

For Immediate Release

Guilty Verdict: Canadian Government Shares Responsibility for Mining Injustice

On International Human Rights Day, the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal releases its final decision

December 10, 2014

Ottawa and Montreal – A guilty verdict resulting from the [first session](#) of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) on the Canadian mining industry in Latin America was published today in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#). Following two days of testimony in Montreal this past May, the PPT jury determined that five Canadian mining companies and the Government of Canada were responsible for multiple cases of human rights violations. These include labour rights violations, denial of indigenous self-determination rights, environmental destruction, targeted assassinations and criminalization of dissent, among others.

“The testimonies demonstrated the complicity and responsibility of various branches of the federal government, including its diplomatic corps and its overseas aid branch,” deplores Maude Barlow, water activist, chairperson of the Council of Canadians and member of the PPT jury. “Through its actions and omissions, the government supports an unacceptable situation that is causing environmental and social devastation within communities in numerous Latin American countries.” Oscar Morales, affected by the Escobal mine in Guatemala and witness during the hearing, adds that “the current pattern of criminalization and repression of social protest, visible in Guatemala and other countries of Latin America, is aggravated by recent legal reforms in the region aimed at silencing opponents, perpetuating impunity of human rights violations”.

Today, the jury also published a series of recommendations to all responsible parties, including host countries, the Canadian government and specific companies. “The process of reparation needs to include a variety of steps including an immediate halt to activities that cause or reinforce harm, the acknowledgement of damages caused and the creation of laws or mechanisms to avoid their repetition,” adds Gianni Tognoni, secretary-general of the PPT in Italy. “International Human Rights Day is an important moment to remind us all that mining activities are a major cause of human rights abuses in the Americas. The witnesses at the hearing clearly argued that these cases are not isolated events, but part of a generalized context of grave impacts on health, life, the environment and civic participation of affected communities, in particular for Indigenous women,” declared Viviane Michel, President of Quebec Native Women (QNW) and member of the PPT jury.

On International Human Rights Day, groups in Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver will deliver the verdict to responsible entities, including the headquarters of companies and offices of federal government agencies named in the decision. The verdict will also be sent to all political parties and Members of Parliament, as well as relevant UN bodies. The PPT is an opinion tribunal that chose to hold a session in Canada in order to highlight the devastating impacts and impunity of the Canadian mining industry.

Media contacts – communication.tpp@gmail.com :

- Daniel Cayley-Daoust
- Claire Doran
- Marie-Ève Marleau

Background

This first Permanent Peoples' Tribunal hearing to take place in Canada focused on Canadian mining in Latin America. The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) is an international initiative of the Lelio Basso Foundation, an Italian foundation that aims to promote the recognition and application of international law related to Indigenous and human rights. This is the first in a series of hearings expected to take place in Canada.

Canada is a principal actor in the global extractive sectors. Of the world's mining companies, 75% are headquartered in Canada. In 2013, nearly 1,500 mining projects in Latin America were led by mining companies that were registered on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX and TSX-V). Furthermore, the McGill Research Group Investigating Canadian Mining in Latin America (MICLA) and the Observatory of Mining Conflicts in Latin America (OCMAL) have identified nearly 90 social conflicts involving Canadian companies in Latin America.

List of members of the jury: Mireille Fanon-Mendès-France (Frantz-Fanon Foundation, France), Maude Barlow (The Council of Canadians, Canada), Nicole Kirouac (Lawyer, Quebec), Gérald Larose (Professor and labour activist, Quebec), Viviane Michel (Quebec Native Women, Innu Nation), Javier Mujica Petit (Expert in human rights, Peru), Antoni Pigrau Solé (Professor of international law, Spain), and Gianni Tognoni (Lelio Basso Foundation, Italy)

List of entities that were named as responsible for human rights violations by the Tribunal: the Government of Canada (through the acts and omissions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development – DFATD, Export and Development Canada – EDC, and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board – CPPIB), five Canadian mining companies (Excellon Resources, Blackfire Exploration, Barrick Gold, Goldcorp and Tahoe Resources), and host states (Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and Chile). www.tppcanada.org