



Salvadoran anti-mining champion wins Goldman Environmental Award



Francisco Pineda, from San Isidro, Cabañas, was one of the international '*environmental heroes*' honoured at the annual Goldman Award, for his ceaseless struggle against mining in El Salvador. Founder and President of the Cabañas Environmental Committee, the farmer started his environmental activism by preventing the set up of a waste dump which directly threatened drinking water supplies in his community. As a regional environmental leader Pineda trained in water ecology issues, which helped him to go on to build a protest movement in Cabañas

against the Canadian transnational mining company, Pacific Rim, since 2002.

The use of large volumes of water in the mining extraction process seriously threatened local water courses used by local people for their daily needs, as they lacked access to household piped supply. In 2004, Pineda noticed that the stream which irrigated his crops had dried up and he discovered the cause was pumps

ENCA Newsletter

Take Action Special
6 ways to take action
today to help safeguard
the Environment of
Central America

Continued from page 1.....

installed by Pacific Rim upstream to supply water for their mining operations. Pineda and his neighbours asked the municipal authorities to solve the problem, only to be given the response that the company would continue its operations, despite the high risks these posed, such as water stress. The local authorities backed the job creation and development prospects for the zone and ignored the concerns of local communities about the catastrophic effects which the water extraction would have in the short term for their fields and the contamination by toxic and heavy metals used in the ore extraction process.

The protest movement was growing but at the same time residents of San Isidro, Cabañas began to receive threats and attacks. Currently the Pacific Rim mining project is stalled – see ENCA Newsletter No. 52 - but the struggle has left a legacy of three environmentalists assassinated by unknown assailants. Pineda continues to receive regular death threats. The National Roundtable against Mining estimates that almost 4 million Salvadorans (56 per cent of the population) and 63 per cent of the land area would be negatively affected by metal mining in El Salvador.

It is for his tireless and courageous efforts to defend his community that Francisco Pineda has been awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize for the Central and South American category for 2011. This international award was set up by American philanthropists Richard and Rhoda Goldman in 1989 and to date has given international recognition to 45 people, providing recipients with some level of protection against threats to their person and families.

“My work is as an environmentalist; this is the principle for my life. When I began to understand the impact of the mining exploration, I couldn’t stay quiet.” - Francisco Pineda.

For more information on Pineda and the other award winners see www.goldmanprize.org

Adapted from Revista Ecotopía #274, newsletter of the Salvadoran Ecological Unit (UNES), April 2011

Translated by Stephanie Williamson.



The Goldman Environmental Prize is the world's largest prize honoring grassroots environmentalists.

'Don't Dam the Patuca River' Tawahka and Garifuna People to Honduran regime

Chinese Project Threatens Indigenous Cultures and Biodiversity



The Moskitia (mos-KEE-tya): it's the largest, most magnificent expanse of tropical wilderness north of the Amazon – and the Indigenous Peoples who live there are determined to keep it that way.

For 3,000 years, Indigenous people have plied their dugout canoes up and down the Patuca River, the central artery of Honduras' vast Moskitia lowland rainforest. On its rich floodplain they grow cocoa, oranges, rice, beans, cassava, and other crops for subsistence and sale, and its fish provide their main source of protein. “The river is our life,” says Lorenzo Tinglas, president of the Tawahka people’s governing council. “Any threat to the Patuca is a threat to four Indigenous Peoples—the Tawahka, Pech, Miskito, and Garifuna—and we will fight to the death to protect it.”

The fight is on. In January, the Honduran congress approved a contract with a Chinese company to build the first of three dams on the Patuca River. In February, the four Indigenous groups and Afro-Hondurans who share the Moskitia formed a united movement to save the river, their livelihoods, and their unique cultures. The Moskitia is a world-class treasure, and it will take international pressure to stop this project. Please write letters today. Gracias!

What difference would dams on the Patuca River make? For Miskito leader Norvin Goff, the answer is stark and clear: “Dams on the Patuca River mean ecocide and homicide.”

Why ecocide? Dams in the Moskitia tropical rainforest would decimate this richly diverse ecosystem both directly and indirectly. In the river, fish species that migrate upstream from the ocean during part of their life cycle would be blocked by the dams, threatening local extinctions. Downstream from the dam, the river’s volume, flow, and temperature would change, altering the habitats of shellfish,



We have teamed up with PayPal™ making subscribing and donating to ENCA even easier.

Log on to www.enca.org.uk & click donate

* Make a one off donation

* Set up a direct debit for regular donations

* Set up a direct debit to pay for your annual subscription

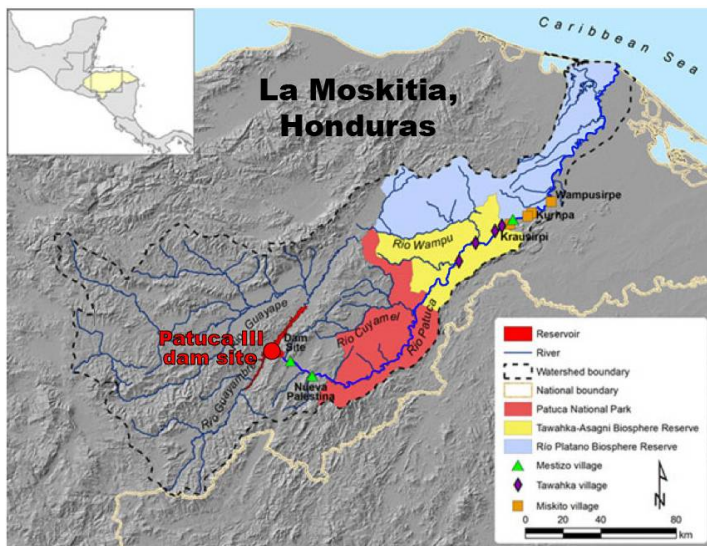
Donate now
with
PayPal®

amphibians, plants, and bird species. Upstream, the reservoirs would submerge rainforest vegetation, soils, and organic matter, which would emit greenhouse gases as they rot. Reservoirs in the tropics produce high amounts of methane and carbon dioxide, accelerating global warming. The reservoirs and a network of roads would obstruct the migration patterns of hundreds of rainforest species. In the Moskitia, this includes endangered species like jaguars and tapirs, whose survival depends on large territories.

Why homicide? Indigenous villagers who live along the Patuca's banks depend on the river for their lives and livelihoods. It is their only means of transportation and communication through the vast, roadless Moskitia. Dams would obstruct commerce and trade for thousands of people. On stretches of river between the dams, the flows, currents, and channels would be altered; people whose knowledge of the Patuca has sustained them for centuries would no longer master the river. Fish would disappear. Flood cycles that regularly wash nutrients over their agricultural lands would be changed. And road construction would open their forests to an unstoppable invasion of loggers, poachers, ranchers, and drug smugglers. The government even plans to build a military base to protect the construction project. "These impacts will be fatal for the survival of the Tawahka as a unique people," says their elected leader, Lorenzo Tinglas.

As an endorser of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the International Labour Organisation's Convention 169, Honduras officially recognizes Indigenous Peoples' right to free, prior, and informed consent for projects that would affect them. But the Indigenous Peoples of the Moskitia have not been consulted and they have not consented to dam construction on the Patuca River. An international outcry is needed to defend their rights and to prevent destruction of a world-renowned tropical rainforest.

(Don't Dam the Patuca! from Danielle DeLuca on Vimeo)
Thank you to Cultural Survival for some of the material in this article.



The Patuca River



Please answer the call of the united Indigenous Peoples of the Moskitia : tell the Honduran government you stand with them against construction of Patuca III.

YOU CAN HELP

Write a letter for this Campaign!

The Tawahka and Miskito organisations, FITH and MASTA, and the Black People's Fraternal Organisation, OFRANEH, ask us to write to Honduras' president and send copies to the officials listed below:

A model letter is posted at:

<http://www.culturalsurvival.org/take-action/honduras/2/model-letter>

Send emails from the Cultural Survival website at:

<http://www.culturalsurvival.org/take-action/honduras/2/send-email>

In your letter, please:

Commend Honduras for endorsing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the International Labour Organisation's Convention 169, which recognise Indigenous Peoples' right to free, prior, and informed consent for projects that would affect them. Tell the president that the Patuca III dam project is a test of Honduras' commitment to Indigenous Peoples' rights, and that his government must not approve construction unless they obtain the free, prior, and informed consent of the Tawahka, Pech, Miskito, and Garifuna peoples.

Express deep concern that damming the Patuca River will accelerate the impacts of global warming, threaten food security and the cultural survival of the Tawahka people, disrupt transportation and commerce for all the peoples of the Moskitia, alter a vital river ecosystem, and put at risk the invaluable biological diversity of Patuca National Park, the Tawahka Asangni Biosphere Reserve, and the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve.

Please send letters to:

Sr. Porfirio Lobo Sosa
Presidente de la República de Honduras
Edif. José Cecilio del Valle
Boulevard Juan Pablo II
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Email: info@presidencia.gob.hn
daysi_2005hn@yahoo.com

Send copies of your letter to:

Juan Orlando Hernández,
Presidente
Congreso Nacional
Barrio La Hoya,
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Email: angasaor@gmail.com

And please send us a copy of your letter to enca2011@gmail.com

216 years after Satuye's death – tourism and land speculation continue the expulsion of the Garífuna on the Banana Coast

On 14th March, 1795, on San Vincent Island, the hero of the Garífuna village Joseph Satuye died fighting against the British. Satuye waged two wars against British imperialism to defend the last bastion of Kalinagu people in the Caribbean.

The death of Satuye did not bring the fight to an end, and our ancestors continued fighting, despite the superiority of the British in terms of troops and supplies. Eventually, we were confined to the Island of Baliceaux, where most of the captives died due to the cruel conditions of the captivity. Later our people were deported to Roatán Island in the Gulf of Honduras. Honduras' independence brought changes and our people spread along the Central American Caribbean coast.

The arrival of the banana companies in Honduras began a process of de-territorialisation, which has intensified since the 1990s due to the growing speculation of real estate around mega-tourism projects. Although the sale of land to foreigners within the perimeters of community land titles was prohibited, in the last few decades there have been systematic sales of land.

For the Garífuna people, territory and culture are essential elements of our view of the world. The process of acculturation mixed with a false vision of development, however, has served as a pretext to assimilate us, to take our territory and to bring us into 'modernity'.

The Garífuna neighbourhoods of Cristales and Rio Negro in Trujillo have historically been bastions of our people. The conversion of Rio Negro into the empire of a porn king (Canadian Randy Jurgensen) is another of the actions taken to expel the Garífunas from Honduras or to convert us into docile African descendants.

Last Saturday, Mr. Pepe Lobo accompanied the Porn King to the opening of the construction of the post-panamax cruise ship jetty. Mr. Lobo was presented with an environmental license for the jetty. However, studies had not been done on the bathymetry of the Bay of Trujillo and so sediment will have to be dredged from the bottom of the bay to make the jetty functional, taking into consideration the draft of post-panamax vessels.



Photo: Alternativa Latinoamericana

Interestingly, the story of the invasion of Honduras by Sam Zemurray and Manuel Bonilla repeated itself a century later, with the heirs of Bonilla's nationalist ideology handing over the Bay of Trujillo to the Porn King. Meanwhile, the Garífuna communities continue to lose the small territory that was granted to them by the National Agrarian Institute (INA).

In 2009, the community of Guadalupe filed a complaint before the prosecutor for Ethnic Groups, about the encroachments and illegal sales by front men on behalf of the Porn King. As usual, these complaints were buried in oblivion and of course, the exhaustion of internal legal resources is a maze at the service of sheltered satraps who masquerade under the title of entrepreneurs.

Our people today once again reflect the death of Satuye and his glorious and heroic deeds against British imperialism; while still we contemplate the territory that we had in Honduras for 214 years. It has been converted into a piñata with the complicity of the authorities, including the consent and silence of those African descendants who are rich from the crumbs of the banquet of power

La Ceiba, 14th March 2011
Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña, OFRANEH

Translated by Genna West



Our partner organisation IPES in El Salvador has made the following appeal for funds, and we are pleased to be able to pass on this request to our members. We will be considering whether and how much of ENCA's money to donate to IPES at our meeting on 19th June.

Permaculture in El Salvador - We Need Your Help

At the Permaculture Institute of El Salvador (IPES) we have been working hard over the past year to promote sustainable agricultural practices throughout rural El Salvador; ensuring food security, protecting Mother Earth, and empowering subsistence farmers to take control of their livelihoods in a way that is beneficial to both them and their environment.

Unfortunately, due to the economic crisis that has affected countries worldwide, IPES is currently struggling to generate enough funding to support the vital work that we are doing here.

Throughout 2010 we saw a surge in demand as IPES was invited to numerous rural communities in different areas across El Salvador to teach about Permaculture ethics and practices. This work is contributing to creating a more ecologically-healthy and sustainable country after years of poor 'conventional' farming practices that have poisoned and degraded the land.

This surge in demand is due to a number of factors: one is the effect climate change has had on El Salvador. In 2010 the country lost 70% of its crops due to damaging rains, and food prices have soared, - in the past year the price of a pound of red beans (a Salvadoran staple) has increased 138% from \$0.52 to \$1.24 per pound.

The need to support sustainable family farming is coming to everyone's attention which means an opportunity to create concrete and vital positive change for El Salvador. To do this we need your support to get us through 2011.

Whilst we are confident that we will secure funding within the next six months, currently we are struggling to pay for the essential running costs of the Institute, as well as the salaries of the people that are working so hard with us to improve their country.

We are appealing to you all - as supporters and friends - to help us now in any way that you can to enable us to continue with the amazing things that we are achieving in El Salvador.



We have a target of \$20,000 to raise by 1st August 2011

You can help us either by donating securely through PayPal on our website www.permacultura.com.sv and encouraging friends and family to do the same.

Or if you would like to organize a fundraising activity in your area contact us via phone or email: 503 2235 1891 or volunteer@permacultura.com.sv to discuss this with us and we can provide you with materials to help. Karen will be in the UK from late April to early June to talk at fundraising events if required.

From everyone here at IPES

Thank you



Phone: (503) 2335 1891

2a Avenida Sur No.38, Barrio El Calvario, Suchitoto, Cuscatlán, El Salvador

WWW.PERMACULTURA.COM.SV

THE TRUE COST OF GOLD IN HONDURAS

GOLDCORP AND HONDURAN REGIME COVER-UP BLOOD AND URINE TESTING AND POISONING AT SAN MARTÍN MINE

Since at least 2007, Goldcorp Inc. and the government of Honduras have known about, and covered up, information about blood poisoning and health problems caused by Goldcorp's open-pit San Martín mine in the Siria Valley, department of Francisco Morazán, central Honduras. This mine is operated by Goldcorp's subsidiary Entremares.

Although Goldcorp suspended its mining operation there in 2008, villagers in numerous towns near the mine site are suffering recurring health problems, even today. Local residents - as well as cows - have died of health problems likely caused by the mine.

Had Goldcorp and the government of Honduras released the results of their 2007 blood and urine samples, and accepted responsibility to care for the health problems caused by the mine, villagers in the Siria Valley might have received appropriate medical attention. Instead, the results were covered up until now. Still, neither Goldcorp nor the government have accepted responsibility.

Soon after Goldcorp began operating the San Martín mine in 2000 (then owned by Glamis Gold, bought out by Goldcorp in 2006), villagers in the Siria Valley began complaining about the effects of the mine on their health and water sources. Their genuine complaints were met with denials and/or silence from the government of Honduras and Goldcorp.

After years of community organisation, protests and advocacy concerning the health and environmental harms, independent health experts first carried out blood and water tests in the mine affected communities of Siria Valley in 2005-06. These initial studies found dangerously high

levels of lead and arsenic (naturally occurring heavy metals released into the air and water in dangerous levels via the gold mining process) in people's blood, but were discounted by Goldcorp and the Honduran authorities, claiming that they were not official studies.

As the increasingly obvious evidence of health and environmental harms mounted (hair loss, skin rashes, miscarriages in women and cows, dying cows, etc) and as pressure mounted from the Siria Valley Environmental Defense Committee (comprised of people from the mine-affected communities) and other human rights and non-government groups, the government of Honduras carried out its own study in August 2007, taking blood and urine samples from a random and representative sampling of 62 children and adults in communities near Goldcorp's San Martín mine. 'Experts' contracted by Goldcorp observed and were present during much of the blood and urine sampling process.

Upon completion, the government of Honduras did not release the results. Rather, the Ministry of Environment claimed a need to send the samples to 'experts' in Colombia, for further verification. Again, 'experts' contracted by Goldcorp traveled to Colombia to 'accompany' the blood and urine samples verification process.

From that moment, until this year, a silence has surrounded the results of those studies, despite constant demands from the mine-affected communities of the Siria Valley to get the results. Then on April 12, 2011, almost 4 years after the samples were taken, the 62 individuals began to receive the results of the levels of arsenic, mercury and lead detected in the blood tests in 2007. Notably, the results of studying the urine samples have still not been released.

What is known, in summary, is that of the 62 people sampled in 2007, 46 of them (27 children and 19 adults) have dangerously high levels of heavy metals poisoning in their blood that would have required immediate and sustained medical treatment back in 2007, let alone today.

Twenty-four of the children studied contain dangerously elevated lead levels in blood (10 ug/dl = 10 micrograms of lead/decilitre of blood), according to World Health Organisation and CDC standards.

For a representative and random sampling of villagers near Goldcorp's mine, these are extremely high percentages of villagers with indications of blood poisoning. The implications for the local population at large would have been alarming in 2007, had they been advised. They are just as alarming now, as villagers living near the mine site have continued to be exposed to the water and environmental contamination that has never been acknowledged by Goldcorp and the government of Honduras, let alone remedied.

Evidence



Photo: Karen Spring, Rights Action, April 2011

14 year old Abel shows rashes that have recurred for years. Abel's blood, based on the just-released 2007 government studies, contains over twice the levels of blood-lead content for children recommended as safe by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). From El Pedernal, a village near the Goldcorp mine, Abel started experiencing health problems as early as 2003 when he began losing chunks of hair.

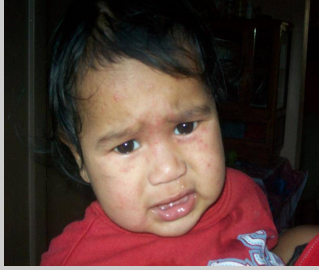


Photo: Siria Valley
Committee, April 2011

Evidence

Rosa Maria Cabrera, 4 years old, is from El Pedernal. Her mother is very worried. "Look. This is occurring again. Look at her little face. You should see how she scratches, and more in the nighttime. The doctor

tells us that for her to get better, we need to bathe her in water from elsewhere. But we are poor. Where can we go? We will die here for the contamination that Entremares has left us, ... and they say it will be like this for a long time. May God take care of us."

What also appears clear is that Goldcorp knew of and therefore - we believe - helped cover up the blood test results by using its own 'experts' to oversee the process of collecting data.

In a further attempt to cover up this information and silence Siria Valley villagers, the Honduran government - with the reported knowledge of Goldcorp - now is going door-to-door to the homes of the 62 individuals, asking them to sign what appear to be confidentiality and waiver papers, and offering to take them to the public hospital in Tegucigalpa to treat them, based on the test results which revealed heavy metals found in their blood almost four years ago. This appears to be an effort to undermine the on-going work of the Siria Valley Committee, CEPRODEC and Dr. Juan Almendares; it is an attempt to silence sick individuals and stop any possible legal repercussions in the future.

Original report by Karen Spring and Grahame Russell, Rights Action, April 27, 2011

Adapted by Doug Specht for ENCA.

WHAT IS NEEDED

What is needed now is an acknowledgement by the government of Honduras and by Goldcorp that there are past and on-going health and environmental issues caused by Goldcorp's mining operation, and that Goldcorp and the government have a responsibility to do everything necessary to provide comprehensive treatment and compensation to all affected people and communities, and to repair the underlying environmental contaminations and harms.

Needed are all the health files - including complete results of the blood and urine tests - to be returned to the 62 individuals.

Needed is a comprehensive medical response to the widespread contaminants and health harms throughout the Siria Valley.

Needed is a comprehensive environmental assessment of the entire region, to test for on-going air, earth and water contaminations; followed by a comprehensive environmental rehabilitation programme to make the region again safe for living.



Send letters to Goldcorp, with copies to your media, to your own politician, to the Canada Pension Plan, and to your own pension fund (if it is invested in Goldcorp):

- Why did Goldcorp not release this information 4 years ago?
- Why is Goldcorp not releasing this information now?
- Will Goldcorp accept responsibility for the health and environmental harms and provide full compensation and reparations as part of a necessary health attention programme in the Siria Valley?
- Will Goldcorp include complete medical/health and environmental considerations and reparations measures in the closure plan?

ADDRESSES

GOLDCORP INC

666 Burrard Street, Suite 3400, Vancouver, BC, V6C 2X8

GOLDCORP INC

3201-130 Adelaide St. W., Toronto, ON, M5H0in5

Chuck Jeannes, President & CEO

Chuck.Jeannes@goldcorp.com

Kim Keras, executive assistant

Kim.Keras@goldcorp.com

Tim Miller, VP Operations in Central America,

Tim.Miller@montana.com.gt

Dina Aloï, VP Corporate Social Responsibility,

Dina.Aloï@goldcorp.com

David Deisley, Legal Counsel

david.deisley@goldcorp.com

Jeff Wilhoit, Investor Relations

Jeff.Wilhoit@goldcorp.com

and don't forget to CC us at enca2011@gmail.com

Pineapple pressure

From Banana Link's *Make Fruit Fair!* Newsletter (spring 2011):

Several workers were recently sacked from the Produfrutas del Atlantico pineapple plantation in Costa Rica following their decision to join workers' rights union SITRAP. Despite a huge international response of solidarity the fruit company has refused to respond or rescind their decision to sack the workers. "Thank you for your support", says Didier Leiton Valverde of SITRAP, who addressed an ENCA meeting last year, "Trade union freedom is a difficult problem in Costa Rica but the international pressure could improve the situation of workers bit by bit".

After trying for more than six months to get Produfrutas to address the serious violations of labour rights on the plantation, SITRAP asked the Ministry of Labour to help them reach a solution. Produfrutas was summoned to a conciliatory meeting by the Ministry on April 14. The Make Fruit Fair partners in the UK, France, Czech Republic and Germany wrote to the Ministry of Labour in support of SITRAP and expressing our hope that the meeting would lead to a fair settlement which would no longer allow Produfrutas to ignore the labour laws of Costa Rica.

Pineapple farm closures

On 17 May 2011, we heard from the Administrative Environmental Tribunal (AET) of the Costa Rican Ministry of Environment, Energy and Telecommunications (MINAET) that the Tribunal had closed down three pineapple farms in the north of the country because of "multiple environmental incidents close to the Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge." The Refuge is a wetland of international importance and is classed as a Ramsar site.

The three sites are being investigated by the AET because of a number of denunciations regarding:

- the drying up of a number of springs,
- the drilling of illegal wells,
- the drying of a wetland,
- contamination of a lake,
- the sedimentation of woodland areas,
- the felling and burning of trees,
- carrying out operations without viable environmental permits,
- change of soil use, and
- poor management of agrochemicals and of residual discharge.

The Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge has been suffering a number of major environmental problems in recent years and has become a cause for concern. The expansion of pineapple cultivation has been one of a long list of environmental problems which have affected the Refuge and the biological corridor of which it forms part. It is also thought that the same contamination could cause problems

for human health, especially through the pollution of water sources.

On 26th May 2011, we heard from Didier again about the results of a meeting held on 17th May between the Del Monte company, the St. Peter farm, SITRAP and the Ministry of Labour. Although there were a number of issues discussed, essentially they covered the same ground that unions have been trying to get the tropical fruit companies to accept for many years:

- ❖ the right to form a union,
- ❖ the right for workers to hold meetings,
- ❖ the need for workers in the fields to have a covered place where they can eat their snacks free of chemicals and chemical residues,
- ❖ the need for adequate toilet facilities
- ❖ the need for adequate protective equipment when the workers are handling toxic chemicals; and
- ❖ the re-instatement of workers who were sacked for joining SITRAP.

In the UK it may seem to us impossible to believe that the captains of agriculture and industry such as the global banana and pineapple companies are still so backward as to try to keep their workers in conditions that are not far removed from slavery. Like many organisations in Central America, SITRAP deserves our support in their continuing struggle to create human conditions of life and work and human rights for those they represent.

Banana workers' leader killed in Guatemala

On Thursday 26th May, Idar Joel Hernández Godoy, treasurer of the Izabal Banana Plantation Workers' Union (SITRABI), was killed by gunmen as he left the Nuevo Campo plantation in Los Amates, Izabal. Eyewitnesses waiting for a bus said that two men on a motorbike shot at Hernández Godoy as he was driving the union vehicle back towards the office in Morales. The vehicle lost control and crashed, as the gunmen fled.

This is the second killing this year of a SITRABI official. Oscar Humberto Gonzales Vásquez, a local committee member and worker at the Del Monte subsidiary Bandegua, was killed on 11th April. His body was found with 35 bullets in it.

"Enough of all this impunity and corruption that means the truth about these bloody events afflicting Guatemalan families is never found out", SITRABI said in a statement.

Source: Banana Link, www.bananalink.org.uk





Bernardino Morales
Photo: Genna West

Chan 75 Dam, Panama

ENCA has received the letter at the bottom of this column from Bernardino Morales of Panama. Bernardino has acted as an advocate for indigenous rights in Panama and has particularly accompanied the Ngobe-Bugle people in the Bocas del Toro province of the country in their struggle against the building of the Chan 75 dam by the AES Changuinola company and in their battle to receive compensation from

the company for their displacement, loss of lands and loss of livelihoods. Bernardino accompanied three ENCA members in September 2010 to the region affected by the dam and reservoir.

The clear-felling of the valley sides ahead of the flooding was done by a Colombian company and clearly affected the land and environment of the Ngobe villages along the valley. The altered flow of the river has also adversely affected one of their major livelihood activities and deprived them of their main source of protein – fish. As if that wasn't enough, AES Changuinola, a subsidiary of the US AES company, will claim carbon credits for the carbon it will supposedly prevent being released into the atmosphere. In fact, to set against any carbon it might save by its replacement of fossil fuel generated electricity, we should start with the carbon no longer stored in the trees which it has clear-felled; add to that the methane and CO₂ which will be released into the atmosphere from the reservoir as the vegetation rots below the surface; then add to that the fact that most of the electricity to be produced will be electricity for new consumption rather than a replacement of electricity from some other source. Perhaps those carbon credits are something of a scam?

Dear Friends,

The reality of life in our community is extremely critical at the moment because the construction of the Chan 75 hydro-electric project has reached its final phase in which they have begun to fill the reservoir. Everything that is happening is very alarming. There is one person who has not negotiated with the company, and in an arbitrary way they lowered the floodgates on Sunday 22nd May 2011, without having compensated the family.

Greetings,

Bernadino Morales
(Advocate for indigenous rights)

**Nicaragua
Solidarity
Campaign**

Visit Nicaragua

NSC environment study tour

19 November–3 December 2011

1–14 June 2012

Nicaragua is a microcosm of the environmental problems facing impoverished countries: global warming, monoculture, deforestation, pollution, overuse of pesticides, rising food prices and environmental degradation – all of which exacerbate high levels of poverty.

Our trips to Nicaragua are part of NSC's work promoting solidarity between UK and Nicaraguan community activists and environmentalists. We also organise speaker tours of the UK, publish information and raise funds for small projects.

What is the purpose of the study tour?

To learn about and experience the many innovative initiatives being implemented by the Nicaraguan government, non governmental organisations, and social movements to move away from oil dependency, to promote community solidarity, to increase self sufficiency in food production and to protect the environment.

To provide an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences with Nicaraguan community activists and environmentalists and to explore ways of building solidarity links with the UK

To enjoy the stunning Nicaraguan scenery and the warmth and hospitality of Nicaraguans

How much will it cost?

Ground and organisational costs: £650 includes preparation in the UK, accommodation, transport, all meals, interpreting/accompaniment in Nicaragua.

Flights, airport taxes and insurance are additional.

Further information:

campaigns@nicaraguasc.org.uk
Tel: 020 7561 4836
www.nicaraguasc.org.uk



Return of President Mel Zelaya to Honduras

Readers of the ENCA Newsletter cannot fail to have noticed that we have covered the human rights situation in Honduras in every issue of the newsletter since the 28th June 2009 coup d'état forcibly removed President Zelaya from office. It is pleasing to be able to report that Mel Zelaya returned to Honduras on 28th May 2011 under an agreement brokered by President Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia and President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela.

We note that this is not just a major stride for Honduras and the Resistance which sprang up (against the coup), but also for the whole of Latin America; and the fact that its brokers were the presidents of two nations which have experienced several conflicts between each other over recent decades is an important milestone for unity within Latin America and the Caribbean. Indeed, in part it has also given rise to a new Latin American and Caribbean organisation, CELAC, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States which will be inaugurated in July this year, one month after the June meeting of the OAS (Organisation of American States). The OAS will probably accept the re-admission of Honduras into its fold. The crucial distinction about the CELAC is that it excludes the USA and Canada, the two divisive members which dominate the OAS largely through blackmail and bullying. The creation of the CELAC, then, is noteworthy for the Latin America unity it is likely to embody.

Whilst these developments are positive, progressive and worthy of support, it is important to note that:

- The agreement signed by the current Honduran President Porfirio Lobo and ex-President Zelaya includes no pressure on the government to prosecute those responsible for the coup;
- Nor is there any extra pressure from the agreement to investigate all the assassinations of Resistance members which have taken place since the coup – many of the organisations with which ENCA has had links have suffered a range of human rights abuses, including murder, and there seems little chance that, at least under this agreement, they will receive any justice for those abuses;
- The death squads newly revitalised by the coup will not disappear as a result of Zelaya's return, and all our colleagues and contacts in Honduras are likely to continue to be the targets of these squads and of repression by the police and armed forces – indeed, if the Resistance manages to convert itself into a major political force, it is likely that the government repression and extrajudicial abuses they suffer will worsen.



Photo: France24

ENCA needs to remain vigilant over the coming years to provide support and pressure wherever we are able to do so – support for the Honduran colleagues whose work we admire and pressure on those forces that wish to keep the Honduran people as serfs and units of labour and who see Honduras as a reservoir of natural resources for the extraction.

To those who consider that with these sentiments an environmental organisation like ENCA is overstepping its remit into the field of politics, we would suggest that there is no clearer example than the coup in Honduras to show how crucial the role of politics is for the defence of the environment and the society which depends on that environment. The days when environmentalists were seen as equivalent to conservationists and devoid of any realpolitik are long since gone – any analysis of the Central American environment demands a consideration of the politics which have shaped it, and which unfortunately have often degraded it.

Notwithstanding the difficulties ahead, we congratulate Mel Zelaya on his return and the Resistance movement for the strength and dignity which they have shown during these dark days for Honduras.



Quick Action

Why not pass on your copy of this newsletter when you have finished it. Or forward it on to your contacts if you receive an electronic version.

Spreading the information will help us hold those responsible for environmental destruction in Central America to account!

The following article appeared in *El Nuevo Diario* (one of Nicaragua's two main daily papers). Given ENCA's previous focus on the abuse of pesticides in Central America, we thought it right to show our readers that this is a matter of daily concern in the region.

Congenital birth defects on the rise – pesticides to blame?

León Hospital Authorities alarmed

In the face of an increase of congenital defects in recent births from mothers that come from rural communities in the department of León, the authorities of Hospital Escuela Óscar Danilo Rosales Argüello (HEODRA) in León initiated a scientific study to identify the risk factors and implementation of an intervention plan for this public health problem.

Dra. Dania Pastora, coordinator of the Monitoring of Congenital Defects System at HEODRA, said that the congenital defects are developmental anomalies of the embryo that are present at birth, "these types of conditions are the second highest cause of neonatal birth that occur in at least 145 cases a year, the majority linked to adolescent mothers and women older than 30 years, from rural communities," she said.



Crop Spraying

According to the official, the majority of the cases are from the municipalities of Larreynaga, Malpaisillo, El Sauce, Telica and the departmental capital, León. The incidence is most common in León – there exists a focus of cases in the community of Sutiaba, affected by the expansion of cultivation and the indiscriminate application of agrochemicals on traditional items like cotton, sugar cane, sesame seed and peanuts.

Expansion of Cultivation

According to the health authorities' official inspection, the most frequent congenital defects are associated with conditions of the central nervous system, related to the neural tube, such as anencephaly, myelomeningocele and encephalocele. 100% of babies with anencephaly die in the first days of life, while babies with myelomeningocele live with permanent physical injuries.

According to the health authorities' official inspection, the most frequent congenital defects are associated with conditions of the central nervous system, related to the neural tube, such as anencephaly, myelomeningocele and encephalocele. 100% of babies with anencephaly die in the first days of life, while babies with myelomeningocele live with permanent physical injuries.

Monitoring since 2006

The increase of cases worried the health authorities, who as of 2006 established the Monitoring of Congenital Defects System at HEODRA, and in coordination with the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua (UNAN-León, by its Spanish initials), proceeded to study and identify the risk

factors, and implement an intervention plan for the public health problem.

Amongst the results obtained to date, the risk factors and causes of congenital defects are: the lack of use of folic acid in the periconceptional period; and the exposure to pesticides (metamidofos and 2-4 D), of which laboratory tests have certified the presence in samples of earth and water extracted from the properties where cases have been registered.

According to Dra. Pastora, the MINSA (Nicaraguan Ministry of Health), the UNAN-León and the World Food Programme are measuring the use of folate and vitamin B12 in the women of reproductive age in the community of Sutiaba, to obtain a baseline that will give guidance about the deficit of these micronutrients.

"It is necessary that women in general get the use of folic acid as part of their medical treatment, at least eight weeks before pregnancy, and during the first three months of pregnancy, to prevent these types of defects, as well as avoiding exposure to pesticides", explained Dra Pastora.

By José Luis González, Nicaragua

Translated by James Watson

Source: El Nuevo Diario, 4th April 2011



Join the network

If you would like to ensure you always receive a copy of the ENCA newsletter containing news about environmental issues in Central America and opportunities for action then please return this form:

Affiliations: Individual £8, Unwaged £4, Local groups £10, National Organisations £30

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel _____

Email _____

I enclose £_____ affiliation fee

I would like a complimentary copy of a recent ENCA newsletter.

I enclose a donation of £_____ for the work of ENCA.

**Return to: ENCA, c/o NSC, Durham Road Centre,
86 Durham Road, London N7 7DT**

MAOCO – leading the Costa Rican Organic Movement.

MAOCO (Movimiento de Agricultura Orgánica Costarricense) is a social movement which represents the political interests of producers and consumers of organic products. Since its formation in 1999, it has promoted exchange, participation, dialogue and meetings of groups and people who are committed to organic farming. This includes organic farmers' organisations, campesino groups, indigenous groups, marketing and certifying companies, NGOs, university programmes, relevant government departments and consumer groups.



MAOCO works to promote the growth of organic cultivation at local, regional and national levels and believes that marrying all the different levels and scales of production and consumption is the best way of constructing democracy. So it facilitates the activities of production, processing, marketing and consumption of organic products, promoting the principles and values that are associated with organic production, establishing alliances and stimulates proposals for alternative development.

Its main areas of work include the strengthening of productive capacity, native seeds, local markets, systems of guaranteed purchase, publicity for organic production and consumption, lobbying and institutional strengthening.

The organisation is composed of groups from all regions of Costa Rica. Its website is:

www.agriculturaorganica.org



NEWSLETTER PRINTED ON RECYCLED
PAPER BY NEWARK DESIGNER PRINT

Turtle project sees success

A ten year project to preserve sea turtles is bearing fruit on Juan Venado Island in the Department of León, with the launching into the Pacific Ocean of 15,000 Leatherbacks, Green Sea, and Olive Ridley turtles, all of which are endangered. The project of protecting the sea turtles and reforesting the mangrove swamps is administered by the National Autonomous University-Leon in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment, local authorities, and international groups including Flora and Fauna International from England. Juan Venado Island is the second largest turtle breeding ground in Nicaragua after the beach at Chacocente.

Biologist Pedrarias Dávila directs the Juan Venado programme. He explained that most of the turtles hatched by the programme are Olive Ridley with the rest Leatherback and Green Sea. He has spent 30 years working to preserve endangered sea turtles and is proud of the role the programme is playing. Between 500 and 600 female turtles lay their eggs on the Juan Venado Island beach each year.

Juan Venado Island was ceded to the university ten years ago and is visited throughout the year by Nicaraguan and foreign scientists who carry out studies of its diverse flora and fauna.

(El Nuevo Diario, May 9 2011)

A fruitful meeting!

Earlier in March trade union activists from around the world gathered together at a EUROBAN meeting to discuss ways of achieving socially, economically and environmentally sustainable tropical fruit production. Hosted by the [Fairtrade Labelling Organisation](http://www.fairtrade.org) (FLO) the EUROBAN meeting focused on how Fairtrade can benefit plantation workers, the ongoing Make Fruit Fair campaign and the work of the [World Banana Forum](http://www.worldbananaforum.org).

Alistair Smith, international coordinator of Banana Link commented that it had been 'a very fruitful meeting'!

from the Make Fruit Fair! Newsletter (spring 2011)

ENCA CONTACTS

<i>Chair</i>	Nick Rau	0208 809 4451 hnnrau@yahoo.co.uk
<i>Secretary</i>	Sheila Amoo-gottfried	0208 769 0492 sheila.amoo-gottfried@ntlworld.com
<i>Treasurer</i>	Janet Bye	01473 254695 janet.bye@btopenworld.com
<i>Postal Address</i>	ENCA, c/o NSC, Durham Road Centre, 86 Durham Road, London, N7 7DT	

ENCA Newsletter 53, July 2011, p.12