



# Declaration from the Gathering of Mesoamerican Peoples: “Yes to Life, No to Mining”

January 21, 2013

*Faced with a development model dependent on extractive industries, we have decided to build relationships between our processes of resistance, through the strengthening of our community structures such as assemblies, community authorities, maintaining communal territorial control, and through strengthening our historical memory.*


The diverse peoples, communities, organizations, collectives and networks from Mesoamerica came together from January 17 to 20, 2012 in the Zapotec community of Capulálpam de Méndez, Oaxaca, México to analyze issues related to mining in our territories, as well to share experiences in the defence and resistance to mega-mining projects being promoted by transnational capital. Those present make the following declaration:

Currently, we live within an economic and political model based in the looting and accelerated extraction of our common goods such as minerals, water, forests, oil, air, gas, coal and knowledge through the pillage and commodification of our ancestral territories.

Through the imposition of this extractive model, the peoples that have inherited Mesoamerica are struggling against a hegemonic transnational process of destruction of our own social, economic, political and cultural structures.

In order to implement this model, governments have signed a series of multilateral agreements, such as Plan Mérida, the Trans Pacific Agreement, the Mesoamerican Project, the North American Free Trade Agreement and others, that translate into structural agrarian, energy, laboral, educational, land, security and justice reforms backed by the political, military and financial power that companies, the state and multilateral financial institutions represent. In this way, governments opt for predatory capitalism, or become associated with transnational companies, and turn into the enemies of our peoples.

Faced with a development model dependent on extractive industries, we have decided to build relationships between our processes of resistance, through the strengthening of our community structures such as assemblies, community authorities, maintaining communal territorial control, and through strengthening our historical memory.




The period during which governments represented absolute power is now past, and a new relationship with government is necessary, in which Indigenous peoples decide the destiny of their territories.

Faced with the threat that the mining industry represents in Mesoamerica we call out to the peoples and communities of Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Argentina, Canada and Mexico to strengthen our networks of resistance and to build broad alliances based in our knowledge, within which the defence of territory forms the basis of our connection.

In defence of life, our sacred spaces, our forests, rivers, hills, sources of water and our children, WE DEMAND:

- A change in the economic and political development model that currently permits the looting of territories. As well as a change in the authoritarian, colonial, military and patriarchal structure of governance. Respect for the decisions of peoples should be a fundamental part of the new relationship with nation-states. This means exercising the right to self-determination of Indigenous, campesino and rural peoples.
- The cancellation of all mining projects where communities are in disagreement with the extractive model in Mesoamerica.
- That community consultation processes be respected, which represent an ancestral practice to ensure participation and in order to make decisions among peoples, as well as that their results be considered binding; these consultation processes represent a substantive right for the protection of the fundamental rights of Indigenous peoples.
- Generate mechanisms to guarantee that border areas are free of mining projects in order to avoid binational conflicts that threaten the harmony and politics of good neighbours in Mesoamerica.
- Justice for all territorial defenders that have been criminalized, threatened, harmed and assassinated in Mesoamerica.
- That there be a law in Honduras that would prohibit open pit and underground mining, as well as to ensure compensation and reparation for the environmental damage caused by Goldcorp and other companies.
- A halt to the provocation, repression and legal persecution against peaceful resistance in Guatemala, and solidarity with communities in resistance in La Puya and in western Guatemala.
- That the constitutional court of Guatemala find the current mining law unconstitutional as per the petition filed by the Western Peoples Committee in March 2012.
- That the Government of Guatemala respect the decisions that have been made to date through community consultations.

Our riches cannot be measured by the amount of minerals produced, but rather by our political, social and cultural means of organizing. The aggression against our peoples causes deep harm, for which reason WE DEMAND:

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- The cancellation of mining concessions and the recognition of the decision to say no to mining on the part of the General Assembly of Capulálpam de Méndez, Oaxaca, as well as the definitive closure of the mining companies Natividad and associates.
  - The cancellation of the San José mining project in the municipality of San José de Progreso, Oaxaca, the cancellation of mining concessions that have been granted in the central valley of the region, as well as the punishment of those responsible for crimes committed against the United Peoples Coordinating Committee of the Ocotlán Valley since 2006.
  - An end to human rights violations on the part of the Canadian mining company Excellon Resources against members of the Ejido La Sierrita and workers belonging to Section 309 of the Mining Union in Durango.
  - A solution to the conflict with the local government of Tlacolula. Punishment for aggressions by the Municipal President of Tlacolula against the members of the Coordinating Committee for the Defence of Natural Resources of the Valley of Tlacolula.
  - The cancellation of the hydroelectric project Paso de la Reina in the coast of Oaxaca, Mexico.
  - A solution to the problem within the municipality of San Mateo del Mar, in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.
  - Justice for the Triqui people
  - Justice for Bety Cariño and Jyri Jaakkola.
  - We also denounce the death threats against Carlos Beas, Bettina Cruz Velásquez, Rodrigo Flores Peñaloza and Saúl Celaya, and an end to ongoing harassment of communities who oppose the wind energy project in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec on the part of the Oaxaca state government and the Spanish company Mareña Renovables.


We stand in solidarity with the Idle No More movement in defence of territory and sovereignty.

We recognize the community of Capulálpam de Méndez for the example that their political-community organization and their defence against mining projects in the Juárez highlands.

We have the right to say NO to development that is imposed on us and to define our own means of economic, social, political and cultural production.

**For the defence of our territories: Yes to Life, No to Mining in Mesoamerica.**


**Municipal, agrarian, and community authorities:** Capulálpam de Méndez, Santa Catarina Lachatao, San Pedro Yolox, Santa Lucía Mecaltepec-Yautepec, Santa María Candelaria, San Jerónimo, San Lucas Ixcotepec, Cosoltepec, San Pedro Chayuco, Santa Cruz Mixtepec, Guadalupe



Victoria-Yautepec, San Pedro Mártir Ocotlán, Ocotlán de Morelos, Ejido la Sierrita-Tlahuatilo-Durango, Huajuapam de León, Santa Marta Zoquiapam, San Miguel Nizaviguite-Yautepec, Santo Tomás Quierí-Yautepec, Magdalena Teitipac, Santa María Yahuiche-Ixtlán, Santiago Lachivía-Yautepec, Santa María Yahuiche, yucuquimi de Ocampo, San Pedro Nexicho.

**Communities:**El Porvenir-San José del Progreso, Zacapoaxtla-Puebla, Maguey Largo-San José del Progreso, San Andrés Yutatío-Mixteca, San Simón Zahuatlán, San Mateo del Mar, Yucha nchaa-Mixtepec, Nuevo México-Veracruz, Coatzacoalcos-Veracruz, Santiago Xiacuí, Acatlima-Huajuapam, Ayuquillilla-Mixteca, Zaachila, Oaxaca de Juárez, San Juan Nopala, San Juan Yagila, Santa María Yavesía, Ixtlán de Juárez, Guelatao de Juárez, Santa Lucía Ocotlán, Miahuatlán, San Juan Tabaá, San Cristóbal de las Casas, San Nicolás Yaxe, San Francisco Tutla, Ayoquezco de Aldama, San Isidro de Morelos-Putla de Guerrero, Santa Cruz Yagavila, Escuintla-Chiapas, Cuicatlán, San Andrés Huajuapam, San Juan Evangelista Analco, Tanetze de Zaragoza, Tlaxiaco, San Miguel Chimalapas, Asunción Lachixila, San Marcos Arteaga, San Miguel Copala, San Cristóbal Chichcaxtepec, Paso de la Reyna-Jamiltepec.

**Civil society organizations and networks:**Colectivo Oaxaqueño en Defensa de los Territorios, Unión de Organizaciones de la Sierra Juárez de Oaxaca-UNOSJO S.C. Servicios para una Educación Alternativa-EDUCA A.C., Servicios del Pueblo Mixe-Ser Mixe A.C. Centro de Derechos Indígenas Flor y Canto A.C., Tequio Jurídico A.C., Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez-Centro Prodh A.C., Coordinadora de Pueblos Unidos del Valle de Ocotlán-CPUVO, Servicios Universitarios y Redes de Conocimiento en Oaxaca SURCO A.C., Red Mexicana de Afectados por la Minería-REMA, Movimiento Mesoamericano Contra el Modelo Extractivo Minero-M4, COSIP-Chiapas, COMCAUSA A.C., Sipaz-San Cristóbal de las Casas, SWEFOR-San Cristóbal de las Casas, Unidad de la Fuerza Indígena y Campesina (UFIC)-Juchitán-Oaxaca, Red Mexicana de Acción Frente al Libre Comercio-RMALC, Otros Mundos Chiapas A.C., Comité de Derechos Humanos de Base de Chiapas Digna Ochoa, C.A.C.I.T.A., Coordinadora de Pueblos Unidos por la Defensa del Agua, Solidaridad Directa con Chiapas-Suiza, Frente en Defensa del Territorio y la Autonomía-Sierra Norte de Puebla, Ciudadanos Comprometidos con la Sierra Norte de Puebla, Acción Permanente por la Paz, Veredas Autónomas, Procesos Integrales para la Autogestión de los Pueblos-PIAP A.C., Fondo para los Derechos Humanos Globales, Movimiento Agrario Indígena Zapatista-MAIZ, La Asamblea Veracruzana de Iniciativas y Defensa Ambiental-LA VIDA, Frente Amplio Opositor a la Minera San Javier-FAO, Alianza Mexicana por la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos-AMAP, Comité de Defensa Integral de Derechos Humanos Gobixha-CODIGO DH A.C., Colectivo de Organizaciones y Redes Oaxaqueñas, Movimiento Madre Tierra-Honduras, Comité Ambientalista del Valle de Siria-Honduras, *Kitchenahmay* Koosib Inninuwug-Canadá, Consejo de Pueblos de Occidente-Guatemala, Asamblea de Pueblos de Huehuetenango por la Defensa del Territorio ADH-Guatemala, Unión de Lucha Anticapitalista,



Peace Brigades International-PBI, Emprendedores Sociales, Centro de Investigación sobre Investigación y Comercio-CEICOM-El Salvador, Mesa Nacional Frente a la Minería-El Salvador, Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña Tlachinollan A.C., ANAD, Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad, COPEVI A.C., Asociación de Profesionistas A.C., Tianguis Indígena Multicultural A.C., UZACHI, Movimiento por el Planeta, MPJD, Consejo de Derechos Indígenas de Oaxaca-CEDIO, OIDHO, Ven y Mira Teatro, SEDELI A.C., España Independiente, Gachij Nej Yuma'an A.C., Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Rural, Unitierra Oaxaca, Unitierra Puebla, MIDEM A.C., Instituto de la Naturaleza y la Sociedad de Oaxaca, Centro de Estudios de la Región Cuicateca-CEREC, Movimiento Popular Revolucionario, OCIO-CNPA MN, Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Zona Norte del Istmo UCIZONI A.C., Asamblea de los Pueblos Indígenas del Istmo en Defensa de la Tierra y el Territorio, Coordinadora para la Defensa de los Recursos Naturales del Valle de Tlacolula, Kualli Komalli, Jóvenes en Resistencia Alternativa, Cinema Ambiente, Escuintla Nuestro A.C. tosepan titataniske-Puebla, Honorable Casa Nacional del Estudiante-HCNE, Fundar Centro de Análisis e Investigación, Serapaz A.C., Proceso de Articulación de la Sierra de Santa María, Consejo de Pueblos Unidos por la Defensa del Río Verde-COPUDEVER, Centro de Estudios Ecuménicos, GADES A.C., IDEMO A.C., DESMI A.C.

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**Mexican States:** Estado de México, Chiapas, Puebla, Guerrero, Zacatecas, Guadalajara, Veracruz, Morelos, Oaxaca, San Luis Potosí, Guanajuato, Durango, Distrito Federal.

**Countries:** Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Argentina, México, Estados Unidos, Canadá, Alemania, Francia, Italia, España.

Capulálpam de Méndez, Oaxaca, México. January 19, 2013.