

Urgent Action-Organization sign-on letter Pan American Silver-linked assassination attempt against Julio González, community defender resisting mine in Guatemala (formerly owned by Tahoe Resistance)

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/urgent-action-pan-american-silver-linked-assassination-attempt-against-julio-gonzlez>

Please add organization names to call for investigation into assassination attempt against Julio González, member of the Peaceful Resistance against the Pan American Silver (formerly Tahoe Resources) mine.

- Deadline: 10am EST, Thursday January 21
- Read/sign letter:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScShQEuq68biu89RxOnM5QY26yFbQeNHT91P-0cNwY031CvDQ/viewform?fbzx=763564390450270902>



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625 Howe Street, Suite 1440
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Repeating Pan American Silver-linked mining repression

This most recent assassination attempt against a community defender in Guatemala, resisting illegal, harmful mining operations, comes in the aftermath of this same company – Pan American Silver (that purchased Tahoe Resources in 2019) – being forced to reach a settlement with community defenders for previous victims of mining-linked violence and repression.

Find here a press release from the lawyers for the Guatemalan plaintiffs in the precedent-setting Tahoe Resources lawsuit, and statements from Breaking the Silence, Mining Watch,

Earthworks & Jen Moore: <https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/pan-american-silver-forced-to-offer-settlement-to-guatemala-victims-of-mining-repression>

Organizational sign-on letter

TO:

María Consuelo Porras, Attorney General, Office of the Public Prosecutor, Guatemala
Augusto Jordán Rodas Hernández, Ombudsman, Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman,
Guatemala

Sean McAleer, Senior Vice President and Managing Director, Guatemala, Pan American Silver

Michael Steinmann, President and Chief Executive Officer, Pan American Silver

Ross Beaty, Director and Chairman of the Board, Pan American Silver

CC:

Alberto Pimentel Mata, Minister, Ministry of Energy and Mines of Guatemala

Rita Rudaitis-Renaud, Ambassador, Canadian Embassy in Guatemala

William Popp, Ambassador, United States Embassy in Guatemala

RE: In response to assassination attempt and threats against members of the peaceful resistance to the Escobal mine, demands for an investigation and an end to company interference

January 18, 2021

The below signed organizations denounce the assassination attempt against Mr. Julio David González Arango, member of the Peaceful Resistance of Santa Rosa, Jalapa, and Jutiapa to the Escobal mine. The Escobal mine is owned by Pan American Silver. On the morning of Saturday, January 16, 2021, unknown men shot Mr. González at his home in the municipality of Mataquescuintla, Jalapa, where he also runs a small shop. He was immediately rushed to the hospital with serious injuries.

The following day, Mr. Juan Eduardo Donis and Mr. Pablo Adolfo Valenzuela Lima, two more members of the peaceful resistance to the mine who are also from Mataquescuintla, received text messages threatening their lives. The threats included an explicit reference the attack on Mr. González and indicated that Mr. Donis and Mr. Valenzuela would be next.

This attack on Mr. González and the grave threats against Mr. Donis and Mr. Valenzuela are the culmination of an increasingly tense and dangerous context for members of the peaceful resistance and the Xinka Parliament of Guatemala. Mr. González has long been the target of threats and intense defamation campaigns by people who support the Escobal mine. Yet, the aggressions had recently intensified so much that in early December, Mr. González filed a complaint with the Human Rights Defenders Unit of the Public Prosecutor's office. Following this complaint, direct threats also increased against Mr. Donis and Mr. Valenzuela, as well as against Edwin Alexander Reynoso Bran and Quélvin Otoniel Jiménez Villalta, lawyer for the Xinka Parliament.

It is important to note that Mr. Reynoso already suffered two assassination attempts in 2014 and 2015. During the first attack, Topacio Reynoso Pacheco, Mr. Reynoso's daughter and a 16-year-old human rights defender, was killed. Mr. Reynoso is one of the 59 representatives elected to participate in the court-ordered consultation with the Xinka people on the Escobal mine. Attorney Quelvin Jiménez has also suffered threats since the Constitutional Court decision that ordered said consultation. Due to these threats, he was granted precautionary measures in July 2019 by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Since September 2020, the Xinka Parliament has denounced the emergence of a parallel group, self-described as the "Reorganized Resistance of Casillas," which is working against the Peaceful Resistance of Santa Rosa, Jalapa, and Jutiapa. This group, led by a former security guard for the Escobal mine, is attempting to undermine Xinka leadership, and generate community division and an environment of insecurity. Members of the resistance believe the group is working in coordination with Pan American Silver. Representatives from the mining company and the Ministry of Energy and Mines have participated in meetings with this group.

Additionally, over the last few months, the Xinka Parliament has denounced Pan American Silver's activities, which include unnecessary truck arrivals at the mine and continued community projects. These activities foment tension and division given that all operations should be suspended. The Parliament has also denounced the company's "community outreach" programs as coercion and in violation of the "free" nature of the consultation.

The Escobal mine has been suspended since June 2017, first due to two peaceful encampments to block mine traffic in the municipalities of Mataquescuintla and Casillas. These peaceful encampments are in place around the clock and organized by the resistance movement. A Supreme Court decision issued in July 2017 legally suspended mining operations. The order was ratified by the Constitutional Court on September 3, 2018. The Court ordered the Ministry of Energy and Mines to carry out a consultation with the Xinka people whose rights were violated by the mining project, in accordance with the United National Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization. In its decision, the Constitutional Court "has been emphatic in affirming that a situation marked by confrontation, violence, and mistrust does not help to make the consultation truly productive."

In response to the attempt on the life of Mr. González, the threats against leaders, and the increase in tension in the area:

- We join in solidarity with the demands of the Xinka Parliament of Guatemala for a full and impartial investigation by the National Civil Police and the Public Prosecutor's Office on the assassination attempt against Mr. Gonzalez.
- We demand a full and impartial investigation by the National Civil Police and the Public Prosecutor's Office into the January 17 threats against Mr. Donis, Mr. Valenzuela, and the serious threats against Mr. Reynoso and Mr. Jiménez.
- We urge the Human Rights Ombudsman to take all necessary measures to guarantee the human rights of Julio David González Arango, his family and the Peaceful Resistance of Santa

Rosa, Jalapa and Jutiapa. As requested by Mr. Gonzalez and his family, it is urgent to implement security measures to guarantee his safety.

- We urge the corresponding authorities ensure respect for due process before, during, and after the pre-consultation and consultation of the Xinka People, according to the resolution of the Constitutional Court in file 4785-2017, so that the free and good-faith character of the process is guaranteed.
- We demand that Pan American Silver uphold the order of the Constitutional Court by halting its community relations work, an undeniable part of mine operations that results in increased tensions in the region and contributes to the insecurity of its residents.
- We call on the national and international community to pay special attention to the risks faced by communities of Xinka People and members of the resistance in Santa Rosa, Jalapa, and Jutiapa, who are peacefully protesting in defense of life.

Act – Stir up the pot – Chip away

The U.S. and Canadian governments, the World Bank and global businesses and investors (mining, hydro-electric dams, African palm, sugarcane, bananas, garment “sweatshop” factors, tourism, etc.) maintain profitable relations with anti-democratic and corrupt, repressive and racist governments in Honduras and Guatemala, contributing to and benefitting from exploitation and repression, environmental harms and human rights violations, corruption and impunity.

Keep sending copies of Rights Action information (and that of other solidarity groups/ NGOs) to family, friends and your networks, to politicians and media – always asking ‘*Why do our governments, companies and investment firms benefit from and turn a blind eye to poverty, repression and violence, environmental and health harms that caused the forced migrancy / refugee crisis in Guatemala and Honduras?*’

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- Canadian Parliament: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members>

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