

# Toxic spill from zinc mine in Peru

September 3 2012

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(AP)—Peruvian authorities say wastewater laced with heavy metals from a major zinc mine has spilled into a tributary of the Amazon, contaminating at least six miles of the waterway.

Pasco regional mining environmental engineer Juan Escalante tells The Associated Press that an unknown quantity of toxic wastewater from the Atacocha mine escaped from a sedimentation well Wednesday into the Huallaga River. The mine is owned by the Brazilian company Votorantim.

Peru's national water authority granted Atacocha a permit in 2011 to remove metals including mercury, cadmium, lead, iron and manganese from the mine's wastewater and release the treated water into the Huallaga.

Escalante said the area where the spill occurred is in the [Andes mountains](#) at about 13,000 feet (4,000 meters).

Peru is the world's No. 2 producer of zinc.

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