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ENVIRONMENTALISTS ASSASSINATED IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Heraldo Zuñiga and Roger Ivan Cartagena

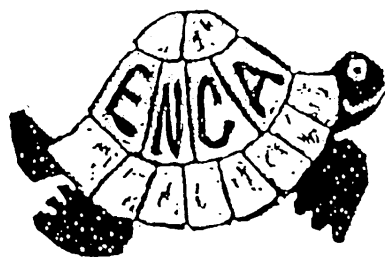
In December, ENCA received the news from the Environmental Movement of Olancho (the MAO by its Spanish initials) that two of its members had been assassinated. More horrific than that, they had been assassinated by the Honduran police.

More details of the crime and possible follow-up to it are given on the following pages.

Gerson Roberto Albayero Granados

Then in January, we learnt of the assassination of a member of the National Anti-Dam Movement of El Salvador. The killing had all the hallmarks of the Salvadoran death squads which operated with impunity against leftists and activists before and during the Salvadoran war of the 1980s.

Again, more details follow on the next page.



In place of an editorial in this issue, we reproduce a letter that ENCA has sent to the Honduran President, Manuel Zelaya, the Attorney General and the Human Rights Commission of Honduras, regarding the assassinations of environmentalists in Central America which we announced on the front page. We encourage individual members of ENCA to send a copy of this letter in their own name. A direct link to a copy of the letter can be found on the ENCA website, www.enca.org.uk/news.htm along with a communication from Amnesty International (in Spanish

which we have not yet had time to translate) giving more details of the circumstances of the assassinations.

To President ZELAYA ROSALES

The Environmental Network for Central America (ENCA) is a voluntary group of professionals, academics and concerned members of the public in the United Kingdom who support a variety of environmental non-governmental organisations in Central America, including in Honduras, and inform the British public about environmental issues in the region.

We are appalled to learn that two members of the Olancho Environmental Movement (MAO) in Honduras, Heraldo Zuñiga and Roger Ivan Cartagena were brutally murdered on 20 December 2006. We have been in contact with MAO's founder, Father Andres Tamayo, for some years and knew that he, his staff and MAO community activists had regularly received death threats for defending their community rights and resources against illicit practices by powerful timber and mining companies.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights had previously ordered your government to take 'protective measures' to guarantee the safety of Father Tamayo and other MAO members but the events of last December show the total failure of the Honduran state to protect these citizens. We understand that only two days before his murder, Heraldo Zuñiga had shared his concern about death threats received from Salamá-based loggers employed by the Sansone logging company. What we find even more shocking is that the murders were carried out by a police officer, Juan Lanza based in Salamá, who was paid by logging companies to get rid of the MAO members. We are outraged that this form of extrajudicial killing by a member of the police force can take place in the 21st century, with the apparent complicity of the Honduran State. We shall be publishing news of this crime in our newsletter and British networks, to expose the horrific situation for environmentalists in Honduras.

We stand by our colleagues in the Olancho Environmental Movement and demand that your government conducts an immediate impartial and thorough investigation of the crime, police sergeant Juan Lanza and links to other authorities and loggers. We demand justice be applied to the material and intellectual authors. Just as importantly, we want to know which IAHRC-ordered protective measures you will implement to protect the lives of other threatened MAO activists including Santos Efraín Paguada, Victor Manuel Ochoa, René Wilfredo Gradiz, Macario Zelaya, Pedro Amado Acosta and Father Andres Tamayo.

Yours sincerely

Dr Stephanie Williamson
On behalf of Environmental Network for Central America

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Gerson Roberto Albayero Granados was assassinated some time between the afternoon of 21st January this year and the evening of the 26th January, when his body was found. His body showed signs of torture before death. Gerson was a member of the National Anti-Dam Movement of El Salvador and went

missing shortly after a meeting in the Town Hall of Texistepeque in Santa Ana department, a meeting held to discuss 'The Impacts of the El Cimarrón Dam'. Along with environmental organisations from El Salvador and Honduran organisations acting in solidarity with their Salvadoran counterparts, we demand that the National Civil Police (PNC) conduct a prompt and thorough investigation into this assassination. We ask our members to send letters to this effect to the Director of the National Civil Police, Lic. Rodrigo Avila, Fax (503) 2289-1200 or email at gacosta@pnc.gob.sv

THE ENCA TOUR TO HONDURAS AND CARBON EMISSIONS

ENCA faces a dilemma. It promotes and organises study tours to Central America as part of its mission to support local environmental organisations in the region. At the same time, the unremitting increase in aviation has worrying consequences for climate change. The question is: do the environmental and other benefits of the study tour outweigh the environmental costs? In attempting to answer this question, we offer in this issue a series of articles which address first the idea of carbon offsets to counterbalance the carbon emissions caused by our flights from the UK to Honduras. Next, and following on from Jenny Owens' rationale for the tour given in ENCA Newsletter 39 (November 2005), we briefly examine the significance of the solidarity benefits of the tour. This is followed by a light-hearted (but serious?) look at an alternative means of travel which would create next to no emissions. And finally, we give an example of the output from a website designed by Ben Matthews to enable us to calculate the carbon emissions of our flights.

Set on offsets?

By Ivor McGillivray

It would be convenient if the aviation impacts of our flights could be neutralised by purchasing offsets. But some controversy surrounds offsetting (which has led to a parliamentary enquiry into the voluntary carbon offset market – due to report shortly). This article briefly investigates some aspects of the controversy.

The idea of carbon offsetting is simply that we pay for the planting of trees or the provision of low energy light bulbs on a large scale or for the conversion of stoves for increased fuel efficiency or for some other scheme designed either to absorb CO₂ already emitted or to save the emission of CO₂ elsewhere. In this way, the theory goes, we compensate for the CO₂ that will be emitted as a result of the flight we are about to take or some other activity that we are about to undertake which will result in the emission of CO₂.

An offset is sold on the understanding that the offset project would not have happened but for carbon finance. This feature of offsetting is called additionality. It may seem clear on first hearing, but is less straightforward on closer examination. For deciding additionality requires a degree of foresight - the project lifespan for energy projects is typically two to seven years and up to 100 years

for reforestation projects. And events have a habit of intervening. Guguletu is an impoverished township by Cape Town, South Africa. In 2005 Climate Care (a company which sells carbon offsets) distributed 10,000 Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs to households in the township. These have a lower wattage than the commonly used incandescent light bulbs and a lifespan of 5-10 years. But only months later, the area suffered a series of power outages due to failures at the Eskom nuclear power plant at Koeberg. As a result, Eskom distributed 5 million low energy light bulbs to low-income households in Guguletu and elsewhere. This turn of events could not have been foreseen by Climate Care, but does dilute its additionality claim.

A variety of tests are used to assess additionality (Regulatory Test, Financial Test, Barriers Test, Common Practice Test, Timing Test) following the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) guidelines for Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects. To pass the Financial Test, it must be demonstrated that the project would not be



economically viable without offset revenues. To appreciate the complexity of the problem, let's imagine the following scenario. A wind farm project seeks capital funding. It first approaches the commercial banking sector. Several deem the project borderline viable based on their projections for interest rates and energy prices over the project period. But one agrees to part fund the project. The project manager then claims that carbon financing is essential to make up the remainder. Is it really clear that the project would not have happened anyway – if not now, then a short time in the future? In fact, the industry concedes that “The evaluation of additionality tests can become highly subjective”. This is particularly an issue where an offset company puts in a small proportion of the project funding yet claims 100% of the carbon saving – a common practice. According to industry insider Mark Trexler, a resolution of the additionality debate “seems as elusive as ever”.

The offset is the difference in carbon budget between the without-project and with-project scenarios. Climate Care advocates that a “credible approach” be used to create an emissions baseline for its projects. Offset critics, on the other hand, claim that it is impossible to isolate a single baseline figure because many without-project scenarios are typically possible. Any single baseline scenario is hypothetical and subject to disagreement.

Carbon accounting is undoubtedly complicated - more or less so depending on project type and lifetime. Measurement of carbon storage and release is variable for both woodland and soils (which are often not considered). Moreover, it is costly and there is evidence of a trade-off between convenience and accuracy. A study into carbon forestry projects undertaken by the Forests and Climatic Change Project in Central America finds that soil carbon measurements are too expensive. There are also suspicions that carbon accounting is prone to corruption because there is a financial incentive to overstate baseline scenario emissions.

Many offset projects are located in the Global South, largely for reasons of cost. From an isolated Northern perspective, it can be difficult to appreciate the ramifications of carbon projects at the local level. Let's look at one case. The Western Highlands of Guatemala is one of the poorest areas in Latin America and the most densely populated area in the country outside of Guatemala City. As many as 95% of farms are considered to be sub-subsistence in size. The population is mainly indigenous. There is a mixture of communal, municipal and private land

tenure. Studies indicate that communal stewardship of forests has been more successful in conservation than municipal or private. From the colonial ‘Two Republics’ system to the present day, however, the Guatemalan government has sought to gain control over indigenous land and forests – in recent decades with the encouragement of international institutions. The 1996 Forest Law, for example, introduced a system of licensing for home consumption of forest products. This was the context in which the NGO CARE attempted to implement a carbon forestry project in 1989. Backed by US energy company AES, it was intended to offset emissions from a proposed 183-MW power plant in Connecticut. Often, communal access to woodlots was denied under Forest Law provisions. In turn, local people withdrew cooperation and in some cases expressed a willingness to sabotage. Unsurprisingly, external auditors in 1999 found that the project was falling far short of its offset targets.

The position of environmental pressure groups with regard to offsetting has become noticeably more critical in recent months. The August 2006 Joint Statement by Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and WWF-UK recognised that “a market for voluntary carbon offsets is rapidly developing and that these can be used to help catalyze the transition to non-fossil fuel based energy systems”, with the proviso that offsetting be considered only once emissions reduction options have been fully exercised. Friends of the Earth hardened its position in January 2007. In a press release, it stated “Friends of the Earth does not recommend carbon offsetting for a number of reasons”. One is that offsetting makes it more difficult to persuade individuals and organisations to make direct emissions reductions.



The aviation industry would argue that the bulk of offsets are purchased by air passengers, and aircraft produce about 3% of EU CO₂ emissions (though with a warming effect amplified by a factor of 2 to 4). Do bigger battles lie elsewhere? Even if they do, aircraft emissions are rising steeply, a trend propelled by growth in air freight and a huge expansion of the ‘no-frills carriers’. The mainstream approach to curb this growth is a gradual escalation of air passenger duty over time, as well as the inclusion of air carriers in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. (But government plans to expand airport capacity threaten to fatally undermine this prospect.)

A recent publication of the Dag Hammersjold Foundation - 'Carbon Trading: A Critical Conversation on Climate Change, Privatisation and Power (October 2006) – argues that the dominant carbon trading approach to climate change as exemplified by the Kyoto Protocol and the EU Emissions Trading Scheme is the wrong approach. The gist of the argument is that this approach is both ineffective and unjust. It draws upon the CARE Guatemala case study mentioned above as well as a wealth of others in supporting evidence.

From an industry perspective, concerns around carbon offsetting are not insurmountable: "This is a young industry and there is a learning curve for organisations and customers alike. The industry needs to grow and improve, particularly on the regulation front" (Michael Buick, Climate Care). The carbon trading approach is underpinned by a belief that the solution to global warming must involve some form of carbon rationing. The industry claims it achieves real greenhouse gas emission reductions – claims disputed by others - and that

offsetting provides an opportunity to learn how to measure and manage carbon - a necessary first step. The carbon market also plays a useful role in informing the public about climate change, in turn contributing to public policy development. Moreover, "it is not seen as a permanent business sector but will be very important over the next century or so to ease the transition from where we are now to where we want to be in the future (emitting little/no carbon)" (Adam Blaker, co2balance).

This brief look at the offsetting controversy raises many practical questions, and it is clear that ENCA members cannot assume that supporting carbon offset companies will counterbalance the carbon emissions caused by their flights. We would refer anyone who is convinced that carbon offsetting will help cleanse the environment and their conscience at the same time to Issue 391 (July 2006) of the New Internationalist for some further sobering reading. As our next article shows, however, there are other ways of offsetting the emissions caused by our tour.

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Solidarity and ENCA's environmental study tour to Honduras

By Martin Mowforth

ENCA members are aware that their environmental study tour of Honduras will necessitate a number of trans-Atlantic flights made by participants and that these flights will cause CO₂ emissions which will further add to global warming. There must be good reason to justify such tours, and some of us believe that there is. Below we have expanded on some of the points made by Jenny Owens in her 'Rationale for the tour' document which we distributed to all people who expressed an initial interest in the tour and which appeared in ENCA Newsletter No. 39 (Nov. 2005).

Solidarity. The organisations which have helped our previous tours have been especially keen for us to visit them. This was particularly so after the two earthquakes in El Salvador when we were very concerned about whether we should go there as planned or not. In the event, all the groups we were to visit were extremely keen for us to go, and some even pleaded with us not to halt the tour. Several of them actually expressed the need for solidarity that they have – it is really important for them to know that there are others out there who are interested in them and who want to know about their projects. OK, there are other ways of expressing solidarity, but there is no way you can do it as well as presenting yourself in person, and all our contacts made from previous tours to Nicaragua (1997) and El Salvador (2001) have said as much. It is also worth noting that a number of these groups do not have websites and all the groups we deal with are small-scale, community-based and grassroots organisations. It is perhaps difficult for us to imagine just how significant our visit(s) to these organisations, communities and projects are for those who are directly involved with them.

Donations. In the past, out of the money left in the kitty at the end of the tour, we have made donations to all of the organisations and communities which have helped us on previous tours and we intend to do the same on this tour of Honduras. ENCA's donations are always small because we don't have much money, but they go to organisations in Central America which can make something useful out of a small donation.

Practical and technical help. During our previous tours, we have always been actively engaged with the organisations or communities which we visit and our tour groups have included participants of considerable and appropriate skills of use to these organisations and communities. As a result, our discussions and engagement with members of these organisations and communities have occasionally been of practical significance to them.

Our own awareness and understanding. One of the major aims of the tour is to increase our own understanding and awareness of the problems and issues faced by the communities and organisations that we visit. This is of more than minor significance and will lead to our improved ability to impart this freshly acquired awareness to others.

Recruitment for ENCA's UK membership. In the past, our tours have attracted people who have remained loyal members and supporters of ENCA as a result of the tour they took part in.



Recruitment for environmental network of Central American organisations. This provides fresh ideas and momentum for the network of small-scale, grassroots Central American organisations which receive our newsletter and which supply us with regular news and information about their activities and projects as well as the regional problems which they face. ENCA's own information base, newsletter and perhaps raison d'être depend heavily on its links with such organisations and communities within the region, and these are often too small to have an outreach to the UK or Europe. We find out about them by being there. Many of these organisations and communities have remarked in the past on how they benefit from the ENCA network and list.

Tour documentation. It is our aim to make some form of documentation of our tour and the issues we encounter there. This may be in the form of a video, report, poster display, exhibition, or whatever, which we will use in the UK in our publicity, information and awareness-raising exercises when we return. This is a crucial aspect of ENCA's work, without which our purpose is deflated, and it is impossible to gain such quality of information without the first-hand experience. (The best way of reassuring sceptics on this is to get them to talk to previous tour participants, who will make it clear that they returned to the UK a great deal better informed and motivated about these issues than had they not gone.)

Carbon offsetting. If anyone were in doubt, issue no. 391 of the *New Internationalist* makes it clear that carbon offsetting is something of a confidence trick, played particularly by those companies which have recently sprung up to make money out of this activity. ENCA does not propose to attempt to offset the carbon emissions produced as a result of this tour by investing with any of these recent Europe-based companies. Instead, we intend to offset our emissions by supporting (financially and otherwise) appropriate schemes and projects run by the organisations and communities which we visit. We have already made our first approaches to these organisations regarding this issue, and it is our intention to visit the schemes which we shall be supporting for this purpose during the tour.

An alternative and CO₂ free mode of getting to Honduras. OR A crazy idea?

Thanks to ENCA member Ivor McGillivray for the research for this.

As there is so much hand-wringing about flying, I thought I'd try to find out something about sailing. I requested information from the Marine Leisure Association, a trade body. Doug Innes of Storm Force Coaching (www.stormforce.biz) got in touch.

July is not the most favourable time to make an Atlantic crossing due to the risk of tropical storms from June to November. The E to W passage would aim to arrive in the Caribbean by the first week in June. From the UK the boat would sail from Southampton to Falmouth, then across the Bay of Biscay to Madeira and the Canary Islands. The Atlantic crossing would start from there. The winds are more favourable.

On the return leg, the route would pass between Cuba and Haiti, along the Eastern seaboard of the USA, across to the Azores, then to the UK possibly via the Canary Islands. (Less sunshine on this leg.) Overall, the route travels clockwise around the Atlantic.

Timings

Southampton to Canary Islands: 1 month (12 days sailing)

Canary Islands to Honduras: 1 month (21 days sailing)

Return leg: allow 2 months (sailing days possibly less than for E to W crossing)



Doug thought the return journey could be done for the cost of an air fare (c. £800), though he suggested 10 'passengers'. It would be a 48' - 50' boat with a skipper and one boat hand. 'Passengers' would help out, eventually taking watches.

Just thought I'd let you know - it's certainly got me intrigued.

Ivor

Calculating your own personal carbon budget

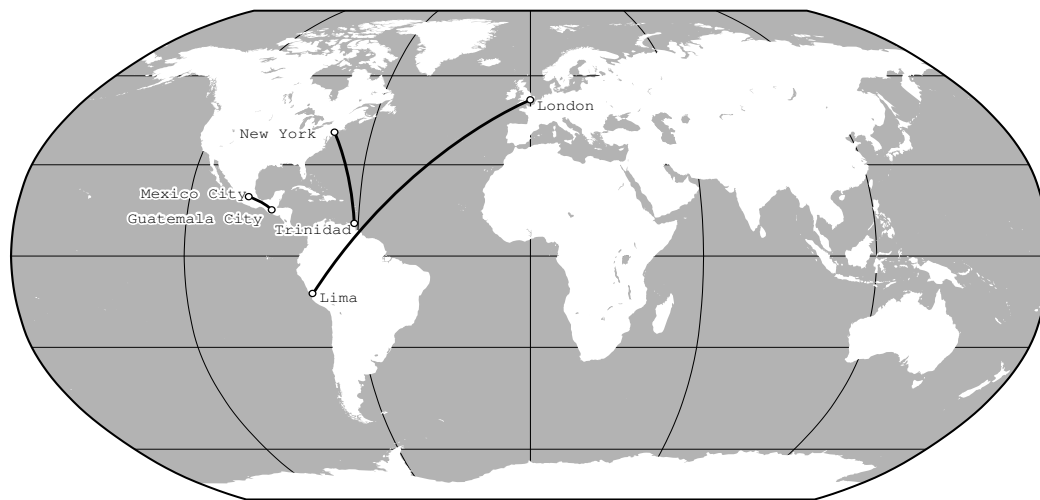
The following is an extract from a book by Mowforth, Charlton and Munt 'Responsible Tourism: Perspectives from Latin America and the Caribbean' to be published later this year by Routledge. The authors are grateful to Ben Matthews for the use of his Choose Climate website: www.chooseclimate.org

Carbon has now become an item of relatively common discourse. The idea of measuring an individual's carbon budget may be very recent, but thanks to this discourse, popular understanding of the notion should not present a great obstacle to its use. The 'Flying off to a Warmer Climate?' section of Ben Matthews' *Choose Climate* website is designed to calculate the amount of greenhouse gas emissions per passenger for any given air journey. The user inputs the origin and destination of their journey, the type of ticket and the type of plane, and the programme calculates the total fuel used per passenger and the total greenhouse gas emissions per passenger. It marks the selected route on a world map and gives the user an idea of the significance of the estimated figures with indices such as its equivalence in the food eaten by an estimated number of people in one year or the size of a typical tree which contains the same

amount of carbon emitted by your journey. Other journey parameters, such as the extra cost of the ticket if tax and duty were charged at the same rate as on petrol in the UK, are also estimated; and the global context of the journey is also explained. Output from its website is given below for an example of short, medium and long haul flights. The following brief extract gives a feel for the spirit in which the calculations work:

"your proposed flight would emit 0.73 tons of carbon (as CO₂) per passenger - i.e., your total sustainable carbon emissions budget for all purposes (including heating, cooking, lighting, local transport, etc.) for 1.82 years. And remember: that's just the CO₂; the total warming effect of CO₂ + H₂O + NO_x is about three times greater."

Figure 4.2 Carbon budget calculations for selected short, medium and long haul flights



	London to Lima	New York to Trinidad	Mexico City to Guatemala City
Distance (km)	10160	3560	1060
Fuel used per passenger (kg)	730	280	108
Total greenhouse gas emissions per passenger warming effect equivalent (kg CO ₂)	6805	2611	1010
Energy equivalent to electricity used by X 60W light bulbs lit continuously for 1 year, where X=	19	7	3
Contains as much carbon as all the air above X m ² of the earth's surface, where X=	396	152	59
Contains as much carbon as a typical tree about X m tall, where X=	18	13	10

(reproduced by kind permission of Ben Matthews who devised and designed the Choose Climate website: www.chooseclimate.org)

Ultimately, the questions raised by such websites and commentators is whether, having expanded our horizons through travel and tourism, we should now rein them in so that we may reduce the adverse effects of carbon dioxide emissions on the climate. And if science and society tell us that we must indeed do so, then will we all be allocated a carbon quota (a kind of personal carbon budget) in the future, which we will not be allowed to exceed (unless we have a license to do so by purchasing another person's unfulfilled quota)? Such an idea may seem a little far-fetched, but in July 2006 the UK Government Environment Minister (David Miliband) revealed his ministry's intentions to examine schemes for implementing and managing tradeable personal carbon allowances.

Honduras continues to be our dominating theme and focus for this issue of the ENCA Newsletter. The following article by Sarah Irving, a freelance writer specialising in environmental and social issues, describes a tourism development mega-project in Tela Bay on the northern coast of Honduras in an area to be visited by the ENCA tour group. There the group will be hosted by local environmental organisation Fundación Prolansate which is active in its protection and defence of the Jeannette Kawas Marine National Park. (Jeannette Kawas used to be the director of Fundación Prolansate until her assassination in 1995 – see ENCA Newsletter no. 19.) Some of the communities affected by the mega-project will be on the itinerary of the ENCA tour.

LOS MICOS BEACH AND GOLF RESORT, HONDURAS

By Sarah Irving

The Honduran Chamber of Tourism's website invites tourists to Tela Bay with the enthusiastic description of:

“A sleepy coastal town that is rapidly becoming a favorite vacation alternative, Tela has grown ... into the premier beach vacation destination in mainland Honduras. Its proximity to three national parks, to Garífuna villages and its outstanding beaches guarantee a sustained growth in the tourism industry for years to come.”

Tela Bay is the site of the Los Micos tourist development, a multi-million dollar project funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Italian government, Honduran business and at least one European bank. The Los Micos development is slated to include many of the trappings of a large, mainstream holiday resort, including hotels run by Hilton and Hyatt, malls, an equestrian centre and golf courses, as well as a cruise ship dock in the town of Tela. International investors and the Honduran government claim that the development will bring significant benefits to the area, including jobs and infrastructure, and funding for the site is included in \$35 million of IDB money specifically earmarked for a “national sustainable tourism programme” for Honduras.

There has been considerable resistance to the development, however, mainly from the Garífuna community. The Garífuna have lived in the area for over 200 years, and are

descended from the Arawak peoples of the Caribbean islands and escaped African slaves. They have maintained communal land ownership structures, and their land title in the Tela Bay area was established in 1992. Previous developments in the area have seen the Garífuna come into conflict with the national government and municipal councils over land rights, including a luxury tourism development started in 1994, which now lies empty. In 1997, the national government is alleged to have ‘conveniently “lost”’ documents relating to Garífuna title to the land.

The challenges to Garífuna land rights are also part of a wider pattern, supported by international institutions such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation, which is seeking to shift communal forms of land rights, as practiced by many indigenous peoples in Central America, to systems of individual rights which are easier for international economic actors to deal with. Such communal land rights have been key to many examples of indigenous resistance to developments such as mining, tourism and bioprospecting in Mexico and Central American countries.

As well as institutional attacks on their land title, the Garífuna of Tela Bay have also suffered direct human rights abuses aimed at forcing them to relinquish their rights to the Los Micos development land. According to a report submitted to the UN Human Rights Committee in October 2006 by US NGO Human Rights First, which has supported the Garífuna claims, the major incidents have included the following.

- The shooting of Gregoria Flores Martínez, the General Coordinator of OFRANEH, the main Garífuna community organisation fighting the Los Micos development. Ms. Flores was shot after a series of warnings regarding her campaigns for Garífuna land rights and while collecting testimonies regarding the alleged false imprisonment of another community leader. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) issued a resolution acknowledging the precarious situation for Garífuna activists and asked for protective measures for Ms. Flores and her family, which were not implemented.
- The alleged false imprisonment of Alfredo López Alvarez, a leading member of several Garífuna rights organisations, who was arrested in 1997 on drugs charges, found guilty in 2000, exonerated in 2001 and January 2003, but not released until August 2003. In February 2006 the IACHR condemned Honduras for its detention of Mr Alvarez and ordered the government to pay reparations, which have not been forthcoming.
- The burning of the house of Wilfredo Guerrero, the President of the Committee to Defend the Lands of San Juan, the site of the Los Micos complex. Although no-one was hurt in the fire, documents vital to the Garífuna case were destroyed.
- Threats to the life of Jessica García and her children. Ms. García, a Garífuna community leader, was approached at home in June 2006 by a man who offered her money to sign a document surrendering Garífuna land rights to the development company PROMOTUR. When she refused, the man put a gun to her head to force her to sign, and threatened her life and those of her children if she publicised the document's existence. The document, a copy of which was obtained by a US human rights group, is said to hand the disputed territory over to PROMOTUR, guarantee that the Garífuna would abandon legal actions or complaints, and that PROMOTUR would have the right to evict and relocate Garífuna communities. The document is said to have been co-signed by

PROMOTUR owner Jaime Rosenthal Oliva.

Activists involved in the land rights campaign at Tela Bay have also alleged corruption against the Honduran government and local authorities. Yani Rosenthal Hidalgo, a recently-appointed minister to the Honduran government, is the son of the owner of PROMOTUR and a shareholder in the Los Micos project. Alfredo López' colleague Jesús Alvarez also accused the municipality of Tela of embezzlement in relation to earlier tourist developments. He died following the second of two murder attempts.

As well as the threats to their direct land rights, the Garífuna have also questioned the environmental impacts of the development and rejected an Environmental Impact Assessment which projected benefits to the area. The Garífuna claim that the Los Micos site will increase pesticide use and eutrophication of lagoons due to fertilizers used on golf courses, as well as depleting the area's water resources.

Much has been made in publicity material for Los Micos of its situation within the boundaries of the Jeanette Kawas National Park, and of the potential for ecotourism on the site. The Garífuna claim that the declaration of national parks and other protected areas has been used as a means of violating their territorial rights and of preventing them from carrying out basic subsistence activities. They criticise actors such as the WWF and Smithsonian Institute, which declared the nearby Cayos Cochinos islands a national park in 1993. The Garífuna state that since 1993 they have been prevented from subsistence fishing, with interference from a naval base, while large-scale commercial fishing has been allowed to continue. They also allege that the creation of ecological reserves is a deliberate method of dissociating them from control of their land, "so that later the protected areas can be raffled off among the same old sorcerers as always."

Certainly, the claim that a development of 4- and 5-star hotels with malls and golf courses can be a source of 'sustainable' tourism demonstrates the lack of a clear definition of such projects. The conflict between the

Garífuna and international nature conservation organisations represents a struggle for power and is one of a growing number of such clashes between indigenous subsistence and concepts of the purity of nature. In late 2006, the Honduran government announced that two of the contractor companies involved in Los Micos had been removed, and the IDB announced

\$1.37 million in funding for capacity building in “ethnic minority” [note: not indigenous or first nations] tourist enterprises in Honduras, through “training, assistance and micro-credit.” It remains to be seen whether such concessions are matched with improved economic and human rights conditions.

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Sarah Irving, author of the article above, has also written to ENCA regarding the focus of the last issue of the ENCA newsletter, namely mining in Central America.

Dear editor,

Many thanks for the excellent articles on the impacts of mining operations by multinational corporations in Central America. Can I suggest a few possible actions for anyone angered by the disregard for human rights and the environment displayed by these companies?

Several of the operations described in the articles are the work of Glamis Gold or of Goldcorp, a fellow Canadian mining company which bought Glamis Gold late last year. Barclays Bank is a significant shareholder in Goldcorp, while the Royal Bank of Scotland is a major lender to it, and both therefore profit from the abuses in Guatemala and Honduras. Customers of these might wish to consider moving their accounts to companies which have no such links, such as the Co-op Bank/Smile with its ethical policy, or mutual building societies. Non-customers, or those tied into loans and overdrafts with these firms, could let them know what they think of their activities and the huge gaps between their actual behaviour here and their stated commitment to the environment and human rights, as expressed in 'corporate social responsibility' policies and their signing of the Equator Principles.

Contact: corporate.responsibility@barclays.co.uk and corporate.responsibility@rbs.co.uk.

Best regards,

Sarah Irving

ENCA seconds Sarah’s suggestions. Lack of space in this issue and the fact that our last issue focused on mining in Central America prevent us from giving details of the mining problems of which we have received news since that last issue. These concern the Canadian-based Bellhaven Ventures company which wishes to begin mining in Ngobe-Bugle territory in Panama, Mayan groups’ occupation of a Canadian-owned nickel mine in Guatemala and a grassroots forum’s pledge to resist mining operations in El Salvador. No doubt other problems caused by mining have arisen elsewhere in the region.

THREE APPEALS

FIRST – ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS - An appeal to any of our supporters in the UK and in particular to any of the recipients of our newsletters in Central America and elsewhere overseas – our postage costs seem to be increasing and if you would like to receive the ENCA Newsletter by email rather than by surface or air mail, then please let us know at mmowforth@plymouth.ac.uk Thus far we have held out against distributing the newsletter by email on the grounds that people are more likely to read a hard copy than a virtual copy, but costs have finally made us re-consider, but we are still willing to post newsletters if people prefer this method of receiving them.

SECOND – ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS – 18 months ago we changed our annual subscriptions system so that all subscription renewals became due at the start of the calendar year. The change in the system may have led some of our UK subscribers to forget that their subⁿ was due at the start of the year. If you don't have a standing order and if you have not yet sent your renewal for 2007 to our treasurer Janet Bye (5 St Edmund's Place, Ipswich IP1 3RA), we would be grateful if you could renew your support of ENCA soon. Thank you.

THIRD – TOUR COMMITMENT – We know that many people, ENCA members and others who are new to us, have already expressed an interest in participating in the environmental study tour of Honduras, but so far very few have actually shown a commitment by paying the £50 deposit. For the sake of planning, we need to know very soon that we have a viable number of tour participants. So we have decided to draw a deadline for the payment of the £50 deposits on the 31st March. Please send your deposit to Martin Mowforth, ENCA Tour, 51 West Street, Tavistock, Devon PL19 8JZ (Tel. 01822 617504).

OTHER NEWS

This issue's focus on air flight emissions and the potential impact of our tour to Honduras has left no space for coverage of the many environment and development issues of which we have received news since the last newsletter. We will therefore be trying to produce the next newsletter as soon as possible to cover some of the following:

- The widening of the Panama Canal
- Fish farm development in southern Costa Rica
- CAFTA and Costa Rica
- The Copalar HEP Project in Nicaragua
- Hotels and turtles in Chococente, Nicaragua
- Solar energy in Nicaragua
- Diving for lobsters in Nicaragua
- Update on the dry canal in Nicaragua
- Carbon trading in El Salvador
- El Espino golf course in El Salvador
- Biofuels in El Salvador
- Water problems and privatisation protests in El Salvador
- UNES' letter to Salvadoran President Saca
- Illegal logging in Olancho, Honduras
- Millennium Development Goals in Guatemala
- Oil in Belize
- Stop Paraquat Campaign in Central America
- Research into coffee production
- and others

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