

EU Legislators Express Support for Chevron Victims in Ecuador



Quito, April 17 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Some 40 left-wing Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) read a letter supporting the victims of the environmental damages wrought by oil giant Chevron-Texaco, during a public audience held by congress on Wednesday.

In the letter, which is still receiving signatories, the legislators expressed their “support and solidarity with the victims of Chevron Corporation, and with the legal demand of compensations for the environmental, social and economic damages.”

The legislators were mostly from the Socialist Party, the United Left (Izquierda Unida - IU), and the European Greens. MEP Javier Couso (IU) explained that they are demanding the implementation of the sentence given to the company by Ecuador's justice system, condemning Chevron to pay a \$9.5 billion fine in damages and clean up costs for dumping billions of gallons of benzene-laden toxic waste into Ecuadorean streams and rivers.

The oil company accused the court of corruption and fraud and refused to recognize the ruling, despite having fought for years to obtain a trial in Ecuador instead of the United States. Chevron appealed to a New York Court, which eventually condemned one of the lawyers, Steven Dozinger, over corruption of an Ecuadorean judge.

In response to the European legislators' letter, Chevron spokesman James Craig told EFE that the letter was “the result of a tour [that] the plaintiffs against Chevron [were realizing across Europe].” “They aim at deceiving authorities, communication medias and the public in Europe, he added, so they would support their judicial fraud in Europe. “Some of them can let themselves deceive, but all the discourses and petitions of the world will not change the fact they were found as extortionists by the New York court, behind what the Wall Street Journal called the ‘legal fraud of the century,’ claimed Craig.

Texaco, which was bought out by Chevron, caused one of the world's greatest environmental disasters while drilling for oil in the Ecuadorean Amazon between 1964 and 1990. Almost 30,000 people, most of them indigenous, were affected by the oil-giant's actions. Health experts have confirmed high rates of childhood leukemia and other cancers in the area where Chevron operated. More than 2,000 people are estimated to have died from cancer with another 10,000 currently at risk of contracting cancer because of continued exposure to carcinogenic chemicals.

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