

**Court Ruling of Women Defenders of Nature
and Peoples against Mining
Jaguar Route
Guatemala, Saturday November 16th, 2019**

The Court of Women Defenders of Nature and Peoples against Mining met in the city of Guatemala, in November 16th, 2019; in the framework of the X Assembly of Latin American Women Defenders Network of Social and Environmental Rights.

During an intense day of work we listened to dozens testimonies of cases about mining impact in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Hondura, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay and territories in the North, South, East, West and Central Guatemala. Additionally we have two international networks of women defenders facing mining, one from Africa, WOMIN and one from Asia WOMA.

The presentations were divided in three complementary and convergent axes: Impact to the Nature, to the Peoples and to Women Defenders of human and nature rights.

On the Nature's Impact Axis testimonies took place showing the severe damage caused by mining in ecosystems, such as paramo, glaciers and Tropical Andean forests; in water, territories and the way on how it impacts spirituality and the body territory.

On the Peoples Impact Axis we listened to testimonies by healing women, indigenous and peasant communities's representatives who tackled issues such as the militarization of their territories land, the violence against their body territory, the destruction of the local economy, and the social fabric. The consequences to the health, to the source and to the life's reproduction. Over the course of these testimonies we demonstrated that mining forms enclaves of sacrifice where the life and territories are destroyed.

On this section different ways of fighting and resistance to make the way for life in mining contexts were addressed. Strategies as resistances, participatory mechanisms, alternative production systems for social and environmental restoration, life's reproduction care and containment, policy proposals, campaigns and complaints; which allows the communities to go from being victims of mining to defenders of their rights, territories and bodies.

On Women Defender's axis the patterns of mass criminalization murders, prosecutions and harassment in different countries were analyzed.

This broad international panorama has allowed us to formulate a gloomy diagnosis, summarized below, but widely compensated by the lights that brighten the proposals made by women in the local, regional and international ambit.

Once the testimonies were over, we confirm the criminal nature of the mining activities which includes the destruction of the ecosystem; exemplified by the devastation of forests, savannas,

paramo, water and nature at large; and, at the same time, the transformation of social relations deepening those that oppress women in this death zones.

Mining penetrates and destroys the bowels of the earth, it breaks the water's cycles which means the life's cycle supported by women through their care tasks. These tasks are duplicated by the water contamination that affect the health of the families, forcing them to work harder, in turn, ruining their own lives by the permanent contact with the water in the life's reproductive labor care such as food preparation and other housework.

We declare that:

- 1) Life's networks destruction. They ravage and mutilate territories. They control and expropriate women's bodies through sexual abuse, trafficking due to sexual exploitation, intimidation by means of silencing and forced displacement in order settle on their territories.
- 2) Wide territories occupancy. Extractive borders have been open throughout Indigenous Peoples, peasants and other local communities land, as well as, in the Natures with which we share ecosystems.
- 3) Water's hoarding and contamination. Stripping the communities their right to water, violating other species their right to access this vital liquid and condemning women to work overloads within their communities.
- 4) Construction of an infrastructure that is destroying all Mother Earth's components and extracting the minerals from her bowels. Tailings that burst, destroying entire towns. Dams concentrate and sequester their water.

However, as we have anticipated, in each of the shared testimonies the search and effective construction of another society based on a different paradigm were present. Rescuing it concretely as a basis to face the challenges in the times we are living.

We ratify the need to:

- 1) Strengthen women's articulation against mining, regionally and continentally, weaving networks and sororities south-to-south.
- 2) Recognize community organization and the role that women have in their sustainability by supporting resistance in the territories.
- 3) Continue with the exchange of information, knowledge and strategies of women from different continents.
- 4) Carry out a coordinated and shared exercise of incidents among the participants of this Court, to follow up, support, denounce and monitor the normative processes under way in the different countries. Share, also, the public policies implemented around mining with the effects on women's body, life and their communities; in order to guarantee due respect and fulfillment of the rights, vigilance and control of the ombudspersons or procurator's offices, in such a way that they assume their responsibilities of protecting the rights, the Peoples, the Nature and the women defenders.

5) Share the successful experience they have developed to face the mining, basing it on the women's contagious power on building new horizons. In order to put them into practice in other territories and reach fairer relationships.

6) Strengthen the communication systems among sisters. Improve our statements and get societies in motion in defense of life and face threats of mining.

Finally, share some of the recommendations that arise from this Court, to continue touring these Routes for Truth and Justice for Nature and the Peoples and their Women Defenders:

1) Extend the knowledge and dissemination of the Nature's Rights as a new paradigm for the construction of new communities that make visible the contributions of women.

2) Send this Ruling to the different Special Rapporteurs on Human Rights of the United Nations, including the special rapporteurs of the right to water, toxic, women, health and environment.

3) Deliver this Ruling to the ombudspersons or procurator's offices from the represented countries in this Court.

4) Express our solidarity with the cases related to this Court and activate ourselves in the demanded answers.

Gina Benavides. Former Public Defender of Ecuador

Cheryl Poulan. WOMA, Philippines

Lorrain Kakaza. Womin, South Africa

Diana Murcia. Attorney, Colombia

Irma Ortiz Alarcón. Latin American Women Defenders Network of Social and Environmental Rights. (Red Latinoamericana de Mujeres Defensoras de Derechos Sociales y Ambientales)

Ivonne Yánez. Nature's Rights Office

Elizabeth Bravo. Nature's Rights Office

Secretary: Esperanza Martínez