

URGENT: In an irresponsible and flagrant act of provocation, Equinox Gold and the State Attorney for Guerrero illegally enter lands belonging to the Ejido of Carrizalillo

September 22, 2020

To the general public, national and international solidarity groups, the government of the state of Guerrero and the Federal Government of the Republic of México

We vociferously denounce the illegal presence at the Los Filos mine **on lands belonging to the Ejido of Carrizalillo** of the head of the State Attorney of Guerrero, Jorge Zuriel de los Santos Barrilla, as well as two representatives and supposed negotiators of the company Equinox Gold, Vice President for Mexico, Peter Burger, and Vice President of Sustainability, Georgina Blanco Mancilla.

At around 10 am this morning, the State Attorney arrived by helicopter and disembarked in an area of the mine known as Acillares, near Gate 5 where there is a section of offices. At the same time, about 7 or 8 pick up trucks with about 40 ministerial police officers arrived at the encampment. After the Attorney arrived by air, five members of his personal security detachment remained with him on Ejido lands, while the rest of his security detail was deployed at the entrance to the mine in a clear act of protection against the encampment where there are entire families from the Ejido of Carrizalillo. They have remained firm since September 3, since which time they have been halting activity at the Los Filos mine over company breaches of their social-cooperation agreement and its racist and discriminatory attitude. They seek a new agreement of adequate strength to avoid this type of situation from happening again.

The presence of the two company officials on Ejido lands, who know they should not be there, makes it clear that the company and its “negotiators” are incapable of understanding the conflict. Instead, with indifference and irrationality, they create an act of provocation that could lead to an unnecessary confrontation.

Why, if the Ejido is open to dialogue, would the State Attorney and the company break the law? Why, after the Ejido respectfully asked the State Attorney yesterday to not get involved and that he had not been invited by the Ejido, would he arrive today in an abuse of power, swayed by the company’s arrogance to enter onto lands without permission of the owners? If just yesterday, the State Attorney demonstrated good intentions with his visit, today he threw away that small effort, and made the company’s racism and disdain even more evident.

This is a warning concerning this interference, which we hope does not end in an unnecessary confrontation as a result of the company’s poor attitude toward dialogue and the imposition on both its part and that of the State Attorney. The State Attorney’s arrival by helicopter on the Ejido’s lands without their permission only serves to increase the tensions in the encampment. We call on the state and federal governments to direct the State Attorney and other political officials that if they are not going to help, that they would not get in the way, least of all through a political official for which this matter has absolutely nothing to do with his public role.

We also denounce Equinox Gold for acts of provocation against the Ejido, which only further demonstrate its racist and arrogant attitude, fomenting confrontation instead of negotiation. They are trying to impose a solution, instead of taking responsibility to dialogue with respect. This is a

conflict created by the company. It concerns breaches of a social-cooperation agreement that is now broken, which in no way justifies the use of state force with the presence of state armed forces, or the arrogance of supposed company negotiators to advance or untangle the conflict.

We will hold them responsible for everything that takes place against the Ejido while the State Attorney and the members of Equinox Gold are present. We urge them to leave Ejido lands and stop sowing fear among the population.

This provocative, aggressive and neocolonialist strategy only puts more distance between the company and the Ejido, instead of seeking an approach that might lead to dialogue. On repeat occasions the Ejido has said that it is willing to dialogue, but under no circumstance will it do so through submission and imposition, but rather with respect and dignity.

The State Attorney should stay out of the conflict between Carrizalillo and Equinox Gold!

Enough of the neocolonial racism and arrogance of Equinox Gold!

Mexican Network of Mining Affected People