

**URGENT PRESS STATEMENT  
PEACEFUL RESISTANCE OF MATAQUESCUINTLA**

In response to the constant violations of our human rights by successive governments and MINERASA [Minera San Rafael], the communities of Santa Rosa de Lima, Nueva Santa Rosa, Casillas and San Rafael Las Flores from the department of Santa Rosa and Mataquescuintla and San Carlos Alzatate from the department of Jalapa decided to declare ourselves in peaceful resistance to defend our rights since June 7, 2017. Later, as a consequence of numerous instances in which MINERASA attempted to continue operations despite the temporary suspension ordered by the Supreme Court of Justice and later ratified by the Constitutional Court, we decided to implement, given our constitutional right to do so, a third permanent resistance camp at the entrance of the town of Mataquescuintla, Jalapa.

**BACKGROUND:**

- As everyone knows, since its arrival to our territory, MINERASA has used intimidation and fear as its main tools to install its mining project. This was achieved through physical attacks with firearms, such as the April 2013 attack ordered by Alberto Rotondo against 12 community members. This attack sought to stop us from continuing to protest and denounce the illegal granting of the Escobal [mining] license. Although Rotondo is indicted [on charges related to the attack], he is a fugitive from Guatemalan justice and currently undergoing extradition proceedings.
- [Other examples include] the criminal cases built on media campaigns to discredit leaders and Xinka authorities, the media's use of false evidence, and the mounting of violent incidents such as what occurred in 2012 in which MINERASA, Mauricio López Bonilla (former Minister of the Interior), Otto Pérez Molina (former President), and Rony López (former Prosecutor for the Organized Crime Unit), attempted to make people believe that thousands of pounds of explosives had been lost. The planning behind the incident was made public when an audio recorded in prison of a former prosecutor from the Organized Crime Unit was released on social media. The recording made clear that the explosives were never lost, and the owners of the explosives even received an insurance payout for them.
- Today, once again through an official public statement distributed by MINERASA nationally and another statement distributed by Tahoe internationally, the company makes direct accusations against the resistance indicating that they attacked, injured, and kidnapped the company's contract employees. We decided to do this press conference to emphatically reject the accusations, and make it clear that the company is desperate and is seeking ways to defame our resistance, which has always been peaceful.

**THEREFOR**

Regarding the above, it is more than clear that in its desperation to continue illegally exploiting our resources, MINERASA returned once again to its strategy of criminalization and defamation against the peaceful resistance of the people of Santa Rosa and Jalapa. The promotion of this spurious media campaign is an attempt to manipulate the punitive power of the State in order to impede our right to defend our human rights.

We lament the perverse way that MINERASA and TAHOE Resources Inc., is publicizing information in an attempt to make the international community think that our resistance is criminal. We call on the general public and the international community to know that in this context only Minera San Rafael benefits from social conflict. The resistance encampments in [the municipalities of] Mataquescuintla, Casillas, and in front of the Constitutional Court, will continue as we await a definitive decision [from the Constitutional Court].

We reiterate our position, which we recently made clear to Tahoe Resources Inc., and MINERASA, in which we call for the definitive closure of the Escobal project. We energetically reject any act of violence because only the company would benefit from violence at this moment.

### **WE ASK**

1. That the Attorney General's Office responsible for the criminal investigation seriously investigate Minera San Rafael, not just for the potential of a self-inflicted attack in this recent case, but also for all of the events that have taken place since 2012, which at that time served as an excuse for the Patriota government to order a State of Siege, a situation that only benefited the company.
2. Once again that the Constitutional Court not be intimidated by industry-led campaigns that are only concerned with protecting their assets. We await a ruling based our [national] legislation and international instruments.

Guatemala, August 30, 2018