

Record of CEDENMA Visit to Santa Rosa, Intag
(unofficial translation)

Date: Saturday, October 21, 2006

Departure from Quito: 08:00 am

Arrival in Santa Rosa: 12:00 pm

Return to Quito: 16:00 pm

Present: Marianelli Torres (C-CONDEM, Corporación Coordinadora Nacional para la Defensa del Manglar, National Environmental Assembly)

Líder Góngora (C-CONDEM, Corporación Coordinadora Nacional para la Defensa del Manglar, National Environmental Assembly)

Silvia Quilumbango (DECOIN, Organización para la Defensa y Conservación Ecológica de Intag)

Márcia Ramirez (DECOIN, Organización para la Defensa y Conservación Ecológica de Intag)

Jerónimo Meneses (CEDENMA, Coordinadora Ecuatoriana de organizaciones para la Defensa de la Naturaleza y el Medio Ambiente)

1. Antecedents

Days before the search of the house of Carlos Zorrilla, three youths from Apuela who support mining activity enquiring about Carlos, to obtain some sort of information about his activities; as well one could see trucks that prowled the area. Fifteen days before this visit, the mining company Ascendant held a meeting in the García Moreno area to introduce its new manager and to find solutions to some internal obstacles. Mr. Francisco Veintimilla was presented as the new manager.

Initially, Veintimilla made a speech in which he made some openings to dialogue; however, days later in another speech he dedicated himself to attacking those who were against mining activity and their leaders.

2. Search of the house of Carlos Zorrilla

Roberto Castro, who works for Carlos Zorrilla as caretaker of the property and as a guide in the area, was an eye-witness to the search of Carlos' house. This is the testimony he told us:

About 6:30 in the morning several individuals arrived at the house of Carlos Zorrilla. They knocked down the door of the house where they found Roberto Castro, and asked him with a series of insults where Zorrilla was, to which Roberto answered that he didn't know.

The people who entered said they were police, which is still uncertain. None of the vehicles in which they arrived belonged to the police; all belonged to the Ascendant mining company.

Five individuals entered the house, one of them with his face covered with a ski mask; it is presumed that this person was a local who was acting as a guide, which is why he covered his face to avoid being recognised.

The Prosecutor of Cayambe arrived, saying that they had forgotten to bring the search warrant for Carlos' house; a while later the warrant arrived and the Prosecutor proceeded to read it, without allowing anyone to see that it was exactly what he said it was.

The prosecutor, accompanied by three other people, entered the Zorrilla house, overturned everything, and left saying there was nothing there. These people were whispering among themselves and later said that Carlos had been accused of robbery and that they only wanted to take the items that had supposedly been stolen.

The place was full of police and those heading up the group asked constantly where the gun was, until someone announced that they had found the gun and the drugs in Carlos' house. The supposed police took a bank card, CD-ROMs, cheques that were no longer valid, and a cellular telephone.

After all this happened, the affected people asked that the authorities leave the parish, and the political deputy came to the place and confirmed the state of things.

3. Context

The conflict in the Intag region is becoming more and more complex. After the facts already known and the constant struggle to avoid mining activity the community is not disposed towards dialogue with the company given that Ascendant has tried to enter using tricks such as blackmail against leaders and members of the community and even death threats against people opposed to its presence.

The most serious confrontations have taken place in the community of Junín, where company employees have tried to enter on various occasions.

All of this has generated conflict between members of the same community over differences of opinion regarding mining development. People belonging to the community who are known to be working for the company are automatically separated from the community and their families.

We have this information thanks to details gathered by infiltrators on both sides, in other words, the community has infiltrators in the company and vice versa.

Ascendant had planned a meeting on October 21; however, this meeting did not take place and it is speculated that this was because it was known that the CEDENMA commission was arriving there the same day.

Despite this, we know that the previous night a bus arrived at the site, and the drivers of the transport confirmed that they had been contracted to pick up the mining company's people who had been contracted and ready to invade people's farms.

As long as the company is in the area an end to the confrontations cannot be guaranteed.

Photos (see following pages):

1. The meeting between the CEDENMA commission, members of DECOIN, and Roberto Castro (standing, left), witness to the search of Carlos' Zorrilla's house.

2. The door of Carlos Zorrilla's house.

3, 4. Carlos Zorrilla's room after the illegal search.

5. The place where the cache of supposed drugs was placed to incriminate Carlos Zorrilla.

6. The room of Carlos Zorrilla's son, and the location where a firearm was found, again to incriminate Zorrilla.



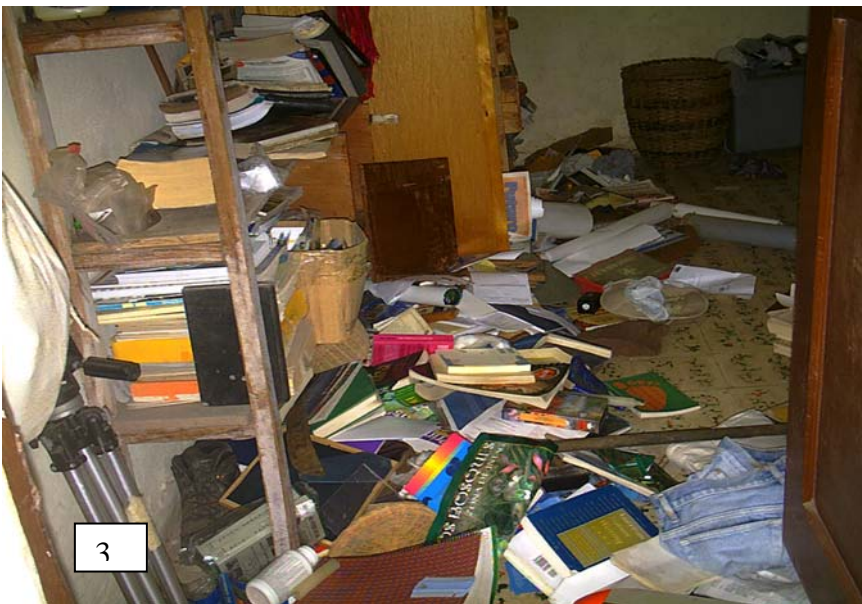
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1. Instalación de la reunión entre la comición de CEDENMA, miembros de DECOIN y Roberto Castro (de pie izquierda) testigo del allanamiento a la casa de Carlos Zorrilla.



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2. Puerta de ingreso a la casa de Carlos Zorrilla



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3. habitación de Carlos Zorrilla después del allanamiento ilegal.



4. habitación de Carlos Zorrilla después del allanamiento ilegal.



5. lugar en el que fue colocada la funda con supuesta droga, para inculpar a Carlos Zorrilla.



6. Habitación del hijo de Carlos Zorrilla, lugar donde se colocó un arma de fuego. Una vez más para inculpar a Zorrilla.