

15 October 2020

Dear **David R. Boyd**, *UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment*,
Michael Fakhri, *UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food*,
Tlaleng Mofokeng, *UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health*,
Anita Ramasastry (Chair), **Dante Pesce** (Vice-Chair), **Surya Deva**, **Elżbieta Karska**, and **Githu Muigai**, *Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises*,
Leo Heller, *UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to water and sanitation*,
Olivier De Schutter, *UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights*,
Marcos A. Orellana, *UN Special Rapporteur on hazardous substances and wastes*,
and **Francisco Cali Tzay**, *UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples*,

We are writing to offer our warm and emphatic support for your recent report in which you drew attention to the damage inflicted by Cerrejón Coal on the communities surrounding the mine, and particularly on the people of the Indigenous Reservation of Provincial.

Many of us from different organisations around the world, and their partners, have been working for years in support of the communities affected by the Cerrejón Coal mine, including mine workers who themselves have been supportive of the rural communities' struggle for justice. We have helped to build a movement of international solidarity with these communities and to challenge the multinational owners of the mine in the places where they have their headquarters and their shareholder meetings.

London Mining Network, for example, has been involved in this work since its foundation in 2007 and a number of the member groups and individuals in that network have been involved for much longer, since some of us were first invited in 1996 by Wayuu activists to support their struggle. Various of us have been visiting affected communities, both Wayuu and African descent communities, since 2000. We can all offer our own testimony in support of your findings: similar patterns of environmental and social harm are to be found all over the area affected by the mine.



We have hosted numerous visits to Europe and the USA by representatives of communities affected by Cerrejón Coal. We have enabled them to speak at the Annual General Meetings of Anglo American, BHP and Glencore, to bring their concerns to the boards and shareholders of these companies.

We have organised meetings and lobbying with Governments or Parliaments in Germany, Switzerland, the UK, Ireland and Belgium. For example, we have given evidence to UK Parliamentary inquiries into the behaviour of London-listed multinational companies. We have assisted in preparing a lawsuit in the UK and a complaint to the Australian and Swiss National Contact Points of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

In Switzerland, the Cerrejón mine is one of the show cases in the campaign for the public vote on the popular “Responsible Business Initiative” and the subject of a documentary.

We have highlighted the complicity of state-owned and private energy companies in Ireland, Italy and other coal-importing European countries in human rights abuses in their supply chains. In Ireland we have also been helping to highlight the role of CMC, the sales and marketing company based in Dublin through which the sales of all of the coal from the Cerrejón mine are channelled.

German, Swiss and British members of Governments or Parliaments have visited La Guajira and spoken there to the affected communities.

We have published a book and numerous reports, articles and blogs on the damage being done to communities by Cerrejón Coal.

We have provided financial and political support for local groups involved in community organisation and emergency relief.

We have addressed multiple letters to the Colombian authorities and the Colombian Embassies in many countries, to support the rights of the people in La Guajira, which seem to be neglected by the Colombian Government.

All these actions have been well documented.

The call by Special Rapporteurs from the United Nations for the suspension of Cerrejón’s operations in the area of the Provincial community is an important step towards the protection of indigenous rights and a spur to multinational mining companies to exercise responsibility and to governments to protect and defend human rights. We are grateful to you for putting the weight and prestige of the United Nations behind the call for justice for the people of La Guajira who have



suffered so grievously and so long from the activities of companies listed on the London Stock Exchange and connected in many ways with countries in Europe and North America. We will do our best to publicise what you have said, and use your report to strengthen collective efforts to obtain justice at last for our friends in Colombia.

Yours sincerely,

Alexandra Huck, Kolko, Germany.

Andy Higginbottom, Colombia Solidarity Campaign, UK.

Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network, Canada.

Aviva Chomsky, North Shore Colombia Solidarity Committee, US.

Bill Spirito, Colombia Vive, US.

Devuélvannos el agua, devuélvanos la vida. Spain and Ireland.

Diana Salazar, University College London.

Emma Banks, Vanderbilt University, US.

Isobel Tarr, Coal Action Network, UK.

Jacqueline Gilbert, Fulbright Colombia Alumnae, US.

Kirsten Francescone, MiningWatch Canada, Canada.

Latin America Solidarity Centre, Ireland.

Liliana Santo Domingo, Anthropologist and advisor to Nación Wayuu in La Guajira.

Louise Winstanley, ABColombia, UK.

pax christi, Kommission Solidarität Eine Welt. Germany.

Re:Common, Italy.

Richard Solly, London Mining Network, UK.

Rosa Peralta, Comité pour les droits humains en Amérique latine (CDHAL), Canada.

Sebastian Ordonez, War on Want, UK.

Sebastian Rötters, urgewald, Germany.

Stephan Suhner, ASK! (Arbeitsgruppe Schweiz Kolumbien), Switzerland.

The International Office for Human Rights - Action on Colombia (Oidhaco), Belgium.

Thomas McDonagh, TerraJusta, Ireland.

Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective. US.

