

<p>Shohei Yasuda President, Asahi Refining USA Inc. Salt Lake City, Utah 84120</p>	<p>James Verraster III CEO, Auramet International LLC Teaneck, New Jersey 07666</p>
<p>Rodrigo Barbosa President, Aura Minerals Inc. Miami, Florida 33130</p>	<p>Paulo Carlos de Brito Board Chairman, Aura Minerals Inc. Miami, Florida 33130</p>

June 25, 2023

Dear Sirs:

We are writing once again about the continuing destruction of the **Indigenous Maya Chortí community of Azacualpa in** La Unión, Copán Department. For several years, the Azacualpa Environmental Committee has been organizing to shut down the San Andrés gold mine, which, like other large scale open-pit mechanized mines, leaches deadly chemicals such as cyanide into water sources.

In 2014 protests erupted in La Unión when the mining company Minerales de Occidente S.V. (MINOSA), operated by Miami-based Aura Minerals, came dangerously close to the 200-year old Azacualpa cemetery. In 2015, the municipality held a *cabildo abierto*, a legally binding town hall referendum in support of the opposition, but the company proceeded to exhume ancestral graves to get at the gold deposits underneath. In November 2020 the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice ordered a cessation of the removal of the buried bodies, but MINOSA defied the order and continued with the destruction. Not only did they bribe and threaten community members to get authorization to exhume bodies from the cemetery but MINOSA executives conspired with a local judge and municipal authorities to get illegal authorization to exhume bodies, which was in direct violation of the Supreme Court ruling.

From the destruction of hills and forests, pollution of waterways, cemetery removal, and destruction of housing infrastructure to illnesses like skin rashes, hair loss, and mysterious types of cancers, residents of Azacualpa have suffered the impacts of the San Andrés mine for too many years. They report difficulty sleeping and damage to their houses because of the detonations. Documents indicate that the mine's expansion plan goes beyond the desecration of the cemetery and implies the forced displacement of 400-500 families of Azacualpa and the destruction of another water source.


Aura Minerals has routinely mischaracterized its operations in reports to shareholders and other business partners. In its 2021 Sustainability Report, the company states that the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner oversaw the relocation of the cemetery, a claim that Commissioner Isabel Albaladejo has categorically denied. Aura Minerals/MINOSA is subject to numerous criminal, civil, and administrative complaints, and adopts business practices that violate human rights standards. It uses coercive tactics (harassment, threatens, and criminalization) against community leaders. Even after such flagrant violations of corporate responsibility, Asahi Refining USA (a subsidiary of Japanese conglomerate Asahi Group Holdings) and Auramet International LLC continue to conduct business with Aura.

In February 2023, the Committee of People Affected by MINOSA sent a letter to Asahi Refining USA and Auramet International LLC which was signed by our organization and 60 others. Asahi Refining sent an unsatisfactory response; there is still no response from Auramet.

We strongly urge that

- Asahi and Auramet immediately suspend their ties with Aura Minerals
- MINOSA terminate its mining operations at the Azacualpa cemetery
- the government of Honduras conduct a public consultation process with local communities about the future of mining projects in the area

Sincerely,

  
Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinators

  
Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Blanca Sarai Izaguirre Lozano, National Commissioner for Human Rights of Honduras ~ via email  
Abg. Agapito Alexander Rodríguez Escobar, Director Ejecutivo de INHGEOMIN: Instituto Hondureño de Geología y Minas ~ via email  
Sr. Lucky Medina, Secretario de Recursos Naturales (MiAmbiente) ~ via email  
Asahi Refining: Simon Houghton-Dodd, Compliance Manager ~ via email  
MINOSA ~ via US mail  
Javier Efraín Bú Soto, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via email and US mail  
IACHR: Carlos Bernal Pulido (Rapporteur for Honduras) and Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño (Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) ~ via US mail and email  
Isabel Albaladejo Escribano, Representative to Honduras of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OACNUDH) ~ via email  
Alice Shackelford, UN Resident Coordinator in Honduras, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email  
Bufete de Estudios para la Dignidad / Office of Studies for Dignity ~ via email  
US Embassy in Honduras: Ambassador Laura F. Dogu and Ariel Jahner, Human Rights Officer ~ via email  
US State Department: Bryan Schell, Honduras Desk Officer ~ via email  
US Senators Brown & Vance ~ via email  
US Representatives Beatty, Brown, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Sykes ~ via email

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**The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter:**