



Media Advisory

For Immediate Release
5/26/10

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Grim Reapers Launch Cyanide-Laced Mineral Water Line at Canadian Consulate

Part of Int'l Day of Protest Against Canadian Gold Mining Company Central
America Free Trade Agreement Suit Against El Salvador

Who: TradeJustice NY Metro, New York Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, and Global Justice for Animals & the Environment

What: Activists dressed as Grim Reapers representing the Pacific Rim Mining Company will give out free samples of cyanide contaminated mineral water at a mock promotional table for the Pacific Rim Mining Company. The table will be lined with dead and dying people who drank the cyanide contaminated water. Pacific Rim CEO Thomas Shrake will encourage passersby to try the samples as the reapers give them cups of contaminated water, add an extra shot of cyanide, and leer threateningly at their gold jewelry. Meanwhile protesters will denounce Pacific Rim and the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). The event is part of a coordinated day of protest, with actions planned in cities including Washington, DC; Boston, MA; Seattle, WA; Portland, OR; Vancouver, BC; and Toronto, ON.

When: Thursday, May 27th 12:30-1PM

Where: Consulate General of Canada in New York, 1251 6th Avenue at 49th Street

Why: In 2009, the government of El Salvador denied a permit for a gold mining project by Canadian mining company Pacific Rim that risked contaminating the Lempa River, the country's primary source of drinking water, with cyanide. In response, Pacific Rim brought a suit under CAFTA-DR's investment rules, which will be heard at the World Bank's International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). The company is demanding hundreds of millions in compensation for money they MIGHT have earned if the project had been allowed to continue. On May 31, the ICSID will decide whether to let Pacific Rim's case against El Salvador move forward.

According to William Castillo of the El Salvador-based Research Center on Investment and Trade (CEICOM), CAFTA-DR's investment chapter supersedes El Salvador's domestic laws: "Even though Pacific Rim did not establish sufficient environmental protections in its Environmental Impact Report or carry out an informed public consultation—both of which are required under Salvadoran mining law to obtain exploitation permits—they are now able to sue us because of this trade agreement that a past government signed despite of civil society rejecting it."

The company's lawsuit against the government of El Salvador has received international attention as the first extractive industries case brought under the CAFTA-DR. Though Canada is not a signatory to the Agreement, Pacific Rim is advancing their claim through a US-domiciled subsidiary, Pac Rim Cayman LLC. This could create a precedent for corporations to set up subsidiaries in nations that have NAFTA-style free trade agreements with the US in order to use the very broad investor rights of CAFTA, NAFTA, and the Peru Free Trade Agreement, which grant more rights to foreign companies than to domestic US corporations, to bring suit when enforcement of US environmental laws limits their opportunities for profit.

Additional Information: www.cispes.org * <http://www.stopthesuits.net>

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