



PRESS RELEASE

Ecuador
January 24, 2023
3 PM

The community of El Triunfo in the parish of La Merced Buenos Aires, province of Imbabura, Ecuador **renounces Gina Rinehart, the mining company HANCOCK PROSPECTING, and its subsidiary in Ecuador, HANRINE ECUADORIAN EXPLORATION AND MINING S.A.** and its use of the public forces of the Ecuadorian Army and Police to forcibly enter our community and private properties to build camps and exploration platforms, violating our constitutional right to environmental consultation and private property. Article 398 of our constitution guarantees a referendum vote to communities that could be affected by extractivist projects, This referendum has not been granted to any of the communities living within Hanrine's concessions.

We denounce that the road they intend to use to gain access to the IMBA 2 concession was opened by us, the small farmers of our community, by our own means and financing, and without the support of the Ecuadorian State. Our road has not been officially expropriated by the Ecuadorian state and HANRINE has not obtained a state sanctioned right of way easement. Therefore, this attack on our private property is illegal and unconstitutional.

For the past two weeks, workers from the HANRINE mining company and the Ecuadorian army have been stationed at the entrance of the community of El Trunfo. Two trucks were staying overnight in the El Triunfo community with approximately 100 soldiers guarding 15 trucks, 5 trucks, 1 dump truck and 1 backhoe loader. Today their numbers doubled as approximately 100 troops arrived in the early morning. The HANRINE mining company desires to enter the properties of Hugo Rosero and Artemio Malquín, who have apparently authorized HANRINE to carry out its activities on their land. However, more than 30 farmers have not authorized or granted an easement for the company to enter and use the road.

Today, the military forces present used tear gas and physical violence against a group of local campesinos who were blocking the road in order to defend their constitutional rights. Three people were illegally detained at approximately 11AM. Their whereabouts are not currently known. The names of two of the detained people are believed to be Daniel Sotaminda y Asimero Armas, who is 71 years old and has severe visual and hearing disabilities. The name of the third detained citizen is currently unknown.

At approximately 2:30 PM the military forces were able to disperse the protestors and gain access to the concessionary area through the disbursement of rubber bullets and tear gas. Unfortunately, this military aggression is a repeating pattern. On August 3 2021, HANRINE was granted the right to petition the use of military force to gain access to their concessions. This resulted in a massive military invasion where violent force and tear gas were used against hundreds of campesino residents protesting peacefully against HANRINE and the illegality of Ecuadorian government's granting of their concessions.

The residents of Buenos Aires have since been systematically criminalized, arrested, and abused by HANRINE, its employees, and the Ecuadorian State. We personally hold Gina Rinehart, Hancock Exploration, HANRINE, and Ecuador's president, Guillermo Lasso, responsible for these grave abuses of human rights and constitutional law. **We personally hold Gina Rinehart, Hancock Prospecting, HANRINE, and Ecuador's president, Guillermo Lasso, responsible for the safety and lives of all the residents of the Parroquia de Buenos Aires.**

Communication:

Peter Shear

Director, APT Norte

+593 986 849 950

info@casainteram.org