



# MiningWatch Canada

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## Mines Alerte

### Newsletter

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#### Editor's note



*We've gone through more changes over the past few months. Ugo Lapointe is really getting his teeth into our Canada program, and we are very pleased to have Diana Martin take over the admin and resource development work from Susan Murdock, bringing a whole new energy to the office! We wish Susan all the best in her retirement. We're also very much looking forward to working with a government that actually values evidence-based decision-making and democratic processes – and a Parliament that actually works! We do, however, remain deeply concerned about the proliferation of investor-state arbitration in investment treaties and so-called trade agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Canada-European Union Trade Agreement that severely limit governments' ability to act in the public interest and give large corporations immense protection at the expense of public well-being, the environment, and democracy. We will also be part of the fight to see the 2015 Anti-Terrorism Act (Bill C-51) repealed, which has expanded the definition of national security to include the financial stability and economic interests of Canada and its allies, which can lead to the criminalization of dissent and the violation of freedom of expression, assembly and protest, a troubling trend that is far too common for many of our partners here and around the world.*

#### How criticising mining projects can make you a criminal – or an enemy of the State

The mining industry may claim to want to work with communities for mutual benefit, but where communities don't see the benefit the companies don't seem to want to take 'no' as an answer – or even fix what they've broken, whether that's polluted water sources or broken contracts and agreements. Unfortunately, they normally have the backing of government authorities, and far too commonly the response to community resistance is violent repression and criminalisation. This is certainly not new, but it is getting significantly worse. After months of intense work, we published an important report on this tendency. "In the National Interest? Criminalization of Land and Environment Defenders in the Americas" brings together cases from

#### In the National Interest?

Criminalization of Land and Environment Defenders in the Americas





Police 'presence' at Zacualpán.

Guatemala, Peru, Mexico, Ecuador, and Canada, but it is just a beginning. Over coming months we plan to publish additional chapters on other cases across the Americas.

Since then, just in Mexico, we have publicised Mexican state involvement in violence against the Nuhua Indigenous community of Zacualpán in the state of Colima and a human rights defender facing dire threats in the same struggle, while Canadian mining companies were called out by agrarian authorities in Guerrero state for being implicated in violence there. Meanwhile statements from the Canadian Ambassador to Mexico indicate he's apparently not worried about violence, kidnapping and extortion at Canadian mine sites. See our web site for details.

## ***Barrick Gold gives a trickle of compensation to victims in Tanzania and Papua New Guinea while the appalling violence continues***

Some villagers who sustained serious injuries when they were assaulted by police and security at Barrick Gold's North Mara mine in Tanzania have received largely inadequate compensation packages, but many more – victims of shooting, beating, and rape and family members of those who died of their injuries – have received no recognition at all. Worse, the violence continues. We did a second human rights field assessment, which calls into question company commitments to stop excessive use of force. See Broken Bones and Broken Promises: Barrick Gold Fails to Address Ongoing Violence at Tanzania Mine. Meanwhile, in Papua New Guinea (PNG), Barrick finished a compensation program for 120 victims of rape by mine security at its Porgera mine, but is refusing to provide these women the same many times higher level of compensation the company provided 11 women who benefitted from independent legal assistance from EarthRights International. Unfortunately, for the victims in Tanzania and PNG, to receive any compensation at all from the company they had to sign waivers agreeing never to sue Barrick or its subsidiaries anywhere in the world.

Barrick hired Enodorigths to assess its remedy program in PNG. We wrote another letter to the UN High Commissioner



Security at Barrick's North Mara mine in Tanzania.

for Human Rights, to point out that Barrick's assessment process does not meet guidelines set out by the UN and is likely to lead to a misleading report. Fortunately, human rights clinics at Harvard and Columbia universities have now released a critical assessment of Barrick's remedy program in PNG that recognizes MiningWatch's work on this issue. We call on Barrick to rescind the waivers for victims of violence in PNG and Tanzania.

## ***Tahoe Resources in Guatemala – an exemplary case of militarisation, repression, and violence***

Despite challenges to the legality of Tahoe's operations in Guatemala and corruption scandals that forced the resignation of Guatemalan President Otto Pérez Molina, the company has (literally) soldiered on, with renewed shootings and a militarized security strategy to quash community opposition to its Escobal project, as exposed by investigative journalist Luis Solano in 'Under Siege: Peaceful Resistance to Tahoe Resources and Militarization in Guatemala'. Solano came to Canada in



Alberto Rotondo talking to his lawyer.

November to present his report to Canadians. His visit coincided with a huge legal loss for the victims of the 2013 shootings at the Escobal mine when a British Columbia judge refused to hear their lawsuit against the company, ruling that the case should be heard in Guatemala. The plaintiffs in the B.C. case have also just learned that the ex-head of security for Tahoe Resources in Guatemala, who was supposed to be under arrest awaiting trial in January for his role in the 2013 attack, is on the run.



## Mount Polley never again

The Mount Polley disaster was the largest mining waste spill in Canada's history. Yet a year later, the mine is running again under a restricted permit and there are still no long-term plans for site clean-up costs, water treatment, or mining waste management. Ugo

took a strong message to the Canadian Mines Ministers' Conference in Halifax in July, with a letter signed by over 50 organisations calling on Ministers to take action to prevent more disasters. They responded positively, but made no concrete commitments. The independent review of the Mount Polley disaster predicted two tailings dam failures

every decade in British Columbia. We should not have to ask which two rivers or watersheds are next. We need to prevent future failures by strengthening and updating our outdated mining laws. A new study revealed that mine waste disasters are

increasing in frequency, severity, and costs all around the world, and prompts us to ask, "Why is the industry incapable of learning from its failures?" MiningWatch welcomed the B.C. government's announcement that it would review the provincial

mining code, but warned that the review needs to be broad enough to address the full range of necessary changes in mining policies and regulations. In partnership with other concerned groups, MiningWatch released a comprehensive report, entitled "Path to Zero Failures" detailing how the planned review can be matched with parallel



The Mount Polley disaster in August 2014 was Canada's largest mining waste spill ever.

reforms of environmental assessment requirements, financial assurance review, and stronger community participation mechanisms in decision-making processes.

Documents and details may be found on our web site.

## Uranium – Quebecers and Crees say no thanks



Participants in the 2015 International Uranium Symposium in Quebec City.

The federal government has still not decided whether to accept the Nunavut Impact Review Board's (NIRB) 'no-go' recommendation for AREVA's Kiggavik uranium mine proposal near Baker Lake. At the same time, the Quebec government has not decided whether to accept the Environmental & Public Hearings Panel (BAPE) conclusions that the risks and uncertainties of the mining of uranium relating to health and the environment are still too numerous to allow it to proceed. Meanwhile, Strateco, a junior company on the verge of bankruptcy, is suing the Quebec government for not licensing its controversial Matoush uranium advanced exploration project in Cree territory – which the Cree have already declared will not be allowed to proceed.

Details may be found on our web site...

## UN report backs allegations of forced labour and torture at Nevsun's mine in Eritrea

Nevsun's Bisha gold-copper mine has been repeatedly cited for appalling labour abuses by the company's Eritrean government contractors, including forced labour and inhuman living and working conditions. Former workers are suing the company in British Columbia for alleged abuses; those allegations are supported in a new report by the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea. Read more on our web site.



### INVESTOR AND SHAREHOLDER ALERT

On 1st June 2015 Nautilus released an environmental and social benchmarking report on the proposed Solwara 1 mine in the Bismarck Sea of Papua New Guinea. The purpose of the report is to reassure investors and the world that mining the sea floor is a social and environmentally responsible way to satisfy global demand for minerals. **Investors should be wary.**

The benchmarking report is based on information provided by Nautilus, has been reviewed by the company's CEO, and is clearly an attempt to downplay the risks posed by the Solwara 1 project.

**The benchmarking report demonstrates limited scientific understanding of the impacts of seabed mining and ignores the wide range of risks identified by comprehensive independent reviews of the project's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).** These reviews demonstrate that the Solwara 1 EIS contains flawed assumptions and poor quality science.

**The benchmarking report wrongly assumes no impacts on communities and no cultural claims.** The coastal communities of the islands of New Ireland and East New Britain are in vocal disagreement. They believe they are already seeing the impacts of the Solwara 1's exploratory phase – on their traditions of shark culling and in the mask kill they have witnessed of fish species they harvest. Indeed they have banned Nautilus from entering the waters around Solwara 1.

Analysis of oceanographic aspects of the Solwara 1 EIS indicates that it is entirely possible that heavy metals stirred up by the seabed mining process will be transported by currents into marine food chains relied upon by coastal communities and by local and commercial fisheries, such as the regional tuna fishery. The benchmarking report fails to account for this.

**Compensation claims for these impacts pose a significant risk borne by shareholders and investors.**

The benchmarking report compares only the best of potential Solwara sites with massive industrial scale terrestrial mines. Extremely little is known about the environmental goods and services of deep sea ecosystems in comparison to terrestrial ecosystems.

Additionally, because of their rarity, the mining of hydrothermal vents at the Solwara 1 site would remove a very high proportion of the global total of these ecosystem types – a property not considered by the report. Taken together with the cumulative impacts that can be expected of multiple deep sea mines planned by Nautilus, **the comparisons between terrestrial mines and the Solwara 1 site is like comparing mangroves to crocodiles.** This report tells us nothing about the relative social and environmental impacts.

**The benchmarking report attempts to paint a picture of DSM as being the lesser of 2 evils, in reality DSM is just the evil we know least about. Don't pay the price for ignorance.**

**1** Nautilus describes this area and mines illegally, we fear all the right order nations to destroy the reefs or ship. Bitter and elegant from different regions have continued but natural environment is actually address the issue from the bottom up. Traditional sea over the environment must be respected by everyone.

**2** In November 2013 a ship from Papua New Guinea, in the Central West Coast, harvested a few lobsters and put a "garage" at the present Solwara 1 project site. In the background, the "garage" entered a traditional sea. Ship to earth by Nautilus MCT will venture into this area prohibited by the "garage". Papua New Guinea & Japan.

1. <http://deepseaminingwatch.org/deep-sea-report/>  
2. <http://ingramandjones.com/nautilus/>

### DON'T PAY THE PRICE FOR IGNORANCE

For further info about Deep Sea Mining and Solwara 1 go to <http://www.deepseaminingwatch.org/deep-sea-report/>

## Deep sea mining – just a bad idea

A Canadian mining company, Nautilus Minerals, is pioneering a highly dubious mining practice: extracting copper, gold and silver from the ocean floor off of Papua New Guinea. As part of the Deep Sea Mining Campaign, MiningWatch has conducted an assessment of Nautilus' project and joined scientists and concerned citizens in calling on the International Seabed Authority (ISA) to halt issuing further exploration licences and to establish a moratorium until independent scientists have had a chance to fully understand the deep-sea environment and how it should be protected.

We also published an Investor and Shareholder Alert to warn investors of dangers that company management may not be fully informing them about. For more information on this issue see our web site.

*This banner, from the protests against Tahoe Resources Escobal mine, reads, "Communities in peaceful resistance: El Escobal. The defence of our territory is a right. San Rafael las Flores, Santa Rosa, Guatemala."*



**YES! I want to help provide mining-affected communities with the support they need – and make the mining industry accountable.**

Please direct my contribution to:

- ☐ **MiningWatch Canada** to press governments to make crucial changes to law and policy. I know I will **not** receive a charitable donation receipt.
- ☐ **The Canary Research Institute for Mining, Environment, and Health** to support research and education – and receive a charitable donation receipt. Charitable Registration Number 87103 9400 RR001.

Here is my one-time gift of: ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$150 ☐ \$25 ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ or monthly: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

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By:

☐ Cheque, payable to the relevant organization

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