

English Translation

Statement of Concern and Solidarity with the Espinar Community

29 May 2012

Statement of Concern and Solidarity with the Espinar Community in view of the declaration of the state of emergency and illegal detention of 22 civilians

We are international development organisations with links to the Catholic Church, who represent four European countries, Belgium, UK, Germany and Switzerland.

Bethlehem Mission Immensee, Switzerland
Broederlijk Delen, Belgium
CAFOD, England and Wales
Misereor, Germany
MultiWatch, Switzerland

Through this statement, we would like to express our great concern at the increasing conflict in Espinar in recent days and the declaration of a state of emergency in the province. According to local reports, there are about 1,500 police officers present in the region.

We are alarmed about the police violence aimed at people protesting against the Xstrata mining company, which has already resulted in the death of at least two people and a high number of police and civilians wounded, including the Mayor of the provincial municipality of Espinar.

In addition, we have received alarming information about the torture by public security forces of at least three young people from Espinar and the illegal detention and mistreatment of 22 civilians in the Tintaya Marquiri mine site. Of the 22 civilians being detained, three of them are women, one is a minor, and two are staff members of the Vicariate of Solidarity of Sicuani. The Vicariate has always been recognised for its constructive and impartial work in favour of human rights defence, respecting the legal framework and seeking coordination with the state authorities.

As international organisations, committed to the principles of social and environmental responsibility of mining companies, we make an appeal to the parties involved.

With urgency we ask that:

- The authorities guarantee the physical welfare of the detainees, their transfer to a medical centre or place of legal detention, and that the public security forces who have committed acts of violence are duly investigated.
- Xstrata does not allow its mine site to be used for the illegal detention of civilians.
- The delegation of the European Union and the European embassies in Peru give follow up to the accusations, harassment and criminalisation of the Vicariate staff and community leaders of Espinar who are seeking to defend the people's human rights, in accordance with the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders.

- Care is given to ensure the respect for the human rights of the people participating in the protests, and that a peaceful resolution to the conflict is sought with the opening of a meaningful dialogue, facilitated through external and independent mediation.

We also respectfully ask the government authorities that:

- The dialogue is carried out with the presence of the most senior Xstrata representatives who have not been involved directly in the negotiations to date;
- The dialogue also includes representatives of the Ministries of Mining and Energy, Health and the Environment;
- The dialogue takes place in Espinar, and not in Cusco, so that the Espinar Community can know about it and feel part of the process;
- The concerns of the population regarding the high levels of heavy metals found in the soil, water, blood and urine of people living near the mining operations are taken seriously;
- The issue of water quality and scarcity is given consideration, taking into account that it affects a large number of the population and is their central concern with respect to the different mining projects that are being developed in the region;
- New studies and participatory environmental research is taken forward in an objective and scientific way, validated by all of the parties involved in the conflict;

Finally, we express our solidarity with the Vicariate of Sicuani, other social organisations and the municipal authorities, who have been striving for several months for a constructive way of making their concerns heard, regarding Xstrata's social and environmental mining operations in the region.

Signed

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