

BARRICK'S DIRTY SECRET: Mining in Papua New Guinea

a report submitted by www.corpwatch.org

PHOTOS AND INTERVIEWS BY DAVID MARTINEZ

In August 2006, videographer and journalist David Martinez traveled to Papua New Guinea to investigate grievances at the Porgera Gold Mine. The Porgera Gold Mine is 75 percent owned by Canadian Corporation, Barrick Gold, which acquired Porgera's former owner, Placer Dome in March of 2006.

The Porgera deposits are currently being mined using open-pit and underground mining methods. In this process, cyanide is used to treat the gold ore. According to our interviews and research performed by Mining Watch Canada, the waste from this process is polluting two rivers. In one, the cyanide-laced tailings are being deposited directly into the river, a practice that is illegal in most countries, including Canada. The other river is being polluted by the debris from the mine, which is creating a marsh of quicksand where people used to live.

Our interviews and video documentation demonstrate a lack of development in the communities surrounding the mine. Landowners (i.e. the indigenous population) also complain of a lack of monetary compensation, coupled with restrained access to the natural resources that they used to rely on for food, water, housing, and alluvial mining. Meanwhile, roads remain unpaved and many primary landowners live in shacks.

In addition to restricting the access to sources of food and water, the pollution of the rivers also pose a serious health threat, especially to those who continue to live on the mine's perimeter and those who continue to practice alluvial mining.

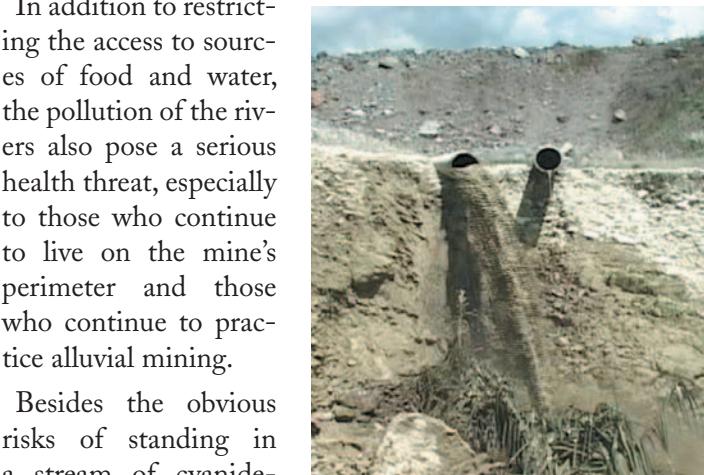
Besides the obvious risks of standing in a stream of cyanide-tainted water, the company's security personnel shoot at these miners. In April 2006 Placer Dome even admitted to killing eight of the local villagers over the years, though local human rights groups put that number at well over 20.

In this report, you will find a sampling of the testimonies gathered from the community affected by the mining operations at the Porgera Gold Mine. Those interviewed include landowners, a representative of a human rights organization, women, mine workers, alluvial miners and displaced people, including tribal headmen and local leaders who were present when the mining agreement was first signed. The views presented are those of the people who are presenting them and the organizations that they represent.

TOP: THE TAILINGS PIPE DEPOSIT CYANIDE-LACED MINE TAILINGS DIRECTLY INTO THE PORGERA RIVER, WHICH DOES NOT MEET THE GULF OF PAPUA FOR ANOTHER 800 KM. RIVERINE TAILINGS DISPOSAL HAS BEEN ABANDONED

BY MOST MAJOR MINE COMPANIES, DUE TO ITS HARSH ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS.

BELOW: THE DUMPING OF DEBRIS HAS TURNED THIS RIVER INTO A SLOW MOVING MARSH OF "QUICKSAND".



THE LANDOWNER'S PERSPECTIVE: SHUT OUT OF THE DEAL, LEFT WITH THE MESS

An interview with Mr. Poko Lege of Pium, PNG

(translated from local dialect)

What happened when the mine first came to Porgera?

First when the company came they told the Pium land owners including myself that the company is coming to develop the gold in Porgera. So the Pium land owners are supposed to give the land to the government to develop the gold.

So, I and my people questioned the government and the company of Wistles who came to negotiate and they told us what benefit are we going to get out of the mine if we let our land go, and then they told us that we will be living in high house; we will be paid so much money; we will get business spinoff and get us into contacts with the mine; and we will have plenty of cars; and we will put their kids to school; and we will be benefiting just like the people from the mine.

Who told you this?

The company of Wistles and the Government of Wistles through mining corporation unit.

So, agreeing upon those words we gave our land to the government to develop the mining town.

We gave all our land and we took a very small portion along the river. All of our land along the road was given to the government to develop.

And now that the mine is in operation that small piece of land that we have taken has been covered by Anaway waste dump. And now we have no land; we are a shortage of land; we have no place to go; we have no money; we've got no

contract with the mine, we are just totally in bad place.

What do you hope to achieve with this group?

There are many positions that we have carried out. The negotiations should be honored they should have given me the house that they promised, they should have given me the contact they promised, they should have give me my compensation payment as they promised. And for the dump area of Anaway, the company should find new land and build the house and relocate me in that new place."



POKO LEGE AND HIS TRIBE HAD TO MOVE FOR THE PORG-ERA MINE TO BE BUILT. THEY RELOCATED TO AN AREA BY THE RIVER THAT WAS SOON OVERTAKEN BY MINE WASTE.

An Interview with Nelson Akiko

My name is Nelson Akiko I am from this Yarik village within the SML, Special Mining List area.

Tell me about your house and how you are living.

I used to live where the actual mine is taking place, Alivis. Now, I was relocated by the company to this village here, this unstable area as you can see. The place to your right left back and front, I am living here

And what do you think of how you are living?

Well, as I just mentioned: unstable, my life is unstable. I am not living to that expectation, once the company came and said that you conditions of life would improve in terms of infrastructure developments, compensations and so forth.

Everything is not what the company told me.



NELSON AKIKO, PRINCIPAL LANDOWNER,
EXPLAINS HOW HE FEELS THAT THE COMPANY
HAS NOT FULFILLED THEIR PROMISES AND
CALLS FOR MORE TRANSPARENCY.

Why not?

Well, maybe that's the company's policy or our government. I've been talking; I've been going to national government, our provincial government, the company... And nothing positive, no good response to what... to me... not me, but the people.

Just look at it. Look at the replacement, my house. Look, there's a house on your right. Just look at the people. Look at my store here. There's nothing; it's not stocked.

Do you have any faith that the government is going to change the situation?

We've been trying so many times, as I said there was no good response.

What are you going to do if things don't change?

At the moment, I am trying to renegotiate the previous agreement that my forefathers signed when I was back in the village. I think when we review and renew these agreements is reviewed, I think things will change.

What if they don't?

Then, I have some possibilities, but I don't want to mention it here. There are ways.

Anything else that you want to add?

Just look around, you know, and you've been to some mines overseas. Within PNG we have some mines, but our mine, Porgera Mine, is different than other mines around the world.

When you look at your right, just look at it, people are dumped.

We depend on our land. You depend on money. Money is not need, it is only a want, but it is need in western society. I live on land, which is my stomach. I grow food from this land and then I survive. But now, where can I get food?

I grow food from this soil if I have no land, I have no life. But now, where can I live? Where is my life? You cannot live with money and air without food.

PNG, we have a different society. I can't go and stay in someone else's land, they will kill me. So I have to stay in my land grow food in there, make house in there, look after pig

in there, make business in there. If there is no land, Nelson Akiko will not exist.

So everything is taken by the company, and the company has no sympathy for the genuine, for the principal landowners.

...

Another thing, I am paid by PJV royalties, the company royalties, equity, occupations. These are some sort of compensations that the company pays to the landowners, but these ones are not satisfied.

Whether they are using the same rate, or the current rate who's controlling the money? Myself, I'm not aware of the money, who's controlling the money.

For example, if I am [supposed to be] paid monthly, then I am paid quarterly in royalty payments and then they used to tell me that there is technical problem and delay the time. I should depend on those royalties and the same thing applies to equity which I own 2.5 percent, with a total of 5 percent, another 2.5 percent our provincial government gets.

And then I have no record of that payment. I end up with 500 kina, 1000 kina, 2000 kina...

I'm talking about the book, I should get more for equity than royalties, occupation, compensation and so forth and then other business spin off.

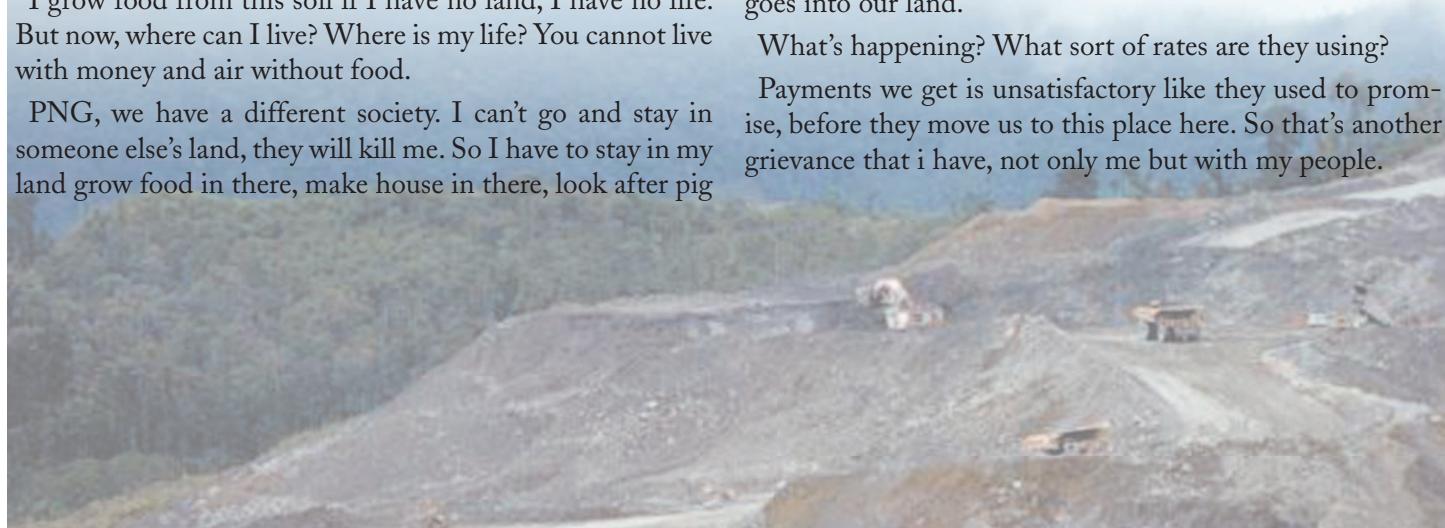
I'm not getting any benefit. They are totally controlled by an outsiders!

Or... I want to know! Nobody comes here and explain to me or to my people that this is what's happening with your royalty, this is what's happening with your equity payment and occupations and so forth.

I want compensations for our guidance when the company goes into our land.

What's happening? What sort of rates are they using?

Payments we get is unsatisfactory like they used to promise, before they move us to this place here. So that's another grievance that I have, not only me but with my people.



An interview with Mr. Egebredi Momai Andambo

I am one of the 23 committees of the Porgera land region in the past when the mining was about to develop the 23 were to negotiate. At the time I was not prepared to sign the agreement, and so I was being pushed aside and the other people who were highlighted took part in the annexation.

The company does not pay or compensate our land property.

We do not get any bit for all the mining, in terms of royalty, in terms of equity, or mine contracts or whatever.

We are also being effected by the gas from the mine, the pollution and noise, and we are not being treated properly.

We breath the smoke from the mine. It pollutes the air system, and when it forms the cloud and comes down it poisons the tank waters. And we drink out of it and it may have destroyed some parts of our body.

We get sick. We are being effected by the gas and we have pneumonia and respiratory disease. Our rivers are being polluted; the company does not get us relocated. We do not [have] good houses to live in.

The houses built by the company are small box houses, not fit to accommodate all the families.

The executives, the developers, and the government have been incorporated and they do it to benefit themselves and not the landowners.

The landowners do not want any trucks. They do not have any good houses or any investment or any business. The PJV has not helped landowners in any way in any part of the country. There is no [PJV] department in the district; there is no good school; there is no add room or reserve electricity. They did not put any services to the district, did not provide health services, education services, power supply, did not seal the road, did nothing.

And Placer Dome that leaving us in darkness.

And now that Barrick comes up, Barrick is saying that the mine will extend another 35 years, and we do not know if that is true or if that is false.

Placer has damaged our environments and even stole our gold. And even Placer has got a loan and also Placer has got a huge claim from the land owners and Placer just disap-



MR. EGBREDI MOMAI ANDAMBO DESCRIBES THE ORIGINAL LAND AGREEMENT MADE WITH THE MINE AND HIS DISAPPOINTMENT WITH HOW THAT AGREEMENT WAS CARRIED OUT.

peared leaving all of these claims and leaving the mess.

Placer is responsible for cleaning the mess that they have left but instead Placer moved on and we have responded another company by the name of Barrick Gold corporation.

And now we are waiting to see how Barrick corporation will cope with us.

What are you going to do if Barrick does not cooperate?

With Barrick in place we are trying to review the mining agreement. Placer did not review the mining agreement, so now with Barrick we want to review the Porgera mining agreement and put some new clause in to best suits the people.

And if Barrick does not want to listen the landowners, we will close the mine and allow Barrick to move out.

Do you think that the government will support the cause of the people?

Government will support the developer because the developer has an agreement with the government; and the government will not support me to chase Barrick out. But, as a landowner I have the power to close the mine.

This is a transcription of an interview that took place in Papua New Guinea's Enga Province in August 2006. The voice and grammar of the interviewees has been preserved for accuracy. Please excuse any spelling errors regarding names and places.

BROKEN PROMISES AND SKETCHY DEALS:

An interview with Village Headman, Arnold Nesocrina

My name is Arnold Nesocrina, I am one of the principal landowners here come Kiligima South Plane, and this is where I come from and this is the house where I sleep. I also work for the landowners association as the general secretary and before the mine started the agreement was signed 1989 with the landowners.

The landowners intention for signing agreement for signing the agreement was to achieve maximum benefit from the mine: economically, socially and you know all of these benefits. But these benefits were not forthcoming and state and the developers, Placer, the parent company in Canada. And in the agreement there set of provisions there which talks about the environment and landowner benefits. And those provisions were not being delivered and the agreement did become a fake agreement. Landowners have asked the state and the developer and they say that currently the mine is taken over by Barrick Corporation, is another parent company in Canada, currently Barrick owns 75 percent of the mine, Porgera mine alone.

What actually happened was that. That was the intentions of the landowners in signing the agreement and giving away the land.

What was the intention?

The intention was to receive the maximum benefit to directly participate in the mine, not indirectly. But those promises were not being delivered, not honored. And landowners now see that as a result there are a lot of social change, their way of living, cultural changes, the land is overcrowded, littering people, more disease, Papua New Guineans migrating into Porgera, of course all of the social problems. A lot of this is man created us, damage to the environment, water pollutions. You know, nobody really cares about the poor people here. Especially in Porgera mine. If it was in other country like America, and Australia or Canada, and this company was operating Porgera mine, it would have been a big problem. And of course a lot of our damages is because toxic waste into the river. And very important thing here is that people here very depend their life on the land itself, I mean to Papua New Guinea, especially we Engans, we depend our life on the land. Land is our life, but to the western world like America and Australia and Canada and all these places, there life is money.

But to us especially Porgerans and Engans money is just a word to us and land is our life. And taking into consideration the governments and the corporations that have done something, we anticipated that the benefits would be coming to us originally when the agreement was signed; but it never came.

Whatever promises that they made was not delivered and landowners have now prove that there were favors for state and with the government. Even in 1999, the agreement was signed the company was not made party to the agreement. Companies and developers and the owners in Canada should've been made a party to the agreement so that they actively participate in ruling the provisions of the agreement. That was not done it was deliberately.... the landowners wanted PJV to be party but something went wrong and the developer which was Placer was deliberately omitted from being party to the agreement. And the state was made party to the agreement so that the company indirectly honored some of the provisions of the agreement through the directives through the national government of Papua New Guinea

This was a big trick played, by the developer and the state.

So the company was not present at the agreements when they were made?

The company were actually there, was actually present there and they agreed to be party to the agreement and the draft was done. And some people who got involved in the Department of Mining, I could name one.... I can recall his name it is Joe Ritt and David Evanson. They all benefited out of PJV

as a result of successfully negotiating this agreement by not making PJV party to this agreement. So, some of these guys are enjoying a luxury life at the expense of the poor landowners here in Porgera mine. And the agreement was signed and PJV is enjoying the benefits through the profits for the mine and the PNG government is enjoying from the taxes that they collect from the mine.

What else, the poor landowners suffer and don't get the benefit from the mine.

I don't know this only applies to Porgera mine or this applies to mining all over the world. And that is not known, but we are still working on it to find out where we



ARNOLD NESOCRINA, GENERAL SECRETARY OF A LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION AND VILLAGE HEADMAN, TALKS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FACED BY PEOPLE AT THE MINE, AND THE TACTICS USED BY PLACER TO AVOID RESPONSIBILITY.

can be miss out because we are the legitimate land owners who really own the mine, and the gold and the land.

And that is not only the case. As a result of the mine activities, the company is deposit all of this waste. Wasting through the river system Cyanide, Mercury, you name all of the chemicals that they use in the mine, to extract the gold. You know and all of these got through the river system in Porgera River and all around the perimeter of the special mining lists area. There is a mining law that people should mining list should be allowed only for the operator of the mine. Because it is very dangerous for people living next to the mine.

What are you doing now to make that happen?

What we actually trying to do is... we have already put in submissions, posi-

tion papers to the state so that some of these environmental issues, resettlement issues, social issues. And land owner rights problems all this will be addressed at the forum, by reviewing the MOA. And that now before the national government of PNG, I believe some of them will be this week.

So... we want them, the state and developer, to come very positively with our position papers because even with resettlement problem and land rights problem and environment problem is, we are also asking the government to at least address these problems. I mean nobody cares because the government is looking for getting the taxes and companies is not a government, where it will care about the people, they are here to make profit, they make profit and they are gone. So poor people who are landowners back at home, they suffer.

Wasting through the river system Cyanide, Mercury, you name all of the chemicals that they use in the mine, to extract the gold. You know and all of these got through the river system in Porgera River and all around the perimeter of the special mining lists area.

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William Gaupe Income Chairman for Porgera Landowners Association

Whats going on with you and the landowners?

The landowners are really being used. the landowners are being represented by PEAK committees and these PEAK committees are rubber stamps. They are being used by key people in Port Moresby and they are known as national executives, and they get all of the benefits that landowners deserve and landowners get nothing.

Now we are trying to tell the company is that we do not want the PEAK to exist. And that the company should deal directly with the landowners and whatever decisions that they make should be between the company and the landowners. Not any middlemen to stay in the middle to speak on behalf of the landowners.

So those people are the representative of the landowners?

Exactly.

How do you feel about the benefits of the mine that are given out to Porgera?

The benefits are not being given fairly the landowners are being miss out. The landowners are not benefiting from the mine. Totally, they are not benefiting from the mine. Instead

of the landowners, the benefits are going to the middle-people. these middle people are not landowners, they are supposed to be custodians. They are not direct representatives.

So what we are trying to do, what me and my group are trying to do is direct the benefits for the landowners directly to the landowners through forming alleges (sic) in Porgera land groups.

So, we have already formed in alleges, there are 61 alleges and these 61 alleges will be the people who will represent the interests of the landowners and each of the alleges humans will become the committee of that region.



And by doing that we think that the benefits will go directly to the landowners and everything be different with the landowners rather than having the PEAK.

WILLIAM GAUPE OF THE PORGERA LAND-
OWNERS ASSOCIATION EXPLAINS HOW THE
ORIGINAL LANDOWNERS ARE NOT BEING
REPRESENTED BY THE COMMITTEE THAT THE
COMPANY HAS SET UP.

Tribe Representatives Discuss Corporate Subsidies

PJV gets the water supply from this dam to do its mining and PJV gets free water supply. PJV does not make any payment so the landowners usually put in claims to get pay them, but PJV does not pay them.

They only pays a payment what they call occupation payment. Every year, but that's not much.

So this is free water?

PJV is using free water, free electricity, free land everywhere. PJV is using free land and free everything to do its mining.

These are... this belong two big south clan in Porgera valley,

one is represent the Enga clan, and on behalf of the Enga clan, I can say that we have not received any payment.

And Mr. walker, who is here, is

representing Rumaniambo clan and I myself represent Enga Poa clan; and we own this dam. We haven't received any compensation the water is get getting without any payment. But actually they pay only a provision fee they pay here which is: my clansman receive 600 Kina*, equivalent to US \$150 and same to other kina rumaniano also receive 600 Kina.

So that is the only benefit for such a big gold mining of Placer company. At the moment the in 2006, it is owned by Barrick, the biggest company. PJV has taken our water. and we come here to show you that PJV never give us any benefit. So this is the highlight of the damn, that PJV has just taken our water.

These are mountain forest land is a very good mountain forest land my grandfather went to 18th century and 19th century (sic). They get bulls, listen birds signing, they enjoyed themselves and when PJV, the bigger developer companies comes with too many noise like helicopters flying up and down big heavy equipment engines nosing every direction and all these birds and all these animals like bush koala bear (in PNG we usually have the koala bear but not any more), these animals were gone and our environment is all damage and never come again.

*US \$1 = 2.7 KINA



TRIBE REPRESENTATIVES MAKE THEIR CASE, WHILE SHOWING OFF THE DAM.

AUDIO, TRANSCRIPTS, AND PICTURES ARE AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF THE PRESS OF THIS INTERVIEW AS WELL AS MANY OTHERS.

PLEASE CONTACT: SAKURA@CORPWATCH.ORG

Learning from Experience: life after mining in Misima, PNG

My name is Joseph Polisbo. I am from here, Misima, my dad is from Sertdest my mother is from Kerema but I was born and raised from here, so I consider myself a Misiman

I have with me about thirteen fourteen years of mine experience. About 8 and a half years with Misima mines with the open pit mining operations, and about 4 years 8 months now with Lihir government over at new island province.

Do you remember life before the mine?

I remember it very clear, a very big difference. Before the mine, the life that was here was basically a subsistence farming, where people didn't rely on the cash economy, but the subsistence way of life. It changed dramatically when the mine came; it was like a culture shock to the people.

And then you were here during the mine and then after as well?

The whole life of the mine, before the mine, during the construction, and during the operation, which was a very peaceful one and ended peacefully without crisis like Mungumby.

And what are things like after the mine is gone?

When the mine came there were a lot of opportunities that open up. People were employed, people saw cash, family life began to improve, people's social life as well. For the landowner group, they were getting royalties and all this is not happening now that the mine is gone.

Were you one of the landowners that received royalties?

No, i was raised on the island off from Misima, but worked here during the mine and also I am married a local lady from the landowner group itself.

Were there any problems that came with the mine being here? I mean, you said there were some good things, but what about bad things?

I will try to answer to the best of my knowledge, to things that i've seen. On the land usage, yes there has been a big damage. They have left a big whole out there on the pit, which was once gardening for the people and also on the cash economy, people have been rely on. They started to rely on the cash to buy these things which they don't get that

anymore. And to teach people to introduce them to cash, and then leave them to go back to the subsistence way of life, it takes time and it has effected the people very much, yes.

What do you think could help the people? What would you like to see happen?

I think that one of the failures of the mining like when they came into operations, they should also teach people or make people aware that it is only for a short time. 10 years over here. Like ahh... is a long time, but all things will come to an end one day. And for people to live in a subsistence way of life and then get introduced to cash and then go to square one again it is a very hard thing. It takes time for people to accept the old way of life here.

Do you think that will come to pass? Will people learn again how to live without cash?

It will take a long time. And from what I hear now, down at the other side, they say that they are going to get a mine back here again. They have some meetings already and they say that they are going to give only 2 years for people to come in and get prospecting and what not.

But I've been working on the mine for a long time and I don't think that mining is the answer to the problem that we have, because they come in and build up community hole, teachers, houses, hospitals that we have up there. The road that we are on now, the condition is very poor, and those several infrastructure that they have introduced, they leave behind and then the government wipes their hands clear and say it is not our project; we have no money budgeted for it.

No one takes responsibility?

No one.

What about the big whole that was left, one of them was filled with water. The other one we couldn't even see because it was overgrown. You said this was some sort of environmental damage. Did those used to be gardens?

They were gardens and also hunting grounds for the people.

And I understand that the one that's filled with water now also provides hydropower to the village. Is this true?

It's true only really in a sense because only some villages on the way to the town that benefit from it.

We are right under the power lines now which was once serviced that used to be run by the mine itself, which are no longer existence which now they sort of just decorate the place.

So, no power in these lines?

No.

So, did the company promise to seal the road and the airport? to take care of the mine?

I, for one did not sign the agreement itself, so I cannot say. But I think like everything else, if they have to come here and get things, I think that they should have improved on those. And if they have to live our infrastructures like roads, hospital, our airport should be sealed and roads should be good condition for some time. And mine has just left like 3 years ago, and the state of things that you can see the condition that everything is in is very bad condition.

Do you want to say anything else?

Bougainville is where the first mine came up, Bougainville copper mine, I never had a chance of going over to that island, most of the people that we can see are dark skin people of Bougainville from there I work next to it over on new island.

Just one time by chance a flight was diverted and let us down in Bougainville. We knew that Bougainville did not end peacefully like Misima. It ended half way prematurely because of crisis and all this, and today you hear that Bougainville is trying to break off from the rest of Papua New Guinea.

And Bougainville is back in very good condition now.

And I had a chance just once (I don't think that I'll have a chance of going back again). I was quite happy to see the state that Bougainville was in now that from crisis. Life during mining, I wasn't there. Life during crisis, I wasn't there. But just after crisis, I have seen and the result of that is not because of mining. It is because of the agriculture, coco and whatnot. So, I think that mining is not the answer all the problems that we have. I think that we can do it ourselves on our products that we have here, on the oceans that we have here.

So what shocked you is how productive Bougainville had become?



JOSEPH POLISBO, A FORMER MINE WORKER AT BOTH THE MISIMA AND LIHIR MINE SITES AND A NATIVE TO MISIMA. HE EXPLAINS HOW LIFE HAS BEEN DISRUPTED SINCE THE CLOSING OF MISIMA MINE. MISIMA MINE WAS OWNED BY CANADIAN COMPANY PLACER DOME AND CLOSED OPERATIONS THREE YEARS AGO.

Very true, yes, and if Bougainville can do it, Misima can, and the rest of PNG can.

The case here with Misima would be a good case study for the rest of PNG because it started as I said peacefully and ended peacefully. And probably the agreements that were signed were not educated Misimas, but by older Misimans, who did not know how to read and write, but were simply convinced, and so they went ahead and signed the agreement. So the rest of the mines coming up now, the alluvians came up here during the operations so the operations themselves got a copy of the agreement and the later mines can base their agreement on and probably the later mines can base their agreements on that and base their agreements on that.

So, they learn from you hopefully?

Yup. They will learn a lot.

Bougainville is back in very good condition now... I have seen and the result of that is not because of mining. It is because of the agriculture, coco and whatnot. So, I think that mining is not the answer all the problems that we have. I think that we can do it ourselves on our products that we have here, on the oceans that we have here.

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A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE:

A Female landowner describes the mine's influence on daily life and tribal matters

I am a principal landowner and I think that I should be benefiting a lot, but I only get a 300 Kina.

How often?

I get the 300 Kina as a royslyt payment quarterly, but now it has moved to yearly. That is all that I get.

For I got a family and I'm married, and how can I budget that 300 Kina for the year?

Is that 300 Kina being paid by the company, or where is it coming from? The mountain the comapany is getting the gold out is my mountain!

How do you feel about what's happened to the mountain?

When I see all of this big modern technology, machines I get pain in my heart and I think if I were a man I would shot all of the people out there. But I am a woman, so I cannot do anything. So I just stay.

How has the mine changed life for women?

Now I have more problem and living a harder life. in the olden days I used to good drink fresh clean water with paste now she is drinking tressness (sic) water. they used to have good bananas, and now

they got bananas that is not sweet, and the bananas are not bearing good fruits and even the covers as well. We used to have good kava in the garden, but under the conditions most kavas have gone, and now one type of kava is in the place.

For the women of Porgera, how has life changed?

In the olden days before the mining, all the women were being properly protected and secured by the men through the sub clan. But now when the mine came and all things kind of came apart: tribes not living together, women all scattered over, and they are not well-protected. And now that money is scarce ... those that don't have the money, they have no place to move to, they've got no money to give to bus drivers, they are not living in good house, they are living in a school settlement out in the bushes. and through that and some ladies are caught into sicknesses like AIDS and it is hopeless now.

and some ladies are caught into sicknesses like AIDS and it is hopeless now.

Is there anything else you want to add?

Now I am in doubt of where the gold is being sold and where the gold is being kept. as a landowner, I have a share of 2.5 percent and according to that sale we are given a gold bar to sell by the company and where is that gold bar. Now is the 17th year the mine is starting in 1989 and to date, it has been 17 years and I don't know where my gold bar is.

This is a transcription of an interview that took place in Papua New Guinea's Enga Province in August 2006. The voice and grammar of the interviewees has been preserved for accuracy. Please excuse any spelling errors regarding names and places.

SUI, A PRINCIPAL LAND OWNER, CLAIMS THAT THE MINE HAS MADE LIFE MUCH HARDER. SHE COMPLAINS THAT THE LAND DOES NOT PRODUCE AS MUCH OR AS SWEET FOOD, THE WATER TASTES BAD AND THE WOMEN ARE LESS SECURE.

AUDIO AND PICTURES ARE AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF THE PRESS OF THIS INTERVIEW AS WELL AS OTHER INTERVIEWS WITH WOMEN.

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HUMAN RIGHTS IN PORGERA:

Killing Alluvial Miners

AN INTERVIEW WITH JEFFREY SIMPSON

ATA is an organization that has been formed. ATA simply means, an abbreviation, it means Akali Tange Association. It is in our own dialect, Akali Tange means human rights, or the owner of the people, the owner of the people who have been suffered or who have been dead, yes. ATA means that. ATA was formed to protect the indigenous community who have been suffered by the impact of the mining here in Porgera. we call ourselves, this organization...

It was founded in 2004. it was in 2004 and then ah ...so far three years, three years so far—it's 2006 now. It is now, it is turning 2.5 years, the organization.

What kind of suffering was there, what are the conditions?

It was an on-going problem here in Porgera. There was a lot of shootings there has been done by the company, security forces of the company. There has been a lot of rapes that has been going on in the mine site, especially to the people, especially the illegal miners who are going there to do illegal mining. There is a lot of rapes done in there. A lot of injuries were also caused at the mine site when the securities chased the illegal miners. There were a lot of deaths as well. So far at least in ATA at least we have 39 people who have been deceased. We have more than 2000 people injured, More than 3-4000 people who are, who have been detained in the jail.

The Porgera jail, or a jail of the mine?

There is a confusion in there. There is a jail in the mine site and there is a lockup in the mine site. There is another lockup in the police station...okay, when the company detain any of those, catch any of those illegal miners they lock them up at the mine site locks ups. Later, they take them to the cell block there in the police station which just belongs to the state.

What kind of authority do they have?

I'm not pretty sure what kind of agreement there has been. What kind of contract or some kind of agreement there has been signed with the police department and the State. I'm not pretty sure but what has happened is that the indigenous people believe that when the mining company itself said the

illegal miners are illegally looking for gold, the people themselves in the community believe they are illegally doing that job. So when the security sort of gets

them and puts them in the lockups and do whatever they want to do, they just comply to what is happening. They don't treat that they have any right to retaliate or take the matter into justice or something. That is what they do. Our organization is presently the ATA. We proclaim that when the company says there are illegal mining activity happening in Porgera, the ATA says [there isn't] illegal mining activity going on in Porgera because ATA believe that every community, every member of the community has the right to live. They have to survive; in order to survive they have to find something for a day. So. especially the mining community, if you look around the mining community you see that the villages are congested. They are all over the place. Mining is done everywhere, is sort of scattered. the villages are also around. If we take a walk around the mine site you will see that the village is located everywhere just around the mine site and the waste is flowing around the villages. You can find that the people sometimes they find it hard to travel to the outer village because of this

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JEFFREY SIMPSON, AKALI TANGE ASSOCIATION (ATA)
A HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATION THAT DEALS WITH ISSUES SURROUNDING THE PORGERA MINE IN THE ENGA PROVINCE, PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

has been washed down there. It's sort of dangerous. Some can sink into quicksands and all this. There is the problem that we have in Porgera.

What about the 2000 injuries?

These injuries have been caused by security personnel in the mine site. They sort of chase the illegal miners away from the mine site and some of them fall into deep pits and break their legs, arms, get injured. Most of them are shot directly by ...most of them are shot directly by the security forces. They shoot under the legs and even every part of their body. The unfortunate ones are dead; the fortunate ones can escape.

We saw two places with illegal mining, are there others?

Along the [rivers] people do illegal mining because peo-

ple, the villages are congested, the villages are just nearby those sediments, those waste tailings. [People are] going to and from those mined areas because some they look for gold, some they get in there to look for firewoods and the rest of the stuff...

And other sites?

Illegal pannings are done everywhere in the Porgera valley. We have illegal mining done down in the valleys, at the edge of the rivers, downstream. We also have illegal mining in and around the mining area.

What are ATA's activities to combat this?

To combat this, ATA is doing especially...ATA is doing something that is supposed to be doing by the government and what's supposed to be done by the other group repre-



ALLUVIAL MINERS LOOKING FOR GOLD UNDER A TAILINGS STREAM. CYANIDE AND MERCURY-LACED TAILINGS ARE DEPOSITED DIRECTLY INTO THE RIVER SYSTEM NEAR THE PORGERA MINE, POSING A HEALTH THREAT TO ALLUVIAL MINERS AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES.

The company call the people who trespass into the mining area to do gold mining, to find for gold especially at the mine site, around the waste area, they call them illegal miners. But our organization, ATA, the organization that protects those people, we call them alluvial miners. Company calls them illegal miners, but ATA calls them alluvial miners because we feel that we have the right to live in our own land. We have the right to do something to survive. We have the right to earn something. We have the right to live. So we feel that we own our land...because we have been doing gold economy. Gold was our economy in the past, and in the present...we are still in that now. We have no other... gold mining is the only thing that we do.

senting us, known as the the Landowners Association. ATA is acting as an umbrella organization, which is doing covering every, fighting for the rights of every impacts, rights of every damages there has been done to the people. We are fighting for the rights of every people for those damages. ATA from now, we have been filing several, we have been filing a civil suit against the state and the company which is Placer Dome and now is Barrick corporation. We have been filing a civil suit against them. But in the meantime, the government of PNG said we will not take the matter to court. You will not take the matter to court, we will take this as a national issue. We will send an inquiry team to come to Porgera and look at what has been done and then look for [something] to solve the problem.

That is what the state is. What we, ATA thought. ATA we tried to take the matter into court, we said justice will prevail, justice will say whether the company and the government is right in doing that, leaving the people suffer and getting the benefit out of their own land. Or it is wrong, so that is why...our intention was to take the matter to court itself. but the state said no, we'll have to sort it out of court. That is the stand where the state is now. We had to comply to the state.

...

Your chances of succeeding?

Well, I feel that even if the investigation team tries to do whatever it wants, the investigation team will still find out we are right, ATA are right because they actually came here and see what is reality. We have, everything is not hidden; it is obvious. Nothing is obscured. The investigation team, what the investigation team does will be for the betterment of the ATA and the people who are suffering, betterment of the indigenous people who are suffering because they've actually what has been done: the impacts of the mining, the life of the community, their daily living, their standard of living, their welfare, especially their economy.

ALLUVIAL MINING



MR. DAVID CLEAVER, A PRINCIPAL LAND OWNER

"In the olden days, before the mining came, I lived on food, like taro, sugar cane, banana, and vegetables. And when I don't have the money, I go to the river to do alluvial mine.

When I was an alluvial miner, I usually get more money out of than gold mine. I sell it and I get a money 5,000, 6,000, 10,000, 20,000 Kina* and I usually have more money and I had a happy life before. And I had food and the money from the gold in the over was still left in my pocket to buy car and run business.

When the company came, the company took all of our land that we used to do our alluvial mining, and where we used to build our gardens to grow food. And when the mine activities were carried out. the river creeks, the area where we dig alluvial gold are being covered. And our land for building gardens are covered by mine waste and taken up by the mine as well.

They took the alluvial mining areas and I am lost now."

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*US \$1 = 2.74 KINA