

Coca-Cola Slowly Deprives 30,000 People of Water in El Salvador



San Salvador, June 10 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Residents from a Salvadoran municipality have seen a gradual depletion and pollution of their main and only water source since multinational corporations such as Coca-Cola started operations there, activists have denounced.

The municipality of Nejapa, in northern El Salvador, is home to some 30,000 people who depend on the *San Antonio River* to satisfy daily activities from hydration and bathing to washing clothes and cattle farming.

Residents complain that since multinational corporations Coca-Cola, Jumex and *Agua Cristal* have been using industrial wells to exploit and rob most of the water source, there has been a significant decrease in water supply. "It is regrettable that in a municipality rich in water there are still entire communities that lack this vital liquid," said Roxana Brizuela, a health advocate and Nejapa resident.

Brizuela explained that 10 years ago, people enjoyed full access to water, which Nejapa natives are now unable to drink because of industrial contamination. Local residents say the water kills their animals and sickens their stomachs.

The impact of the Nejapa's water exploitation has led many local communities to support a pending law called the Water Act that could protect this vital resource. "This way companies wouldn't come and take our water without anyone saying anything, because they are only interested in selling water," affirmed Brizuela. "They don't care about the people who really need it."

According to Carlos Flores, from the Water Forum, right-wing politicians are opposing the law because it is not in their interest. "That would mean that what's happening here won't happen again because there will be someone who thinks about the water... and will prevent things like these to happen."

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