

IV Environmental March to Defend Water

Saturday October 20th 2012 in Sensuntepeque, Cabañas.
Organized by the National Roundtable against Metallic Mining

Goal of the activity: Show the people of Cabañas's opposition to the presence of mining companies in their department and pressure decision makers in Cabañas to take actions that defend life and the environment.

Description of the activity: The march will begin at 8:30 am at the road leading into Sensuntepeque and will end at the central square, with a multi-denominational mass and cultural activities like dance, music, and theater. The march will pass in front of the offices of Pacific Rim. Besides mobilizing thousands of local residents, the organizers of the march will invite local mayors, representatives from the police, local representatives from the Ombudsman for Human Rights Office and other government institutions.

Background: Metallic mining projects would pose a significant threat to the already taxed water supplies of El Salvador, as well as to the environment and public health in this densely populated country. The civil society organizations and affected communities that make up the National Roundtable against Metallic Mining (the *Mesa*) have been struggling to stop metallic mining in El Salvador since 2006. The *Mesa* represents hundreds of communities and thousands of people throughout the country and includes environmental, community-based, research, legal and religious organizations.

In 2007, when the Salvadoran government began to put restrictions on the mining industry, as a result of the efforts made by the *Mesa* and other members of civil society, two multinational mining corporations, Commerce Group and Pacific Rim, responded by filing lawsuits against the government. The companies claim that their rights as investors are being violated. Pacific Rim, a Canadian company looking to mine in the department of Cabañas, is claiming losses of up to \$100 million. On June 1st, 2012 a panel of three arbitrators hearing the case in a trade tribunal that is part of the World Bank ruled that the case would continue.

The controversy over Pacific Rim's mining project in Cabañas has not come without a social cost. To date four environmentalists opposing mining from the region have been murdered, and countless others have suffered through threats, attacks, kidnapping attempts and violence. While the Attorney General's Office in El Salvador has never done thorough investigations into the intellectual authors of the crimes in Cabañas, local residents say that community divisions and conflict started when Pacific Rim arrived and began promoting their mining projects.

The *Mesa* is fighting back against Pacific Rim and other companies in El Salvador by educating the population around the dangers of mining, carrying out scientific research to support their positions, and pressuring decision makers in El Salvador to protect the environment and public health. The *Mesa* has presented a bill to the Legislative Assembly that would ban all metallic mining in El Salvador, the first of its kind in the world.



La Mesa Nacional frente a la Minería Metálica
le invita a participar en la:

**Movilización por el agua y
contra la MINERÍA
METÁLICA**



Fecha: Sábado 20 de octubre de 2012
Punto de Encuentro: Frente a la Cárcel de Sensuntepeque, Cabañas.
Hora: 8:00 AM
Punto de Llegada: Parque Luciano Hernandez, Sensuntepeque.

Habrà baile, música, batucada y otros puntos artísticos.
Ven y participa. Seamos más contra PACIFIC RIM y digamos: NO A LA MINERÍA METÁLICA

www.einomineria.blogspot.com

International Support: The *Mesa* is asking for international support as they organize this protest and cultural activity opposing mining in Cabañas. This support could take two forms:

-Protests and rallies in the U.S. and Canada on the same day (or the days surrounding) the march in Cabañas.

-An international call in day to the Pacific Rim offices in Vancouver demanding the company pull out of El Salvador, drop their suit, and cooperate with investigations into the violence in the region.