

## Aura Minerals blowing up Azacualpa Cemetery hill

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/aura-minerals-blowing-up-azacualpa-cemetery-hill>

Watch, as Aura Minerals (US company, trading on Toronto exchange) “gets on with normal” in times of Covid19, blowing up this mountain (western Honduras) on top of which is the 200 year old Azacualpa Cemetery, in behind of which lies the community itself of Azacualpa.

- **View:** <https://www.facebook.com/noticiashondurashn/videos/697480547648444/>



Azacualpa cemetery hill. The 200 year old cemetery sits perched on top of this hill that –since 2010– has been open-pit mined by Aura Minerals in all directions. Photo, October 2019, Azacualpa Environmental Committee

Supported by the military-backed, drug-trafficking Honduran regime, US and Canadian governments and investors, Aura Minerals will not stop with its illegal destruction of the Azacualpa cemetery and community, unless the pressure comes from the US and Canada, the media, and investors.

The repressive Honduran regime (a “democratic allie” of the US and Canada, and member of Canada’s “lima group” trying to overthrow the democratic government of Venezuela) completely supports Aura Minerals, and the destruction of forests, mountains, cemeteries, communities and the livelihoods of thousands of people, many of who have been forced into exile, trying to get to the US.

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### ASONOG statement

August 20, 2020



### Pronunciamiento Público

Ante la insistencia de la empresa Aura Minerals de capital canadiense, quien amenaza con explotar el cementerio en Azacualpa, La Unión, Copán, la Asociación de Organismos No Gubernamentales (ASONOG) a la comunidad nacional e internacional se pronuncia en los siguientes términos.

1. Condenamos este hecho repudiable por parte de la empresa Aura Minerals, quien sabiendo de la oposición y resistencia que han mantenido las familias de Azacualpa, insiste en explotar el cerro donde se ubica el cementerio de la comunidad, con 200 años de existencia y aproximadamente 1800 cadáveres depositados en él.
2. Como organización defensora del ambiente y Derechos Humanos exigimos a la corporación municipal de la Unión Copán, dirigida por el señor Víctor Hugo Alvarado respete la resolución tomada por la corporación municipal de ese término quien determino en Cabildo Abierto el 11 de enero de 2015, que el predio donde se encuentra el cementerio de la comunidad de Azacualpa "era intocable.
3. El hecho de estar destruyendo el cerro en más del cincuenta por ciento en los alrededores del cementerio consideramos es un acto abominable de maldad, porque pretenden obligar a la familia que se oponen a las exhumaciones a que lo hagan por la fuerza, de lo contrario correrán el riesgo de perder los restos de sus seres queridos producto de los desprendimientos de tierra.
4. Exigimos a Mi Ambiente, IHGEOMIN, COPECO, y el CONADEH que ordenen a la empresa a dar inicio a las acciones de mitigación del daño ambiental ocasionado, rellenando el área explotada en los alrededores del cementerio con el fin de evitar deslizamientos que ocasionen daños mayores al área del cementerio.
5. Hacemos un llamado a los organismos nacionales e internacionales defensores del ambiente y Derechos Humanos para que hagamos un esfuerzo conjunto con el propósito de reivindicar la dignidad de los pobladores de Azacualpa y exijamos de manera conjunta el resarcimiento de daños.
6. Aura Minerals explota la mina San Andrés desde el 2010, dejando como consecuencias una conflictividad social dentro y fuera de la comunidad, daños irreparables al ambiente y la salud de las personas y lo peor, un daño de contaminación ambiental a las futuras generaciones a través del Drenaje Acido de Minas (DAM), el cual contaminara toda la sub cuenca del río Higuito alcanzando hasta el río Ulúa.
7. En mayo y junio de 2018 se interpusieron dos amparos en el Juzgado de lo Contencioso Administrativo de San Pedro Sula, donde se solicitaba la suspensión de las exhumaciones por parte de la empresa en el cementerio, este juzgado resolvió en favor del acto reclamado, pero traslado dichos amparos a la Corte de lo Constitucional en Tegucigalpa quien finalmente dejo sin valor y efecto el contenido de los mismos en una clara acción de favorecer los intereses de la empresa.
8. ASONOG reitera su compromiso de protección al ambiente y defensa de los Derechos Humanos, nuestra solidaridad con las familias de Azacualpa que resisten a la destrucción de su cementerio, se expresara a través de nuevas acciones de protección y defensa de los mismos.

Santa Rosa de Copán, 19 de agosto de 2020

### Translation (by Rights Action)

At the insistence of the Aura Minerals company of [US &] Canadian capital, that threatens to mine for gold under the Azacualpa cemetery, La Union, Copan, the Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (ASONOG) declares:

1. We condemn this reprehensible act on the part of Aura Minerals that, knowing of the consistent opposition and resistance from the families of the community of Azacualpa, insists on mining the hill where the 200 year old community cemetery is found, where 1800 people are buried.
2. As an organization that defends the environment and human rights, ASONOG demands that the municipal government of La Union, Copan, directed by Victor Hugo Alvarodo, respect the decision taken by the municipal government that decided in an open town hall, January 11, 2015, that the land where the Azacualpa community cemetery is located is untouchable.
3. The fact of destroying cemetery hill, underneath and surrounding the cemetery, is an abominable act of evil. The company is obliging families, who oppose the exhumations of the

remains of their loved ones, to do so by force, otherwise they run the risk of completely losing the remains of their loved ones as a result of the explosions and destruction of the hill.

4. We ask Mi Ambiente, IHGEOMIN, COPECO, and CONDADEH to order the company to begin actions to mitigate the damage caused, by filling in the exploded area around the cemetery in order to avoid landslides that cause major damage to the cemetery itself.

5. We call on national and international organizations to support the people of Azacualpa in their just claims for the complete repairing of all damages sustained thus far.

6. Repairing the damages will not be easy. Aura Minerals has been exploiting the San Andres mine since 2010, leaving as consequences social conflicts within and outside the community, irreparable damage to the environment and people's health and the even worse, environmental pollution damage to future generations through the Acid Mine Drainage (AMD), which will contaminate the entire sub-basin of the Higuito River reaching the Ulua River.

7. In May and June 2018, two injunctions were filed in court, in San Pedro Sula, requesting the suspension of the exhumations in the cemetery by Aura Minerals. This court ruled in favor of the suspension, but this decision was appealed to the Constitutional Court in Tegucigalpa, which, improperly, overruled the suspension order of the San Pedro Sula court, favoring the interests of the company.

8. ASONOG reiterates its commitment to protect the environment and defend human rights. Our solidarity with the families of Azacualpa who are resisting the destruction of their cemetery will be expressed through new actions to protect and defend them.

Santa Rosa de Copan, August 19, 2020

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### **Background: Azacualpa cemetery and community defense struggle**

To learn more about the Azacualpa Environmental Community and their long standing defense of their lands and rights, and their 200 year-old cemetery, check out the newly created archives and photo gallery:

- **Archives:** <https://rightsaction.org/aura-minerals-archives>
- **Photo Gallery:** <https://rightsaction.org/aura-minerals-photos>

### **Support community defense and Covid19 response struggles in Guatemala and Honduras, including the Azacualpa Environmental Committee:**

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