

Guatemalans Suing Canadian Mining Company Tahoe Resources for Violence and Repression

The Canada Pension Plan holds CAD \$49 million in Tahoe Resources shares

By [MiningWatch Canada](#)

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By Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala, Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network and MiningWatch

(Ottawa/Tatamagouche/Guatemala City) [A civil lawsuit filed today](#) in Vancouver against Tahoe Resources for negligence and battery in connection with a shooting at the company's silver project in Guatemala sends a strong message to investors and all Canadians.

Seven victims of a shooting allegedly ordered by Tahoe Resources' former head of security, Alberto Rotondo, are suing the company for punitive damages. Rotondo is an ex-naval officer from Peru who was indicted in Guatemala on charges related to this attack in May 2013. The Canadian lawsuit represents one of numerous abuses in connection with Tahoe's only asset, which was rushed into production in January 2014 despite strong community opposition.



Violence and repression has marked the development of Tahoe Resources' Escobal silver project in southeast Guatemala.

"Repression against community leaders involved in organizing local referenda and peaceful protests in opposition to Tahoe's mine dates back to 2011. Some 90 individuals have faced spurious legal persecution and, in May 2013, a military state of siege was declared in the area surrounding the mine creating a climate of fear and intimidation in order to quash local opposition," observes Ellen Moore for the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA).

Tens of thousands have voted against mining in San Rafael Las Flores, where Tahoe currently operates, and in the immediately surrounding municipalities where the company hopes to carry out further exploration.

The widespread opposition is motivated by concerns over the current and future impacts of Tahoe's operations on local water supplies, as well as community health and agricultural activities. Tahoe's mine is only two kilometres from the central park in San Rafael Las Flores and mere metres from homes and livestock.



"This is a company with a troubled history in Guatemala, which should be a cause of concern to Canadians and all investors," remarks Jackie McVicar from the Maritimes-

Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network. “Tahoe Resources is a spin-off company from Vancouver-based Goldcorp, whose Marlin mine in Guatemala’s northwestern highlands has been a source of strife and ongoing Indigenous and human rights violations during the last decade.”

Goldcorp holds 40% of the shares in Tahoe Resources and six of the company’s eight Directors have past or current ties to the gold mining mammoth. Most Canadians are also invested in Tahoe Resources through the Canada Pension Plan, which [reported holding CAD \\$49 million in shares](#) as of March 31, 2014.

Notably, when Guatemalans sued another Canadian mining company, HudBay Minerals, [the company ended up selling off its Fénix nickel project](#) to a Russian firm at a quarter of the price for which it had purchased it. The three lawsuits for the shooting murder of a land rights activist, gang rape of 11 Maya Q’eqchi’ women and shooting paralysis of a young man are [ongoing in Ontario courts](#).

“The abuses for which Tahoe is being sued are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of rampant violations in connection with Canadian mining operations in Guatemala and across the region,” comments Jen Moore for MiningWatch Canada. “This lawsuit should alert Canadians to a much deeper problem with this industry that Canadian authorities are unconditionally promoting abroad.”

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[Background on Tahoe Resources, Goldcorp and Mining Conflicts in Guatemala](#)

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