

EL DORADO PROJECT

SUBTERRANEAN GOLD AND SILVER MINE, HALTED IN 2008 AND CANCELLED IN 2017



NATURAL RESOURCE
Gold & silver



LOCATION
Municipality of San Isidro, Cabañas Department



AFFECTED COMMUNITIES
San Isidro and other neighbouring municipalities



OWNED BY
Pacific Rim/OceanaGold, run by subsidiary Minerales Torozog

EL DORADO

El Salvador

1992
Peace agreement ends El Salvador's civil war.

1995
Dayton Mining Co. begins exploration for gold deposits at El Dorado site in Cabañas Department.

1996
New Mining Law.

1999
Investment law to facilitate transnational investment in El Salvador.

2002
Dayton Mining Co. merges with Pacific Rim Mining Corporation.

2003
Increasing opposition to mining in Cabañas communities as exploration work expands.

2005
Local and national NGOs generate civil society concern at impact of mining in El Salvador.

2006
Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) with the United States enters into force.

2006
Pacific Rim submits Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for exploitation licence. A critical independent technical review of EIA is published and presented to affected communities.

2006
Mesa Nacional holds a "Week of Action" against metallic mining.

2006
First community protest against the mine in San Isidro, Cabañas.

2006
EIA and exploitation permit for El Dorado mine continue not to be approved.

2007
Pacific Rim moves its Cayman Islands subsidiary to Nevada in order to launch a lawsuit against El Salvador under CAFTA-DR in relation to revenue lost at stalled El Dorado mine.

2008
National survey by IUDOP finds 62% of population in mining affected areas opposed to metallic mining in El Salvador.

2008
President Elias Antonio Saca announces that no more mining licences will be granted.

2009
Mesa Nacional's letter writing campaign results in 10,000 letters to President requesting a mining ban.

2009
US\$ 314 million Pacific Rim files claim for US\$ 314 million in damages against El Salvador via national Investment Law and Chapter 10 of CAFTA-DR before the World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

2009
Marcelo Rivera Moreno, active member of the Friends of San Isidro Cabañas Association (ASIC) opposing the El Dorado mine, is abducted and murdered.

2009
Death threats made against critics of the mine, including local radio station Radio Victoria, and a priest.

2010
Pacific Rim CEO testifies before a Canadian Parliamentary committee.

2010
Canadian NGOs send letter to Canadian Embassy requesting it ends support for Pacific Rim.

2010
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) hearing on the situation of environmentalists in Mesoamerica.

2010
Open letter sent by 244 international NGOs to World Bank on Pacific Rim vs El Salvador case, demanding that domestic governance and national sovereignty be respected.

2011
Local environmental activist Juan Francisco Durán Ayala is murdered.

2011
Cabañas organizations hold forum to promote environmental protection laws as an electoral issue.

2011
Environmental Alliance of El Salvador holds forum about the need for a water law and a law prohibiting metallic mining.

2011
The NGO The Council of Canadians starts campaign against Pacific Rim.

2013
Salvadoran activists participate in Canada and US speaking tour to raise awareness of the impacts of mining in El Salvador.

2013
OceanaGold purchases Pacific Rim, continuing the ICSID lawsuit.

2014
Protest outside the World Bank offices in El Salvador and in Washington DC against Pacific Rim's lawsuit.

2014
First popular community consultation held in San José Las Flores, Department of Chalatenango, to declare the municipality a "mining-free territory".

2015
Mesa Nacional holds public events calling on voters not to support candidates in favour of mining in legislative and municipal elections.

2015
Festival calling for the rejection of the Pacific-Rim/OceanaGold mine and lawsuit.

2016
Mesa Nacional and International Allies Against Mining in El Salvador hold a public forum on mining and Corporate Social Responsibility.

2016
US\$ 8 million ICSID dismisses the Pacific Rim/OceanaGold claim against El Salvador and orders the company to pay US\$ 8 million in costs to El Salvador.

2017
Archbishop of El Salvador leads march to Legislative Assembly demanding approval of ban on metallic mining.

2017
The municipality of Cinquera, in Cabañas Department, unananimously votes to declare itself a "mining-free territory".

2017
Legislative Assembly approves law banning artisanal and industrial metallic mining.

2017
OceanaGold states it will close El Dorado project and withdraw from El Salvador, including El Dorado Foundation, its local agency sponsoring community development projects.

2019
OceanaGold states that it has completed sale of El Dorado properties and withdrawn from El Salvador.

2020
Local NGOs publish report on alternative forms of development to mining in Cabañas.

September 2021

This timeline forms part of the **Juridification of Resource Conflicts** project at the Centre for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) at the School of Advanced Study, University of London, in partnership with Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS), Mexico.

This project is funded by The British Academy's Sustainable Development Programme, supported under the UK Government's Global Challenges Research Fund.

