

Mining Firm Offers 'Compensation' for Tia Maria Project in Peru



Lima, June 1 (teleSUR-RHC)-- President of the Mexican mining company Southern Copper, Óscar González Rocha, offered to create a \$3.2 million fund to compensate farmers, schools and the health sector affected by recent demonstrations against a proposed mining project in the southern region of Arequipa.

Locals have been protesting against the project since March 23. In an interview with *Canal N*, González Rocha said the company is in the process of establishing a monetary compensation package of 1 million soles, to cover the costs of damages suffered by local farmers as result of recent protests.

“Also, we will designate a fund towards hospitals to attend the victims and wounded. We will also modernize and help fix homes that have been damaged,” he added. In early May, Peru's President Ollanta Humala sent troops to support the police to guarantee law and order in southern Arequipa

department amid increased local opposition to Southern Copper's Tia Maria mining project.

At least three people, including one policeman, have died in the confrontations. Protesters are concerned that the project will affect water supplies despite Southern Copper explaining that it will use a water desalination plant that will mitigate pollution and the use of drinkable water sources.

The announcement comes as the UK-based NGO Global Witness released a publication documenting high levels of violence carried out against Peru's environmental activists. The report also said that between 2002 and 2014, at least 57 murders took place in Peru, most of which stemmed from conflicts over mining projects. Southern Copper, a subsidiary of Mexican holding Grupo Mexico, is behind the \$1.2 billion Tia Maria mining project which aims to produce over 120,000 tons of copper per year.

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