

International Day of Action for the Cancellation of El Zapotillo Dam
“The Eyes Of The World Are On Temaca”

10th November, 2010

Mexican Embassy/Consulate in

Dear Ambassador

We the undersigned represent organizations, movements and citizens who are concerned for human rights and the environment. From all over the world we come, deeply troubled by the grave situation of communities living under the threat of the Zapotillo Dam, in the Jalisco region of Mexico, to ask for your intervention in a matter which we believe to be of great international relevance and importance.

We are aware that the Mexican Government, in conjunction with the National Commission for Water and the State Commission for water in Jalisco and Guanajuato are carrying out a policy of water privatization, under which they have begun construction on the Zapotillo Dam; a water storage project which will divert water for the River Verde to the industrial city of Leon. The dam will cause the destruction of 3 communities: Temacapulín, Acasico and Palmarejo. Directly affecting **1,000 residents** and indirectly affecting **15,000** more. If completed the dam will flood more than **4, 816 hectares** of fertile soil. Land on which the cultural heritage and the lives of the communities depend.

The affected communities refuse to be relocated and refuse to have their homes destroyed. They have not been appropriately informed or consulted about the project which will directly affect them. Instead they have been harassed and threatened, and the psychological strain of the uncertainty about their lives is evident; it has created a feeling of desperation and even resulted in death.

We are worried that the Mexican government continues construction on this project, incurring a series of judicial irregularities, following the fact that there has been no social and environmental impact study, nor has the government followed the recommendations of the State Commission on Human Rights for Jalisco (35/2009). They have not discussed alternative options for water storage and conservation proposed by researchers at the University of Guadalajara, the University of Guanajuato, ITESO and the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

The project is in potential violation of many rights recognized by the Mexican Constitution: The right to a home, to security, to food, to health and work, the right to a healthy environment and many more recognized also under the International Agreement for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the ONU along with the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams.

Some of us learnt these facts on our recent visit to Mexico as part of the Third International Meeting of Dam Affected People and their Allies, which took place in Temacapulin, October 1-7th 2010. Others from information from the affected communities and organizations working as part of the international campaign “Los Ojos Del Mundo Estan Puestos en Temaca.”

The Federal Government is aware of the opposition of communities and society in Mexico and yet they continue to construct dams as a solution to water and energy problems. Alternative options that are less harmful to society and the environment exist, however the government continues to enforce policies that ignore the social cost of such infrastructure.

In light of what is explained above, and with all due respect, we present this letter to show our solidarity with the communities of the Jalisco State, that are affected by El Zapotillo Dam. We ask you to intervene, with your good will, to not let such grave violation of human rights continue. To respect the lives, the physical integrity and the emotions of the threatened communities.

With call on the Federal Government to:

1. Cancel El Zapotillo Dam, in the Jalisco Region, Mexico
2. Create an open dialogue with affected communities, specialists and civil society in general to consult on possible alternatives for water storage and conservation.
3. Immediate suspension on the construction of the Dam curtain, the resettlement site and a stop to the harassment of the affected communities.

Signed:

Address:

Email:

Temaca we are with you!