



Indigenous people call on Pan American Silver to cease local interference out of respect for consultation process in Guatemala

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(Vancouver/Victoria/Ottawa/Tatamagouche/Washington, D.C.) Ahead of Pan American Silver's annual shareholder meeting in Vancouver today, the Xinka Indigenous Parliament released a statement calling on the company to stop attempts to engage with communities outside of the court-ordered consultation process over the Escobal silver project. They insist that the company's community relations taking place in parallel to the consultation are coercive, heighten tensions and jeopardize the free nature of the process.

In [their statement](#), the Xinka Parliament of Guatemala said: "The mining project has greatly affected our ways of life and the company's actions over the past months have only increased and worsened the conflict in our region."

"The Escobal mining project represents a threat to the life of Xinka communities in the region. During nine years of resistance to this project, we have been victims of kidnapping, assassinations, criminalization, destruction of our ways of life, as well as the destruction of archaeological sites and sacred places. As a result, the reactivation of this project is untenable, since it would mean deciding between the project and our survival."

The Xinka Parliament concludes: "The Xinka People oppose Pan American Silver's continued or any increased interference in communities and demand that the company suspend all social and economic programs, and publicity during the consultation process."

Xinka leaders participating in the consultation process are facing death threats, intimidation, criminalization, and defamation. In March, the Xinka Parliament, joined by representatives of the Peaceful Resistance of Santa Rosa, Jalapa and Jutiapa and four mayors from municipalities in the area of the Escobal mine, [held a press conference to publicly denounce these threats](#). In particular, they raised serious concern for the safety of Quelvin Otoniel Jiménez Villalta, lawyer for the Xinka Parliament, who has received death threats, been followed, and faced spurious

legal action for his work on behalf of Xinka communities to demand their full participation in the consultation process, as well as transparency and due process. Earlier this week, Mr. Jiménez reported being surveilled and intimidated by unknown assailants. This was the second incident of its kind in as many weeks.

“This is an extremely concerning situation that is only getting worse. Unfortunately, what Mr. Jiménez is suffering is just the most recent example of the tension and violence that has plagued the Escobal project since the start. The company and its associates must stop trying to get a foothold in the communities outside of the current consultation process, especially because it is aggravating an already dangerous context for environment defenders,” remarked Kirsten Francescone, Latin America Program Coordinator for MiningWatch Canada.

Pan American Silver acquired the Escobal mine as a part of its acquisition of Tahoe Resources, which was [finalized in February of this year](#). The Escobal mine has been suspended for nearly two years as a result of local organizing and a court order to suspend the mine while the Ministry of Energy and Mines heads up a consultation of affected Xinka people.

Pan American Silver has committed to bringing the Escobal mine back into operation despite well-documented, broad-based community opposition to the project. The Justice and Corporate Accountability Project (JCAP) [submitted complaints to the British Columbia and US Securities Commissions to this effect in January](#), arguing that Pan American Silver and Tahoe Resources made misleading statements on the future of the Escobal mine and failed to disclose serious conflict already emerging with the consultation process.

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