



Rainforest Action Group

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'Over the last eight years, the Rainforest Action Group has [produced a significant body of work](#) highlighting our environmental and social concerns with Hanrine and other Australian mining companies, both public and private, which are operating with impunity in Ecuador – one of the world's most biodiverse countries with high rates of poverty.

The recent series of feature articles published in The Age and Sydney Morning Herald on Gina Rinehart's Ecuador-based mining company, Hanrine, underlines and deepens our concerns. The story of Hanrine in La Merced de Buenos Aires demonstrates that operations by Australian mining companies are having significant social, environmental and political impacts,' says Liz Downes, a member of the Rainforest Action Group, and the director of the Rainforest Information Centre.

'Various [reports and studies](#) have demonstrated the environmental risks of legal and illegal mining in Ecuador's biodiverse and sensitive terrain, while the impacts of inadequate consultation with communities are having profound social consequences, with high rates of violence and suppression of civil rights by both the companies and the government's attempts to expand the mining industry. [The security risks for Australian mining companies](#) (read also [here](#)) trying to operate in Ecuador are likely to increase as paramilitary gangs grow in strength through the wealth gained by intercepting gold mining operations,' Liz Downes says.

'The recent investigations by The Age and Sydney Morning Herald also detail the lack of accountability that mining companies in these areas seem to operate under – despite the expectation that these companies meet OCED legal obligations under Ecuador's constitution around environmental consultation and Free, Prior and Informed Consent¹ and also the rights of nature²,' Liz Downes says.

'We are heartened that this issue is finally receiving media attention in this country, and ask the Australian government to investigate further whether Australian mining companies operating internationally are meeting requirements and obligations under the law – as Ecuador is not the only country where our companies are alleged to be causing environmental and social harms,' Liz Downes says.

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¹ Art.57 and 398

² Art. 71-74