

Guatemala, June 23, 2010

Guatemalan government suspends mining activities in San Marcos

THE GOVERNMENT OF GUATEMALA'S POSITION REGARDING THE REQUEST FOR PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES SUBMITTED BY INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE OAS

The Republic of Guatemala's government has received and carefully reviewed the request for precautionary measures submitted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of the Organization of American States (OAS) in reference to mining activities surrounding the concession granted to the company GoldCorp/Montana Explorada de Guatemala, S.A., in the municipalities of Sipacapa and San Miguel Ixtahuacán, department of San Marcos.

With regard to the request, the Guatemalan government reaffirms its firm commitment to ensuring the health of the Guatemalan public, protecting the environment, and reducing pollution levels, as well as to its decision to promote socially and environmentally responsible investments.

In this respect, the government, in response to the IACHR's request, asserted that in reference to the precautionary measure of suspending mining activities, "The State of Guatemala announces its decision to meet the request, in order to comply with its international commitments in the area of human rights."

The note read that to this end, in accordance with its domestic regulation, the Guatemalan government will initiate the corresponding administrative process by which the precautionary measure can legally be enforced.

With respect to the IACHR's second recommendation, the Guatemalan government reported that according to studies conducted by the Department of Public Health, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Ministry of Energy and Mines, there is no evidence to support the claim that the communities' waters have been contaminated by mining activities. The studies, the government holds, reveal that the quality of these water sources is fit for human consumption.

Similarly, with respect to the third recommendation, the government stated that the investigation carried out by the Ministry of Health and Welfare did not detect any diseases or illnesses within the communities that could be linked to the alleged contamination produced by the Marlin mine.

Regarding the Commission's fourth recommendation, the government explained that through the Ministry of the Interior, it will continue to uphold its efforts to preserve the physical integrity and life of the members of the aforementioned communities, and to take the necessary measures to guarantee the rights of its citizens. In order to respond more appropriately, the government requests that persons reportedly suffering any form of persecution be specifically identified, so that the government can determine the appropriate measures by which it can provide support.

Finally, in reference to the fifth recommendation, the authorities declared that the planning and implementation of the protective measures, if necessary, will include the participation of all relevant parties.

The Government of the Republic will provide its full cooperation to the mission of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of the OAS, which will visit Guatemala in the month of July, in order to contribute to an objective impact assessment of the Marlin mine operations.

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