

UNBC Geography + Rights Action Emergency Delegation to Guatemala
Urgent Need to End Canadian Impunity for Mining Companies in
Guatemala

Alert #1
May 14, 2016

Goldcorp Inc's Marlin Mine:
A Family's Pain: Death of Jaime Otero Pérez López

(San Miguel Ixtahuacán, Guatemala) The family of 24-year old Jaime Otero Pérez López spoke out for the first time today, exactly one month after his death in a collapsed Goldcorp Inc. tunnel. On April 14, 2016, Jaime was trapped and killed in one of the Marlin Mine's 147km of tunnels that have spread out in all directions under the municipalities of Sipakapa and San Miguel Ixtahuacán, since the date of Goldcorp's first open pit, mountain-top removal operation in 2005.

Vancouver-based Goldcorp Inc. is at the centre of ongoing structural and everyday violence, exploitation and environmental destruction in the Mayan Mam and Sipakapan communities in and around the mine's operations. Since 2004, repression, human rights violations and environmental harms have been widely documented and denounced, and yet no legal measures, no international condemnation, no orders to cease operations have stopped Goldcorp in their efforts to continue to maximize profits.

Julian Gerardo Pérez (Jaime's father), Margarita López Bámaca (mother), Nelson Marino Pérez López (brother) and two sisters Marta and Eva Aracelia Pérez López invited us into their tiny home to speak with our delegation and denounce the death of their son and brother while on the job at Goldcorp's mine. Jaime started working at the mine on August 4, 2014, and his job was to place explosives in perforated holes in the tunnels that would then be detonated to expand the underground network. Jaime was paid approximately Q2500 per month (approx. US\$300) for this dirty and very hot, difficult and dangerous work, so as to support his family.

Though the family is not entirely clear on what happened that day to Jaime, they are clear on their pain related to the company's very slow body recovery efforts, the lack of communication with them by Goldcorp, the lack of explanation of how this accident occurred, and of his body's transportation to a morgue, 5 days later, without advising them. "It is a real pain in my heart, the way they treated my son," cries his mother.

The father Julian denounced the discriminatory way in which the company's lawyers treated him during three meetings the family has had, weeks later, with Guatemalan authorities and Goldcorp lawyers. Julian was referred to as "Julianito," as one would refer to a child, and asked if he needed

help with translation, even though he understands Spanish perfectly well. The family are poor Mayan Mam people; they speak Spanish very well. "They did not respect my dignity at all. We are all humans!" he states.

In complete contradiction to claims made by proponents of global, neoliberal resource development, and by Goldcorp about "bringing development" to Guatemala, Julian's father closed out our meeting, saying:

"There is such economic need [in our country], that one has to risk their life for 2,500 Quetzales a month. Then, [when one is killed], we are discriminated against and there is no support from the company."

In Guatemala's well-documented context of racism, exploitation and repression, corruption and impunity, and of staggering mining profits, incidents of mining caused repression, rights violations, harms and indignities – so widely documented since 2004 – continue with no end in sight. It must stop.

"Wake up. Wake up, humanity. We are out of time." – Berta Cáceres

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- Facebook: <https://web.facebook.com/UNBCRightsActionGuate2016>
- Twitter: @cnolin, @RightsAction, and #CDNMinningImpunity #Guatemala #Mining

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