

PRESS RELEASE

The National Roundtable against Metallic Mineral Mining denounces the disappearance of our colleague Gustavo Marcelo Rivera

Facing the disappearance of our colleague Gustavo Marcelo Rivera, last Thursday June 18, 2009, the communities and organizations of the National Roundtable against Metallic Mineral Mining express the following;

1. Gustavo Marcelo Rivera is a community leader and environmental activist, known especially in community resistance against the mining activities of Pacific Rim, a Canadian mining corporation that has filed an international arbitration suit against the Salvadoran government in the World Bank international arbitral tribunal. The basis of the suit, under the investor's rights provisions of CAFTA, is that the Salvadoran government has denied the corporation exploitation permits for the El Dorado mine.

At the time of his disappearance, Rivera worked as the legal representative of the Friends Association of San Isidro (ASIC), a citizens' organization – a member of the National Roundtable Against Metallic Mineral Mining – with its headquarters in the municipality of San Isidro (Cabañas) and in the city of Los Angeles, California (US). Additionally, he acted as the director of the Cultural Arts Center of San Isidro and as a member of the Departmental Board of the FMLN political party in Cabañas.

2. Our colleague, Gustavo Marcelo, has also headed up the fight for democracy in his municipality and in the country. Due to his participation in social protest alter the fraudulent actions that occurred during the municipal and legislative elections on January 18, 2009 in San Isidro (Cabañas), he has been threatened and persecuted, according to reports from his family, friends, and neighbors in his municipality.

The referenced elections were won – in the middle of scandalous denunciations of fraud – by the ARENA party member José Ignacio Bautista, an intense promoter of Pacific Rim in the zone. Journalists' accounts highlight that at that time, the re-elected mayor Bautista had imported voters from Honduras, Nicaragua, and some municipalities of Cuscatlán and San Salvador.

3. **The police authorities of Cabañas have been reluctant to find the whereabouts of Gustavo Marcelo and to investigate his disappearance. For these reasons, we demand that the highest authorities of Public Security (Director of the National Civilian Police, Attorney General, and Minister of Justice and Public Security) to act immediately, until they find our disappeared colleague and prosecute those responsible.**
4. **The disappearance of Gustavo Marcelo occurs in a climate of insecurity and growing delinquency. But, because this disappearance is of a social activist and political leader, it should not be ruled out that his disappearance is due to**

motives that transcend common delinquency. For these reasons, we demand a thorough investigation of the case, because its material and intellectual authors should be punished.

San Salvador, June 25, 2009.