

Open Letter for Local and National Authorities

We the undersigned—farmer organizations, workers, and citizens of the North Department, especially from Morne Pele—raise our voices to denounce gold and other metal mining in the North, particularly in Morne Pele, Quartier Morin.

As declared in Article 247 of our Constitution, working the land is the primary source of wealth in Haiti, and agriculture guarantees the well-being of the people and the socio-economic progress of our nation.

Those of us who live near Morne Pele (also called Morne Bossa) live off our land: we farm, we raise animals, we produce *klerèn*, a rum-like hard alcohol that we make from sugarcane and export all over the country. However, in 2012 the government granted an exploitation permit to mine gold in Morne Bossa to VCS Mining, an American company. The government did this without informing the people who live in nearby communities. Article 40 of the Haitian Constitution of 1987 demands that the government shares information affecting the national life.

In July of 2017, we learned that an Australian company, 3D Resources, had arrived in the area and conducted a number of preparatory activities. Through research (digging our fingers around in the okra), we learned that 3D had bought 70% of the rights to the VCS permit to mine Morne Bossa. This shows us how money moves around in the international market, over the heads of local communities, despite local people still having no access to information.

We emphasize that mining is an activity that requires a lot of land, we note the risk that companies may take land from our farms, our houses, our schools and churches. This means that companies want to take our land to make themselves more rich, and to leave our communities in poverty;

We consider the experiences of other countries, we see that mineral exploitation is a potential disaster—it threatens our health, our water, our land, and the rest of our environment;

We emphasize the public health system of Haiti, that cannot even adequately respond to cholera, introduced by the military occupation of the United Nations MINUSTAH troops, although we know that mining is often accompanied by militarization, too; In our reality the majority of people in rural areas use leaves and natural medicine to cure illness;

We emphasize the importance of this mountain, Morne Pele, where the companies plan to build a mine, especially as a protection to our communities from hurricanes, dangerous winds and other threats;

We emphasize that mining violates Article 253 of the 1987 Constitution. Article 253 says that the environment is the natural framework for the life of the people. It further forbids any activity that disturbs the ecological balance;

We emphasize that companies come to do business, and that although they may make many promises, they generally fail to fulfill them, we also consider that companies rarely give information about the risks and consequences mining poses, especially for workers, farmers, union members, and the rest of the population. We see that companies have not provided information in the areas where they have worked so far;

We emphasize that many places where we see mining activity become more poor; the experience of SEDREN, a company in Meme in Gonaives and REYNOLDS in Miragoane show the potential damage that mining activity may cause, and the long-term consequences that remain;

When we consider that our environment is already the most vulnerable in all of Latin America, and we suffer from earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods every year;

We raise our voices and we say, together: “We do not accept mining activity in Morne Pele.”

We raise our voices and we ask for agricultural reform, for roads to transport our products, for schools, for reforestation, for potable water.

Mining is Poison for the Environment

Mining is Poison for Agriculture, Land and Food

Mining is Poison for Water

Wi ak Lavi, NON ak Eksplwatasyon min

Yes to Life, NO to Mining

In order for us to win this struggle, we seek national and international solidarity, with people who believe that life is more meaningful than making money.

Signatory Organizations and Citizens:

Rasanbleman agrikiltè Morinwa (RAMO): Thélus SONY

Mouvman Peyizan Kayimit (MPK): Toussaint Charnel

Federasyon Mouvman Demokratik Katye Moren (FEMODEK): Dassas Gaston

Legliz Katolik: Jacques Mari Charles

Legliz Batis: Lemercier Xavier

Legliz Advantis: Fracois Wilssaint

Asosyasyon Kilti Lakay: Thélus Sonise

Sant Santé Kadouch

Lekól Nasyonal Kadouch: Valmir Saphira

Entèsendikal Premye Me Batay Ouvirye (ESPM-BO): Phanès Elusma

Konsèy Administrasyon Seksyon Kominal (KAZEK): Rose Mari Xavier

Asanble Seksyon Kominal (ASEK): Jacquelin Valcourt

Asosiyasyon Voudou: Davilma Baudin