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Nominated for the Public Eye Award 2005
in the category:

HUMAN RIGHTS

Nomination by: Legal Rights and
Natural Resources Center –
Kasama sa Kalikasa /
Friends of the Earth Philippines

Toronto Ventures Incorporated (TVI)

Headquarters: Calgary (Canada)
Turnover / Net profit: 2003: 3.6 billion Canadian \$ (turnover) / 1,3 billion Canadian \$ (loss)
Branch of trade: mining
CEO: Clifford M. James (president and CEO)
Member to the WEF: NO (in January 2004)

Outline

The indigenous Subanon people, living in Siocon (situated in the Philippine province of Zamboanga del Norte), strongly oppose Toronto Ventures Incorporated's (TVI) mining projects in their ancestral land. They argue that the company violates human rights and is acting in a socially and environmentally irresponsible way. The nominating organisations demand that TVI stop violating human rights law and labour law. In addition, the company should ensure that the safety problems are solved and that environmental concerns are duly addressed.

General Information on the Case

Toronto Ventures Incorporated (TVI) is a Canadian mining company that has been operating in Siocon, Philippines since 1997, when it acquired its mining right for an area of 486 hectares. It is mining for gold and silver in particular. For the people in Siocon, farming and fishing are the two main sources of livelihood. The mining site is sacred to the Subanon indigenous people because it is their traditional prayer and worship area. Mt. Canatuan, which is situated in the area, is regarded as sacred ground of the Subanon ancestors.

Characteristics of irresponsible corporate behaviour

- TVI entered the area by force without prior consent from the community living in the area
- Several residents had to be relocated to other areas because of the mining activities
- An armed paramilitary force employed by TVI is barring the access to the community. It built checkpoints on the public highway. Locals have reported numerous human rights abuses by this paramilitary force. For instance, in March 2004, when a group of the "Save Siocon Paradise Watershed Movement" tried to prevent TVI's heavy equipment from moving towards

the mining site, the paramilitaries fired into the crowd. Four people were wounded with multiple gunshots.

- TVI filed a number of charges against the community leaders in order to disrupt local opposition. The cases were later dismissed for lack of grounds.
- TVI tried to bribe people opposed to the mining projects.

Consequences

The rights of the indigenous people in the area are violated. In addition, the mining causes soil erosion, siltation, deforestation, and cyanide contamination of the waters. The mining activities will lead to the destruction of the hunting and fishing grounds, which are the main sources of income for the local population.

Current status and demands to the corporate group

The Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center – Kasam sa Kalikasa / Friends of the Earth Philippines demand that Toronto Ventures Incorporated:

- ensure that its security officers stop perpetrating human rights violations
- recognise the ownership of the Subanon People over their ancestral domain
- cease its mineral exploration until all human rights, labour rights, safety and environmental concerns are fully addressed
- fully inform all the affected communities of its activities in the area
- take concrete safety measures in order to improve the plant facilities and to secure the safety of the plant workers
- allow its workers to join trade unions without imposing any restrictions on them
- publish its actual income in terms of gold/silver production and make it available to the local government of Siocon

Link to the details of the nomination: www.evb.ch/nominations.htm

Further information and links:

www.lrcksk.org