

Forms of Resistance

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Lawsuits

Omai

Company Name: Cambior & Golden Star Resources Ltd.

Location: Guyana

Target metals: gold

Type of Mine: Open pit

Status of Mine: Production

In 1995 the failure of the tailing impoundment released large quantities of cyanide-laced slurry into the Essequibo, Guyana's most important river. The area was declared a disaster zone by the Guyanese government. Civil society organizations blamed the lack of independent monitoring and company negligence. The elimination of fish, a key part of local diets, had serious impacts on community livelihoods. Indigenous groups claimed to have been excluded from the decision to open this project. A suit was brought against Cambior in Montreal court on behalf of the affected communities but was rejected and sent back to Guyana.....what was appening after ?

Fénix

Company Name: Various companies over the years: INCO, Skye Resources, HudBay, now Solway Group.

Location: Guatemala

Target metals: Nickel

Type of Mine: open-pit

Status of Mine: Advanced development

The main source of conflict taking place at the Fénix Nickel mining project revolves around land acquisition and land rights. Social conflicts at mine initially began in the 1960s and 1970s when INCO acquired lands farmed by local Mayans from the country's military government. These culminated in 1978 in the killing of fifty-two indigenous Mayan protesters by employees by the Guatemalan army, an act described by a UN Truth Commission as "arbitrary execution" during Guatemala's genocidal Civil War. Inco shut down operations in 1982. It was sold in 2004 to Skye Resources and in 2008 Skye was purchased by HudBay Minerals. Hudbay, the last Canadian company to hold the property, is currently being sued in Toronto for murders and rapes allegedly committed by members of its private security staff. This is the first time in which a Canadian judge has allowed a Canadian mining company to be held accountable for abuses committed overseas.

Blockades

Cerro Colorado

Company Name: Various Canadian mining companies over the years: Canadian Javelin, Tiomin Resources; Corriente Resources

Location: Panama

Target metals: Copper

Type of Mine: open-pit

Status of Mine: Inactive

Cerro Colorado has been at the forefront of mobilization against mining in Panama since initial exploration of the site began in the 1970s. One of the world's largest remaining copper mega-deposits, Cerro Colorado, lies inside the territory (Comarca) of the Ngobe-Bugle indigenous peoples. Conflicts with mining companies date back to the 1970s (Canadian Javelin) and Tiomin (late 1990s to e. 2000s). Currently there is no mining at Cerro Colorado but mining promoters have been active in the communities and have been formally asked to leave the area by Ngobe-Bugle authorities, who see mining as fundamentally incompatible with a Ngobe worldview. In 2011, the Ngobe organized in protests and blockades in rejection of modifications to the Mining Code; dozens were injured in subsequent police repression. In Jan. 2012, two Ngobe protestors were killed and dozens more injured in a police crackdown on a week-long road blockade, which the Ngobe established to protest the government's failure to pass legislation that would annul existing mining concessions in the Comarca. As a result an accord was signed with the government, prohibiting mining in the Comarca.

Pierina

Company Name: Barrick Gold

Location: Peru

Target metals: Gold

Type of Mine: Open Pit

Status of Mine: Production

Despite receiving an awards for its corporate social responsibility programs in 2011 and being cited in a University of Queensland study on "responsible" mining concerns over water contamination, high water use in an arid region have lead to local opposition. The Peruvian Congress opened investigations into allegations that the company allegedly did not pay \$140 million to the government. In 2006, local residents employed under a Barrick community employment program went on strike demanding better working conditions. Two strikers were killed in a confrontation with security forces when the latter fired on the strikers with live ammunition. Following the deaths a memorandum of agreement was signed between Barrick and mine workers. Workers, however, allege that Barrick has systematically violated this agreement, laying off unionized workers and bringing workers in from out of province.

Asambleas Populares

Esquel

Company Name: Meridian Gold, Yamana Gold

Location: Argentina

Target Metals: Gold

Type of Mine: Open Pit

Status of Mine: Open Pit

Citizen concerns focus on water and local forests, especially

endangered species of tree known as the alerce. External experts report flaws with company EIA especially its lack of an adequate waste management plan. In 2003 a locally-organized referendum was held with a 75% participation rate. A strong majority rejected the mine (80%) and municipality subsequently moved to ban open-pit mining from the area. In 2007 Yamana Gold stated that it would no longer develop the project, but in 2011 citizen protests renewed as company reactivated its activities.

A primary tactic of anti-mining community groups in Esquel has been the *asamblea popular autoconvocado*, a form of community based direct democracy, which emerged in Argentina following the 2001 economic collapse. The *asmableas populares* have been crucial in educating community members about the dangers of mining, organising different community groups and denouncing the presence of mining companies through community referendums. The tactic has spread throughout Argentina, with *asambleas* across the country, which coordinate both regionally and nationally through groups such as the *Unión de Asambleas Ciudadanas (UAC)* and the *Unión de Asambleas Patagónicas (UAP)*.

Government Responses

Pascua-Lama

Company Name: Barrick Gold Corporation

Location: Chile/Argentina

Target metals: gold, silver

Type of Mine: Open pit

Status of Mine: advanced development

The company's first Environmental Impact Assessment came out in 2000 after two years of exploration in which it proposed to remove three glaciers. Company representatives stated that would preserve the glaciers. Scientists expressed reservations about this plan. The glaciers provide critical irrigation water for the Valle de Huasco and locals formed an opposition to the mine. A second EIA in 2006 explored the possibility of not removing the glaciers, but there are concerns that they will still be affected by mining nearby. Concerns about land usurpation and contamination have been expressed by *Diaguita* Indigenous community and other community members. Blockades, stand-offs with the police and the incarceration of community organizers have also marked the past years in the Valle de Huasco. In May of 2013, the company was fined 16.4 million \$ by the Chilean government for contaminating the local water supply and the project was temporarily suspended however, many community groups have criticised this decision for not going far enough, and allowing the project to continue.

International Solidarity

Marlin

Location: Guatemala

Target Metals:silver, gold
Company:GoldCorp
Type of mine:open pit, underground
Status of Mine: production

Goldcorp, whose local subsidiary is Montana Exploradora Guatemalteca (MEG), began soliciting for an exploitation/exploration license in the region in 1996. Construction of the Marlin mine began in May 2004, and a month later, the Marlin Project received a \$45 million dollar loan from the World Bank. In December 2005, the mine commenced production and is expected to continue its activities until 2015.

The construction of the Marlin Mine received an immediate response from civil society, starting with a protest consisting of about 500 Sipakapense farmers in February 2004. In December, an indigenous group from Sipakapa began a 42-day blockade of Glamis trucks passing through their community on the way to San Marcos. The blockade ended on January 11, 2005, when more than 1,200 soldiers and 400 police agents began firing at unarmed protesters, and resulted in the death of Raul Casto Bocel an indigenous farmer.

The lack of proper consultation during the development of the mine is primary reason for the growing resistance against Marlin. In response to the company's inadequate consultation process, the municipality of Sipacapa organized its own consultation process in June 2005, with 98% voting against the mine. However despite the results which were overwhelmingly against mining, the government judged that the consultations were not legitimate enough for the State to suspend the mine.

In 2009, the Human Rights Office of the Archbishop of Guatemala received several complaints by area residents that the Marlin Mine was causing negative health effects (in the form of skin rashes, hair loss, respiratory difficulties and other disorders which people did not have prior to the development of the mine). In 2010 in response to these complaints, new studies were published, one by scientists of the University of Michigan for Physicians Without Borders, and another by the *Comisión Pastoral Paz y Ecología* (COPAE) both revealing high concentrations of certain metals in the rivers downstream from the mine which posed potential negative impacts on the health of surrounding communities.

Based on these results, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has demanded the Guatemalan Government to suspend operations at the mine by June 24th 2010]. On June 23rd the Guatemalan President Alvaro Colom announced it would suspend operations at the Marlin Mine to allow for a thorough scientific study of the environmental and health impacts of the mine. To this date however, the government has failed to comply with the IACHR recommendations, and Goldcorp continues to operate at the Marlin Mine.

As the "first modern mining project in Guatemala," Marlin has been

the focus of attention of various North American NGOs and networks that have been directly supporting community initiatives in San Miguel Ixtahuacán and Sipacapa or have been campaigning on behalf of these communities against mining activities on their lands.