



PRESS RELEASE

III CARAVAN FOR INTEGRAL ECOLOGY begins: “Mining-Energy Transition: solution or sacrifice of the poor and the earth?”

III Caravan for Integral Ecology brings together 9 representatives of territories affected by mining that seek to discuss the paradigm of energy transition and how it impacts Latin America.

This September 17 begins in Spain the III Caravan for Integral Ecology that this year is organized by the Churches and Mining Network - RIM, the Indigenous Missionary Council - CIMI and REPAM - Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network. 9 representatives from Latin American territories (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Peru) affected by extractivism and mining, will tour 10 cities in 6 European countries (Spain, Belgium, Italy, Austria, France and Germany) to tell different audiences the situation in their territories due to pollution and violation of rights and the new extractivist logics, but at the same time, they want to raise their voice with proposals that come from the communities to stop the irreparable advance of climate change and promote other economies in defense of life.

Mining-Energy Transition: solution or sacrifice of the poor and the earth?

Europe has a marked agenda on what has been called Energy Transition, various approaches that come from the European Union, or from bilateral agreements and conventions from European countries with governments in Latin America, which promote an advance for obtaining critical minerals, considering them “alternatives” to fossil fuels and coal.

For Latin America the story is different. This so-called energy transition is not leading to a change of model, but continues to sustain the colonial and extractive system of raw materials, at the cost of the lives of thousands of people and territories.

The World Bank has suggested that demand for key transition minerals could increase by around 500% by 2050 (Hund et al., 2020). However, the economic and socio-environmental overlay that has usurped territories from a colonial policy is being challenged by indigenous peoples, traditional communities, social movements, civil society and churches accompanying the realities martyred by extractive economies. Also, the Global Gateway initiative of the European Union (EU), announced from 2021, aims to address the investment gaps in the Global South. Over the period 2021-2027, Team Europe (the EU and its member states) has committed to mobilize up to €300 billion for projects around the world, focused on digital transformation, climate resilience, energy sustainability, efficient transport networks, health, education and research systems. However, according to research published by CONCORD, if the Global Gateway is not effectively rethought, it will exacerbate inequalities in partner countries rather than reduce them.



One of the examples that are generating very violent processes has to do with lithium extraction. Lithium is used to manufacture cell phones, batteries, screens and the very fashionable electric cars. It is one of the minerals that Europe and the Global North have nominated as critical minerals and for its extraction incalculable amounts of water will be used. Water is precisely one of the main keys to the dispute. Recent studies estimate that up to 2 million liters of water can be used to produce one kilogram of lithium.

Lithium is extracted from salt flats and near glaciers. They also want to extract lithium in stone in indigenous communities with agricultural and livestock farming vocation, which already suffer from droughts.

Rights violations, colonialist violence and the suffering of the Common Home

The defenders who will be present on the tour denounce a panorama of multiple human rights violations, especially in contexts where indigenous communities face extractivist projects and a lack of adequate state protection. Criminalization and persecution of those who resist the advance of the extractive capitalist model, governments at different levels that protect and legitimize mining companies. They also show disrespect for prior consultation and for ILO Convention 169, which protects them and should guarantee their collective rights. This is leading little by little to a racist and ethnocidal violence that seeks to destroy entire peoples and that seeks to dispossess them of their territories, that does not consult, that enters their territories without their consent and that does not respect their worldview, spirituality, and way of life. They denounce the contamination, destruction of the environment and water sources, as well as health problems that are not being addressed.

This *III Caravan* is composed of nine young people, activists and representatives of indigenous peoples from Argentina (Valentina Vidal), Brazil (Railson Guajajara, Ytaxaha Braz Pankararu, Christian Clevels and Guilherme Cavalli), Chile (Joan Jara Muñoz), Peru (Vito Calderón and Father Enrique González) and Bolivia (Sister Gladys Montesinos), carrying proposals that call for personal and collective conversions, and which are based on the experience of their communities. To stop the consumption model, to articulate and support ongoing productive initiatives that guarantee food security, water protection and land sustainability. Incorporate into political and academic discussions the experiences of indigenous peoples, which are proven as alternatives for a life in harmony with the Common home and with all beings.

The Caravan for Integral Ecology brings a very concrete proposal to organizations of faith, civil society, banks, and all people and organizations of good will, which in the framework of the magisterium of Pope Francis (Encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Laudato Si*, *Fratelli Tutti*, Vatican Document *Mesuram Bonam*) invites us to say no to an economy of death, to a system that kills leaving discarded and where Mother Earth suffers labor pains. In this system, financial practices are accomplices of all the violations denounced by the territories. For this reason, the Churches and Mining Network promotes the Mining Divestment Campaign that calls for ethical coherence in investments and financing.

To hope and act with Creation: Season of Creation



Creation time is a time of the year when ecumenical unity in the world prays, reflects and proposes actions for the care of the Common Home. In many places around the world proposals are undertaken to raise awareness and take action for the defense of the planet. Many activities of the III Caravan for Integral Ecology are framed in this period. The delegation of the III Caravan will be present in Rome for the audience with Pope Francis on October 2, 2024, where they will make their cries and hopes known.

Agenda summary:

SPAIN September 17-21	09/17 - Press Conference and visit to the media
	09/18 - Conference of Bishops of Spain and Conference of Religious Men and Women Religious
	09/18 Platform for Responsible Business
	09/19 Bilbao: meeting with Bishop and ecology sector
	09/19 Valladolid: Human Rights Observatory of the University of Valladolid
	09/20 Meeting with Coordinating Committee of NGOs for development
	09/20 Meeting with the Archbishopric of Madrid
	09/20 Caceres: Meeting with communities in resistance to lithium mining
09/21 World Ecumenical Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation	
BELGIUM September 22-25	09/24 EU Bishops' Conference: Meeting with political actors
	09/24 EU Bishops' Conference: Meeting with actors from different churches
	09/23 Working meeting with CIDSE
	09/25 Meeting with MEPs – CIDSE
FRANCE September 26 - 30	09/26 Public Seminar and Launching of Report on Violence against Indigenous Peoples in Brazil
	09/27 Meeting with French Bishops' Conference
	09/28 Dialogue with Climate Action Network
	09/30 Dialogues with French Banks with mining investments
	09/30 Dialogues on EU-Mercosur Agreement with advisors to French MPs
	09/30 Meeting with International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
ITALY October 01-04	10/01 JPIC Seminar Rome UISG and USG
	10/02 Participation in the Audience with Pope Francis
	10/03 Meeting with the Pontifical Council for Latin America and the Caribbean
	10/04 Meeting with the Dicastery for Integral Human Development
AUSTRIA October 07-08	10/07 Dialogue with the Investment Council of the Austrian Bishops Conference
	10/07 Dialogue with social collectives at the University of Vienna: Mobility and Energy Transition
	10/08 Dialogue with Divine Word Congregation
	10/08 Dialogue and public space with Cultural Survival and Edson Krenak
GERMANY October 09 - 11	



	10/09 Meeting with actors of the German government and Members of Parliament (Anti GPM Project)
	10/10 Dialogue on Campaign with Facing Finance - Dirty Profits and German Banks with investments in Minera Vale
	10/10 Space for participation in the Week of Alternatives and resistance to mining.

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