



## Backgrounder

### Argentina

Asamblea Jáchal No Se Toca (Assembly) has documented a long history of highly toxic spills leading to fish kills in waterways downstream from the Veladero Mine. While the Assembly alleges that Barrick defaults to denial of any involvement of the mine in downstream impacts, the company has, ultimately, acknowledged spills from the mine on September 13, 2015, on September 8, 2016, and on March 27, 2017. For the 2015 spill, Barrick submitted analyses to the court in Jáchal showing cyanide and mercury up to 140 kilometers downstream from the Veladero mine. In the 2016 case, Faustino Esquivel filed a complaint on September 14, 2016 with the National Gendarmerie after which Barrick acknowledged the September 8, 2016 spill. The company said the contamination had not reached the river (the same claim initially made in 2015) but water analyses of the river carried out by the municipality of Jáchal found high levels of mercury.

In 2017, three large pipes carrying cyanide solution broke. Two days later the company confirmed this, but again claimed the contamination had not reached the river. In 2022 and 2023, Barrick [responded](#) to official letters from [UN](#) experts raising concern about the spills by [denying any responsibility](#), saying “any suggestion of spills is baseless and unsubstantiated.” Barrick also has been linked to broader efforts by the Canadian mining sector to weaken or overturn [Argentina’s Glacier Protection Law](#)—legislation designed to safeguard critical water sources in high-altitude ecosystems. For communities in Jáchal, these developments reinforce concerns that environmental protections are being undermined in favour of continued extraction, despite ongoing risks to water, livelihoods, and public health.

### Balochistan, Pakistan

On December 1, 2025, [UN Special Rapporteurs](#) and other UN mandate holders issued an official communication regarding “alleged human rights violations and abuses related to mining operations in the Chagai District of Balochistan, specifically to the Reko Diq mine operated by a subsidiary of Canadian based Barrick Gold Corporation. The allegations entail repeated acts of reprisals, arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearances, and inhuman or degrading treatment in custody, of human rights defenders who have raised concerns about the mining activities and toxic contamination, in particular human rights defenders Dr. Mahrang Baloch and Mr. Sibghat Ullah Shah Jee Baloch.” The UN communication specifically links increased violence to foreign-owned resource extraction projects, such as Reko Diq:

“Baloch people’s struggles are closely tied to the foreign business operations on their lands and the appropriation of natural resources. State security forces have reportedly carried out extensive crackdowns marked by unnecessary and disproportionate use of force to silence and suppress social and political movements advocating for Balochistan’s rights, leading allegedly to the



enforced disappearance of up to 18,000 people in the province since 2000, as well as tortured and extrajudicially killed, particularly among Baloch indigenous communities. Additionally, local leaders and residents have described an increasingly oppressive environment since 2023, marked by intensified State repression of those peacefully advocating for the return of forcibly disappeared individuals and the people's community's right to self-determination.”

Barrick owns 50 percent of Reko Diq and has recently said it will [slow development of the project until mid-2027 because of the security issues in Pakistan and the Middle East](#).

## **Tanzania**

Since 2013, two lawsuits were filed against Barrick's subsidiaries in the UK, both in regard to alleged physical harm suffered by Indigenous Kuria at the hands of mine security at the North Mara Gold Mine; both cases were settled out of court. Since 2022, another [two lawsuits](#) have been filed in Canada on similar claims. The Kuria plaintiffs in these cases are now seeking leave to the Supreme Court of Canada. Another lawsuit has been filed in the UK on behalf of Kuria claimants who allege that in 2019 police contracted to guard the mine killed two men who were their family members. This [case is against the London Bullion Market Association](#). The case alleges that the LBMA was negligent in its duty of care by certifying gold from the North Mara Gold Mine as “responsibly sourced,” when it should have known about long-standing and systematic allegations of human rights abuses by mine security and mine police, given the public reporting by, among others, MiningWatch Canada on this issue.

## **Papua New Guinea**

In 2019, the Papua New Guinea (PNG) government declined to renew Barrick's lease for the Porgera Joint Venture mine citing tax issues, environmental concerns and [legacy issues](#) understood to include [human rights abuses](#) such as [rapes and gang rapes](#) of local Indigenous women and girls by mine security and police contracted to the mine. In 2020, Barrick filed against the PNG state over its refusal to renew Barrick's permit to mine in an [international tribunal](#). The PNG government ultimately renewed the lease allowing mining to restart in 2024. However, conditions for the Indigenous people who live in Porgera remain miserable, with high levels of [violence related to the mine](#) and widespread poverty in the local communities.

See video describing conditions for villagers around the mine and the lack of education for children of Porgera see [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1K\\_H9YprnY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1K_H9YprnY)

## **Philippines**

In 1996, a mining disaster filled the Boac River on the small island of Marinduque with mine waste from the Macopper Mine in the mountains to the sea. It was the third major environmental disaster associated with the mine with serious consequences for the people of Marinduque. Prior to this, in 1993, a catastrophic failure at the mine site sent mine waste flooding down the Mogpog River at night, burying two small children, causing wide-spread damage, and leaving the river degraded. The first sacrifice zone was a wide shallow bay, Calancan Bay, which had supported 12 fishing villages. That bay was used to dispose of mine tailings for 16 years (1975-1991) covering coral reefs with some 200 million tons of tailings. The Marcopper Mine was part-owned and operated by the Canadian mining company Placer Dome between 1969-1997.



Placer Dome divested from Marcopper in 1997, a year after the Boac River mine disaster. In 2006 then-Barrick Gold Corp. acquired Placer Dome.

For a brief summary of the mining disasters in Marinduque [see this report.](#)