

Ejido Carrizalillo  
Municipality of Eduardo Neri  
Guerrero, México

September 21, 2020

Today, we were surprised to receive a visit at our encampment from the Attorney General for the state of Guerrero, Jorge Zuriel de los Santos Barrilla, where we continue halting the operations of Equinox Gold for breaking our agreement signed in 2019 for a period until 2025.

The meeting was respectful on the part of both the Attorney General and our community assembly. He told us that, despite being a public official without responsibilities in the matter, he did not have much to offer to resolve the conflict except his willingness to facilitate dialogue with the company Equinox [Gold] with which communications have broken down to date.

The meeting with him provided an opportunity to give him a first-hand account of the company's breaches in our contract. We made clear that, in our view, it is irrational that the company continues to show us contempt when the issue in dispute is that it is the company that has not fulfilled its agreement and is now trying to resolve the situation by imposing its supposed economic and political influence on us.

We spoke with him and explained that our struggle is based on problems arising with this company as well as prior companies due to environmental harms and, as a result, health harms to the local population. In no way do we share the company's idea that they seek to impose on us saying that what is important and of top priority are jobs at the cost of our health. For us, the struggle is simple: the company is obliged to follow through with what it agreed to and, if this does not happen, jobs should not be conditioned on the issues that we are struggling to address.

Our anger, as we have previously expressed, arises from having been deceived by the first company that came to our lands, which gave us no other option but to negotiate with our eyes blindfolded, telling us at the time that this was progress and development. Of course, none of this was true, but now without lands and with the contamination that is depriving us of our health, we will fight as long as we can to make Equinox follow through on the agreement it signed with the community. As such, if the company is not interested in this, it can leave and deceive others somewhere else, but we will not let them do that here.

We thanked the Attorney General for his visit to our encampment, but it is important to add that the appropriate means and approach are not what he believes is correct. We hope that he has come to realize as a result of his visit that there are entire families here and that a police operation such as what he presented us with today creates uncertainty, fear, and stress and puts us on alert because, while it seems that history is repeating itself, the community is being treated as if it is the criminal and the company is the victim. When in reality, it is the company that is the criminal and we are the victims.

We do not like that government actors arrive uninvited, unless those who visit have nothing else to do aside from listening to what we have reiterated over and over since our press conference on September 3. Over and over we have said that we are exercising our rights because the company violated its agreement with the communities and if it believes that we are just going to let this

happen, it is wrong. Of course we thank the Attorney General for his visit, but it created much fear and anxiety, which we urge him and other government officials is not necessary. We are here, open to dialogue and in an encampment full of people who want to talk and not have confrontations with anyone, including the company. The company has no example nor motive to say that, during its sporadic visits, that we have treated it poorly, neither with bad words nor disdain. This contrasts with the company's treatment of us, which we know is hoping to wear us out and use political pressure to try to break us.

To public opinion and, of course, to the Attorney General, we respectfully say that you are welcome to visit, but that we will not accept dialogue - even if we did so today - with your armed agents surrounding us and taking photos and videos of us as if we were delinquents. If you return, you can be sure that we will receive you with respect, but we will not permit you to surround the community and whole families [with police] when they are only demanding clean water from the company.

You know that you were received with respect and with respect you listened to us, but if you make a return visit, we ask you not to do so with arms at the ready and threatening us. The issue here is simple: Equinox Gold does not fulfill the agreements it has signed and we are not going to allow it to break its agreements, and if the company is not interested it can leave Guerrero.

The Leadership Council of the Ejido of Carrizalillo