

# **Laura Leonor Vasquez Pineda: Another Activist Murder Linked to Canadian Mining in Guatemala**

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**Laura Leonor Vasquez Pineda was a fierce opponent of mining near the El Escobal silver mine owned by the Canadian company Tahoe Resources.**

Guatemalan environmentalist Laura Leonor Vasquez Pineda was shot dead Monday in the southeastern department of Jalapa, local authorities have confirmed.

Police said she was shot in the head by a group of unknown men who raided her home during the night. She was a member of the Committee for the Defense of Life and Peace in San Rafael Las Flores near the El Escobal silver mine owned by Canadian company Tahoe Resources.

The area near the El Escobal silver mine has been a scene of conflict since the mine was established in 2007. Opponents of the mine, mainly Xinca people, have held numerous peaceful protests that have been met with violence from mine guards and police.

Residents near El Escobal depend on agriculture and their lands have been affected by the mining activity. In 2013, Tahoe Resources was granted a 25-year mining license, and villagers conducted a referendum in which they expressed their opposition.

The government then sent in the military and later falsely accused 17 opponents of the silver mine, including Vasquez Pineda, of violent crimes. Vasquez Pineda was jailed for seven months as a consequence of her activism, but the charges brought against her were never proven.

Several organizations in Guatemala are outraged over the murder of Vasquez Pineda and demanded the government find those responsible. Human rights groups have also expressed concern for the rising number of activists killed recently in Central America.

A number of international human rights, environmental justice and solidarity organizations have urged Guatemala's attorney general to bring justice and end the deadly attacks against environmentalists.

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**P.S.**

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<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Another-Activist-Murder-Linked-to-Canadian-Mining-in-Guatemala-20170119-0021.html>