

Plaintiffs in landmark Hudbay Minerals lawsuits face alarming health & food security situation

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/hudbay-lawsuits-plaintiffs-face-alarming-health-food-security-situation>

6 women test positive (abnormal) after Pap smears 11 women live in village suffering food shortages & famine conditions

As the Hudbay lawsuits continue into their 13th year in Canadian courts, find below:

- Emergency medical report/request sent by 13 Maya Q'eqchi' plaintiffs involved in the Hudbay lawsuits
- Prensa Libre article: ""There is no food at all": Cahoboncito is the village in Panzós with highest levels of famine, where malnutrition hits children"

The Prensa Libre article features Amalia Tiul, one of the plaintiffs, addressing issues of hunger and famine in her village of Cahoboncito where she and 10 other plaintiffs have lived since being forcibly evicted from their home community of Lote 8 in 2007.

How to support: See below

Emergency medical report/request

El Estor, Izabal
18-03-2023

Health status of plaintiffs in lawsuits in Canada Alarming Pap smear test results

To: Rights Action coordinator Grahame Russell

We salute you, wishing you success in your daily work in defense of human rights and may God our creator and shaper shower abundant blessings on you, your family and community.

The reason for this letter is to express our concern for the state of health of the 13 plaintiffs in the civil lawsuits in Canada.

For some time now, almost all of the 12 women plaintiffs - 11 from Cahoboncito (originally from Lote 8, a community evicted in 2007) - have been experiencing serious discomfort. They complained of constant body pains.

Given this situation, we took the initiative to seek out general medical check-ups all the plaintiffs. This was done with the support of Rights Action, as the plaintiffs have limited economic resources to be able to go to a medical clinic. (Separately, a general check-up was done for German Chub, who was left paraplegic after being shot in 2009).

Complete hematology labs were done, taking blood, stool and urine samples. The women also underwent Pap smears.

Of the 12 women, 9 tested positive for *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*), a stomach infection that can cause ulcers. Some also tested with high cholesterol, and gastritis.

The Pap smear results are alarming. Six women tested positive with infections; two of them are in very poor health.

All of those who tested positive were prescribed medicine. The doctor explained that if the medicines do not have a positive effect, it will be necessary to operate on them. All of them – particularly the two women in very poor health - are worried because they do not have money to pay for operations, were they necessary, let alone for proper treatment because medications are expensive.

Furthermore, they are worried because they do not want to go through what happened to Elena Choc Quib, one of the 11 plaintiffs who died of cancer in 2020 because she did not receive the proper medical support in time.

For this reason, we ask Rights Action to help us to cover the medical expenses for all the women, paying particular attention to the 6 who tested positive after the Pap smears.

With thanks, we await a favorable response to our request.

Respectfully
The 13 plaintiffs

Prensa Libre news report

"There is no food at all" Cahaboncito is the village in Panzós with highest levels of famine, where malnutrition hits children

By Andrea Domínguez and Sandy Pineda, Prensa Libre, 15 March 2023

<https://www.prensalibre.com/ciudades/alta-verapaz/no-hay-nada-de-alimentos-cahaboncito-la-comunidad-de-panzos-mas-azotada-por-la-desnutricion/>



Amalia Tiul, 42, mother of Astrid, 3 years old, who weighs just 16 pounds
(Prensa Libre Photo: Roberto López)

The cries of babies can be heard in the Permanent Care Center (CAP) of Panzós, Alta Verapaz, where a nurse makes notes on weight, height and age, knowing that in many cases the signs are of chronic and acute malnutrition.

Prensa Libre and Guatevisión traveled to this location to learn more about the impact of chronic malnutrition, which has claimed the lives of three children in recent days in these communities, and another 58 children continue to suffer from it.

Outside the CAP, several mothers can be seen waiting for periodic medical check-ups, and to receive notices of possible aid that will arrive for the communities from the government or humanitarian organizations.

Although almost everyone in Panzós speaks Q'eqchi', the information posters in the center on breastfeeding and other topics are in Spanish.

The language difference makes communication difficult between the workers of the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance (MSPAS) and the mothers of the children, the most vulnerable due to malnutrition.

But they are not giving up. Aware of the need to get the message across as far as possible, they produced a video to alert parents to what can happen to their children if they suffer from nutrient and vitamin starvation.

The images are heartbreaking and show real cases of children affected by chronic malnutrition and with signs of kwashiorkor [a form of extreme malnutrition].

One of the babies has swelling on her face. The arms have scaly skin, sparse, reddish and weak hair. One of the babies has her small bones highlighted.

But the video only arrives by chat to those who have a cell phone. Given the lack of information and the difficult access to the communities, the message does not get through sufficiently.

Cahaboncito, most affected

After 17 kilometers of dirt road from the CAP, one arrives at the village of Cahaboncito, also in Panzós, which, according to municipal records, heads the list of families with "famine" with 882 cases in total.

The community has not been the same since the passage of hurricanes ETA and IOTA (October and November 2021), which impacted their subsistence crops.

There lives Amalia Tiul, 42 years old, mother of Astrid, 3 years old, who suffers from malnutrition. In her native Q'eqchi' language she explains the crisis they are going through now, with a diet based almost exclusively on beans, herbs and tortillas with chili.

The difficulties of the long road make it difficult for them to travel to the Care Center, and the cost of transportation is almost impossible due to their low income.

"From time to time the health post staff came to check on the baby. Now she is 16 pounds, she doesn't go up or down and she is three years old," explains Astrid's mother. "They have only given us milk for three months. There is no food at all," she assures.

Difficulty in planting crops

Erminio Choc, part of the neighbors' committee, explains that they struggle to be able to put food on the table, but there are difficulties that persist and they feel forgotten by the State.

"It is hard to sow taking into account that fertilizer costs have risen. We can sow the land, but the land does not produce. The cornfield does not grow."



Ramos Xococ related that relentless rains generate flooding, seriously affecting their subsistence crops.

(Prensa Libre Photo: Roberto López)

"Some go fishing and with the money they buy 10 or 20 pounds. The other person sells firewood among us. That's the way we are going through it."

"We are very needy by the gunwale, that's what we need. That's why we can't plant," says Choc, as a plea to the central government.

According to Choc, without the dyke, the increase of the Cahabón and Polochic river flows seriously affects their crops and has left them with losses.

Funds needed

During the course of the lawsuits, Rights Action has done our best to provide the plaintiffs and families with regular, minimal financial support to respond to the various causes of their chronic poverty and suffering, including most recently the devastation and loss caused by Hurricanes ETA & IOTA (October & November, 2020), the suffering and hunger caused by the COVID pandemic and utter lack of government response, and regular flooding of the nearby Cahobon river caused by advancing climate change and the recent construction of a largescale, privatized hydro-electric dam up river.

Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & U.S.)

To support the medical and food security needs of the plaintiffs, make check to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- US: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
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Credit-card donations: <https://rightsaction.org/donate/>

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(On request, Rights Action can provide foundations and large-scale donors with estimated short and medium-term budgets)

Thank-you

Grahame Russell, director

info@rightsaction.org

Please share this appeal widely

More info: info@rightsaction.org, www.rightsaction.org

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Edited by Catherine Nolin (UNBC) and Grahame Russell (Rights Action)

<https://www.testimoniothebook.org>

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