



Water Ceremony, Pípsell (Jacko Lake). Photo courtesy Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation.

## Highlights of 2017

### *International campaigns – Holding government and industry accountable for mining abuses abroad*

#### **Making Canada “Open for Justice”**

Since 2005 we have worked with other members of the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability – with the support of tens and hundreds of thousands of Canadians – to make it possible for people who have been harmed by the activities of Canadian mining companies in other countries to be able to file a complaint here. In late 2017, Canada's International Trade Minister indicated his intention to announce the creation of a Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise to investigate human rights complaints about the overseas operations of Canadian companies and recommend appropriate remedies, which could include the withdrawal of Canadian government political and financial support.

#### **Bringing Attention to the Dangers of Economic Diplomacy**

Over eight years ago, Mariano Abarca was murdered for his leadership in the fight against the social and environmental impacts of Calgary-based Blackfire Exploration's barite mine in the state of Chiapas, Mexico. This year we joined his family, along with Otros Mundos Chiapas, the Mexican Network of Mining-Affected People, and others in preparing petitions to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Canadian Public Sector Integrity Commissioner aimed at establishing the responsibility of the Canadian Embassy in Mexico in supporting the company despite knowing that Mr. Abarca's life was in danger, which we believe heightened the risk he faced.

#### **Indigenous Women from Papua New Guinea Confront Barrick – and Canada**

We coordinated and hosted the visit to Canada of two indigenous Ipili women, Everlyn Gaupe and Joycelyn Mandi, who both suffered sexual violence at the hands of mine security at Barrick Gold's Porgera mine in Papua New Guinea. They made public presentations and attended Barrick's annual shareholders meeting in Toronto to demand justice for hundreds of women who have experienced similar abuse by the mine's security guards.

#### **Historic Advances and Risks to Communities: Tahoe Resources' Mine in Guatemala**

Tahoe Resources' Escobal silver mine in south-eastern Guatemala has been suspended since June 2017 due to peaceful protest and legal action by local communities and organizations. We have responded in coordination with the Coalition Against Unjust Mining in Guatemala (CAMIGUA) to denounce and prevent further repression and criminalization. We are documenting the situation in coordination with local partners, CAMIGUA, and the Justice and Corporate Accountability Project (JCAP), including a complaint to the British Columbia Securities Commission.

There were also historic advances in the civil lawsuit against Tahoe Resources over a 2013 shooting of peaceful protesters by company security guards that is proceeding in British Columbia courts. We continue to work with other members of CAMIGUA to publicise this suit and the broader issues at [tahoentrial.net](http://tahoentrial.net).

## **Learning to Lay the Paper Trail**

We have continued working in collaboration with the Mexican Network of Mining Affected People, with support from the Canadian Centre for International Justice (CCIJ), to identify learnings from civil lawsuits brought to Canada against Canadian mining companies.

## ***Regulatory effectiveness in Canada – The need for regulations that protect people and the environment***

### **Canadians Seek Justice for Canada’s Biggest Mining Spill**

Affected community members and the public at large are deeply concerned that no sanctions have been brought forward by any level of government so far for the Mount Polley mine disaster in 2014, which spilled 24 million cubic metres of mine wastes into Hazelton Creek and Quesnel Lake in British Columbia’s Fraser River watershed.

The private prosecution under the federal Fisheries Act that we had filed in the absence of any official action was stayed by Crown prosecutors in March 2017. They did not provide any real explanation, nor indicate whether or when they will lay their own charges. We then supported Bev Sellars, Chief of Xat’sull First Nation when the disaster happened, in filing private charges against Imperial Metals under B.C. environmental laws. With SumOfUs, we also launched a national petition – endorsed by over 40,000 people – urging the Trudeau government to enforce the Fisheries Act and hold Imperial Metals to account for the Mount Polley mining disaster.

### **Environmental Laws Matter Because Protecting the Environment Matters**

We have been working to ensure that the Trudeau government lives up to its promise to rebuild and “restore public confidence” in the environmental assessment process, participating in the Minister’s Multi-Interest Advisory Committee, sitting down with ministers and high-level civil servants, and coordinating civil society engagement as part of the Canadian Environmental Network’s Environmental Planning and Assessment Caucus.

The Expert Panel appointed by the government to gather input from the public, Indigenous peoples, industry, and experts issued a remarkable report at the end of March. The government responded with a very disappointing and problematic discussion paper. We helped coordinate a national response to those proposals, as well as an intensive lobbying effort. We also joined a national campaign to push the government to “get EA right,” building public awareness and pressuring MPs.

## ***Movement building and community support – Working in common cause***

### **Protecting B.C.’s Jacko Lake and Pípsell Cultural Area from Mining**

This year marked a huge breakthrough for the Stk’emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation (SSN) and the Kamloops citizens who fought for years to stop KGHM’s proposed massive open pit Ajax copper-gold mine on the doorstep of the city and on SSN’s traditional territory. SSN undertook a year-long historic, Indigenous-led environmental review process, and in March concluded it would not give its free, prior and informed consent for the project. We accompanied and supported SSN and Kamloops residents, raising public attention through the media, organizing meetings and rallies, and launching a campaign website to urge BC and Canada to reject the project. Finally, in December, the B.C. government decided not to approve the project.

### **International Campaigning to Victory in El Salvador – Water Triumphs over Gold**

In March, El Salvador’s Legislative Assembly passed a law making the country the first to ban metal mining outright. Then in July, OceanaGold finally paid the US\$8 million it owed El Salvador after

During 2017, we worked with CCIJ to better understand the opportunities for civil litigation in Canada. As well, we organized and led meetings in Mexico and Costa Rica with groups from across the region to finalise a guide for better ‘laying the paper trail’ on mining harms.

### **Prosperity Mine – Adaptive Mismanagement**

With legal representation by Ecojustice, we intervened in court to help uphold the federal environmental assessment that found the proposed “New Prosperity” mine in T̓ílhqot’in territory in central B.C. would have serious ecological and cultural impacts. The proponent, Taseko Mines, challenged the environmental assessment, claiming that it should have been allowed to use “adaptive management” to mitigate serious environmental problems after the assessment process. As intervenors, we told the court that protecting communities and ecosystems demands a precautionary approach. In a December decision, the court backed the review panel and the government’s actions, making heavy use of our arguments, though (of course) the company is appealing the decision.

### **Encouraging the Northwest Territories to Modernize its Mining Legislation**

In 2017, the Northwest Territories government began the process of creating its first Territorial Mineral Resources Act, and published a discussion paper. MiningWatch collaborated with local and regional partners in making a submission and creating a website to provide detailed comments during the public engagement period. Recommendations included ensuring a greater share of the NWT’s non-renewable minerals benefit future generations; ending the ‘free entry’ system to reduce conflicts and better protect communities and the environment; and increasing transparency, accountability, and oversight of the mining sector.

### **New National Inventory for Abandoned Mine Sites**

After fifteen years and significant efforts by participating provinces and territories, industry, and non-governmental organizations, the National Orphaned and Abandoned Mines Initiative (NOAMI), which MiningWatch co-founded, has finally released the first-pan Canadian inventory of contaminated mine sites. It’s an important step to ensure greater transparency and inform the public about the location and dangers of contaminated mining sites in Canada.

losing its international investment arbitration case against the country. As a core member of the International Allies coalition with the National Roundtable against Metal Mining in El Salvador, we supported the legislative initiative, including helping to facilitate a visit by the governor of the Philippines province of Nueva Vizcaya on the eve of the vote to share his experience of the impacts of OceanaGold’s operations in his country.

### **Building Capacity for Research & Campaigning in Latin America**

By building capacity for corporate research within and among our partner organizations and networks, we aim to help ensure that mining-affected communities have useful and timely information to help them organize to effectively prevent mining harms and defend their rights. During 2017, we further developed and deployed a strategic corporate research tool as part of a multi-year collaboration with the Latin American Observatory on Mining Conflicts (OCMAL), the Latin American Observatory on Environmental Conflicts (OLCA), and Above Ground.

## No Clean Growth without Mine Clean Up

As Energy & Mines Ministers from across Canada met under the theme of 'Clean Growth' for their annual conference in New Brunswick, we participated in a delegation of regional and national Indigenous and advocacy groups to urge the ministers to do much more to protect the environment and communities affected by mining. We expressed our concerns over the growing liability of toxic mine waste facilities across the country, estimated to be well above \$10 billion, a figure that could easily triple or quadruple if the true costs for site

clean-up and risks from spills and failures are considered.

We also joined the voices of Wolastoqey Nations (Maliseet) that would be affected by the Sisson mine project in New Brunswick. If built, it would be one of the world's largest low-grade tungsten open pit mines, storing massive volumes of mine wastes in a facility very similar to the failed Mount Polley dam. We participated in public meetings, met with public officials, and urged both N.B. and Canada to stop supporting this project.

## Communications & advocacy – Getting out the word, reinforcing credibility, ensuring relevance

### Putting a Stop to Deadly and Damaging Spills Everywhere

We contributed to a new report released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which urges governments and industry to act to stop deadly and damaging mining spills worldwide. The UNEP report was timely as it came just ahead of a major conference to discuss the latest developments in tailings and mine waste management and strongly reinforced the discussions there.

### Barrick Gold Leaves Human Rights Abuses Unaddressed in Tanzania

This was the fourth consecutive year that we did a human rights field assessment at Acacia Mining/Barrick Gold's North Mara mine in northwest Tanzania to document the ongoing violence and human rights abuses perpetrated by mine security and police guarding the mine. All of those we have interviewed over the years have expressed dismay over the violence and over the mine's ineffective grievance mechanism process. Those who have received remedy indicate that they did not understand they were signing away their legal rights to seek judicial remedy. They were also disappointed with the remedy they did receive, as it was not what was promised verbally and clearly does not address their long-term needs. Many others have been denied access to remedy through the mechanism.

#### Board of Directors in 2017

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### Members in 2017

1. Alternatives North
2. Bathurst Sustainable Development
3. Bedford Mining Alert
4. Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA)
5. Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS)
6. Centre for Longterm Environmental Action Newfoundland/Labrador (CLEAN)
7. Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
8. Development and Peace
9. Friends of the Earth
10. Friends of the Stikine Society
11. Innu Nation
12. Inter Pares
13. Kairos - Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
14. Mixedwood Forest Society
15. Nature Canada
16. Northwatch
17. OPSEU (Ontario Public Service Employees Union) Social Justice Fund
18. Polaris Institute
19. Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)
20. Quebec Native Women
21. Rivers Without Borders
22. Sierra Club of Canada
23. Steelworkers Humanity Fund
24. Unifor Social Justice Fund
25. United Church of Canada
26. Watershed Sentinel Educational Society
27. Yukon Conservation Society (YCS)

### Canada is Failing to Fulfil International Human Rights Obligations

The United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights made its first official visit to Canada in May 2017. We met with them as part of their meetings with representatives of federal and provincial governments as well as Indigenous peoples, civil society organizations, trade unions, and business. We were encouraged that their report urged Canadian authorities and the business sector to bolster their efforts to prevent and address human rights impacts of business activities, both at home and abroad, especially regarding Indigenous peoples.

Later in the year, in time for Canada's appearance before the UN Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination in August 2017, we collaborated with EarthRights International and the University of Toronto International Human Rights Program to issue a report calling on the Committee to denounce Canada's ongoing failure to prevent Canadian mining and petroleum companies from violating human rights overseas – and especially the rights of Indigenous peoples and ethnically diverse communities – and to hold them account for such abuses.

### Sharing Information, Spreading Awareness, and Connecting People

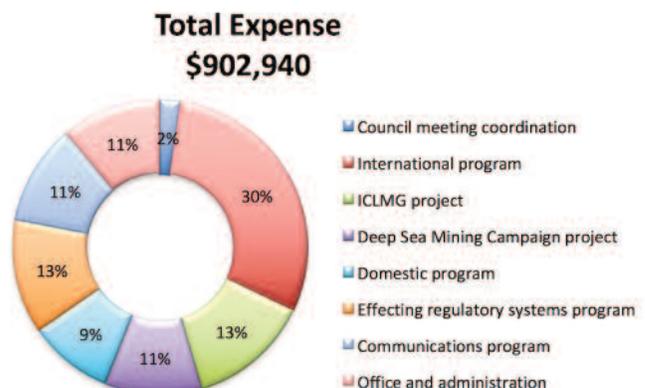
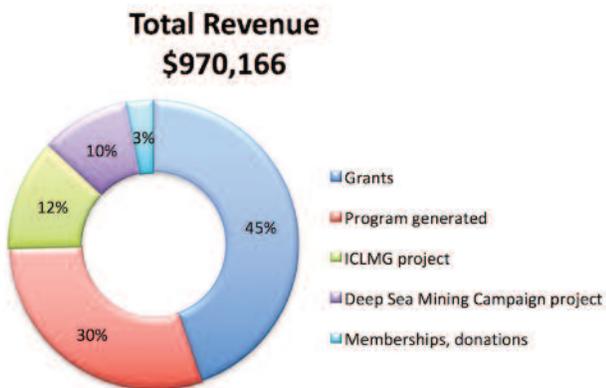
Our Facebook fans, Twitter followers, website visitors, and e-mail lists were very active. Numbers, as well as good interactions, retweets, and 'shares' kept rising with almost 14,000 Twitter followers and nearly 7,000 Facebook fans by year-end, and a total of over 140,000 website pageviews for the year.

### Staff in 2017

Catherine Coumans, Research Coordinator  
Jamie Kneen, Communications & Outreach Coordinator  
Ugo Lapointe, Canada Program Coordinator  
Diana Martin, Administration & Resource Development Coordinator  
Jen Moore, Latin America Program Coordinator

**MININGWATCH CANADA / MINES ALERTE CANADA**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2017**

	2017	2016
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$ 120,956	\$ 123,062
Short-term investments	111,603	140,173
Accounts receivable	64,908	35,954
Due from Canary Research Institute	123,740	114,752
Government remittances receivable	10,675	-
Prepaid expenses	3,078	3,890
	<b>\$ 434,960</b>	<b>\$ 417,831</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 34,417	\$ 18,220
Government remittances payable	-	20,018
Deferred revenue	41,473	86,561
	75,890	124,799
<b>DEFERRED LEASE INDUCEMENT</b>		
	3,956	5,144
	79,846	129,943
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Reserve fund - internally restricted	187,000	182,000
Legal fund - internally restricted	25,000	25,000
Unrestricted net assets	143,114	80,888
	355,114	287,888
	<b>\$ 434,960</b>	<b>\$ 417,831</b>



(Please note that the audited financial statements are available on request.)

**MiningWatch Canada is thankful for support from the following organizations:**

Canadian Union of Public Employees  
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 Echo Foundation  
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 Inter Pares  
 MATCH International Women's Fund  
 Natural Resources Defense Council  
 Ontario Public Service Employees Union  
 Primate's World Relief and Development Fund  
 SAGE Fund

Sigrid Rausing Trust  
 Swift Foundation via Global Greengrants Fund  
 The Fund for Global Human Rights  
 The McLean Foundation  
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