

Isai López, “For Extortion of a Canadian Mining Company - Petition regarding the dismissal of the mayor of Chicomuselo”. El Heraldo de Chiapas, June 24, 2009. [translation] [Blackfire-Complaint.doc](#)

FOR EXTORTION OF A CANADIAN MINING COMPANY  
Petition regarding the dismissal of the mayor of Chicomuselo

Isai López  
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Canadian mining company Blackfire Exploration Mexico asked the State Congress to dismiss the mayor of Chicomuselo, Julio César Velázquez Calderón, for the alleged crime of extortion, conspiracy, destruction of property, theft, damage to roadways and illegal detention.

The company's legal representative, Horacio Culebro Borayas, indicated that a group of peasants from the municipality had been incited by the mayor to commit various crimes under the pretext or reasoning that the State government has failed to undertake infrastructure projects and had violently seized company facilities used in the mining and transportation of material known as "barite".

He explained that Rogelio Ramírez Roblero, Mario Pérez Ramírez, Mariano Pérez Roblero are implicated for the same crimes and along with the aforementioned municipal official, stand accused before the Attorney General of the State (PGJE).

Culebro Borayas rejected the suggestion that environmental pollution has resulted from the company's process of barite extraction, arguing that there is adequate information available but that unfortunately, the mayor is endeavouring to confuse the population and has undertaken to extort the company, promising to control the protesters.

For this reason, he said, the general director of Blackfire Exploration Mexico, Artemio Avila Cervera, has requested the intervention of Governor Juan José Sabines Guerrero, Government Secretary Noe Castañón León, Attorney General Raciél López Salazar and President of the Board for Political Coordination of the State Congress, José Ángel Córdova Toledo.

The document sent to authorities by the company states that “since we began operations, we have been extorted by the mayor of Chicomuselo at the rate of 10 thousand pesos a month in order that, according to him, the population would not take up arms in the area where we extract [barite] and where the project has generated direct employment for 60 people and indirect positions as well.”

The document goes on: “every day the mayor becomes more abusive in asking favours of the company, and has asked on various occasions for airline tickets to Mexico City for him, his wife and his children and for one of his colleagues, requests that we have granted.”

The CEO of Blackfire Exploration Mexico, Artemio Avila Cervera, informed local elected representatives that the mayor had asked for the sum of one hundred thousand pesos for the Chicomuselo Fair, of which 75 thousand were deposited to the Mayor's personal account in Bancomer and 25 thousand were directed to another person, believed to be the president of the community board.

“He also asked us him to have the celebrity Niurka perform at the Chicomuselo Fair, and to contract her to have a sexual night with said mayor. Faced with such demands, we decided to grant no more of his requests. As a result, the mayor has begun a smear campaign, allying himself with the local priest and we know that he is encouraging people to take over [the company’s] facilities.

Blackfire Exploration Mexico calls on the 40 elected representatives from political parties PRI, PAN, PRD, PT, Convergencia, Verde Ecologista and Nueva Alianza to intervene so that foreign investment is not blocked in Chiapas “by unscrupulous people such as mayor Julio César Velázquez Calderón.”

Businessman Artemio Avila added that his company was invited by Governor Sabines through the current Tourism Secretary, Juan Carlos Cal y Mayor Franco, who travelled to Canada to extend the invitation and encourage a development project.

Unfortunately, when the company is not running its mining operations and transport of minerals – that are used in Mexico’s oil sector – due to protests promoted by said municipal official, it loses 250 thousand pesos a month. It is therefore urgent to restore the rule of law and determine what wrongdoing may have been committed.