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Canada Refuses to Take Action Against Abuses by Mining Project in Ecuador

Wednesday, October 15, 2014

Source: International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) - Ecuadorian Ecumenical Human Rights Commission (CEDHU) - MiningWatch Canada

(Paris/Quito/Ottawa) **FIDH** (<http://www.fidh.org/en/>), its Ecuadorian member organisation, **CEDHU** (<http://www.cedhu.org/>), and MiningWatch Canada deplore the lack of will and failure to take action on the part of the Canadian National Contact Point (NCP), the office in charge of handling complaints made under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, in this case pertaining to the Mirador mine, a large-scale project in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

On 25 July 2013, **FIDH, CEDHU and MiningWatch Canada filed a complaint** (<http://www.miningwatch.ca/news/canadian-complaints-office-should-investigate-destructive-large-scale-mining-project-ecuadorian>) with the Canadian NCP on behalf of a group of peasant farmers and indigenous people affected by the first large-scale mining project in Ecuador. They denounced impacts on human rights and the environment that CRCC-Tongguan of China is causing in the Ecuadorian Amazon with Canadian subsidiaries Corriente Resources and CRCC-Tongguan Investment, and Ecuadorian subsidiary Ecuacorriente S.A. (ECSA).

On July 28, 2014, the Canadian NCP published an initial assessment of the complaint, announcing that they would not continue with the case, saying that allegations had not been substantiated.

"After waiting for a year for a reply, the Canadian National Contact Point decided to close the case, without providing a detailed explanation and despite the comprehensive information provided. Neither did the NCP did seek additional input," stated Elsie Monge, Executive Director of the Ecuadorian Ecumenical Human Rights Commission (CEDHU) and Vice-President of FIDH.

However, it appears that the real reason why the NCP closed the case is that the company was unwilling to engage in a process of dialogue. In so doing, the NCP negated the role that it could play to investigate alleged harms and determine whether or not the company had violated the OECD Guidelines, as NCP offices do elsewhere.

"Unfortunately, Canada's decision in this case is not surprising; it merely confirms a clear tendency to shirk its human rights obligations in favour of promoting and protecting private investments, which has serious consequences for local communities in Ecuador and in other parts of the world," stated Jen Moore for MiningWatch Canada.

In a report published in December 2010 (<http://www.fidh.org/en/america/ecuador/8921-large-scale-mining-project-in-ecuador-urgent-need-for-a-moratorium-to>), FIDH and CEDHU denounced, among other issues, lack of prior consultations to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of communities, as well as irregularities in the company's acquisition of land from campesino farmers, and the displacement of dozens of families from their land and homes.

"We deplore that the Canadian National Contact Point refuses to recognize these blatant violations of the OECD Guidelines, including the duty that companies have to conduct due diligence, while also failing to acknowledge indigenous peoples' right to free, prior and informed consent," concluded Karim Lahidji, President of FIDH.

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