New report maps mining impacts of the energy transition in the Americas

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On the heels of COP-26, where global leaders agreed to make unprecedented investments in the energy transition, frontline communities already in the crosshairs of mining for critical minerals

warn of the dangers posed by the mining boom for 'green tech."

The Atlas of Environmental Justice, coordinated by the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ICTA-UAB), MiningWatch Canada and mining-affected communities from nine countries in the Americas—Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Panama, Mexico, U.S. and Canada—have launched a new interactive map and report documenting some of the social and environmental impacts of lithium, copper and graphite mining.

Through the analysis of 25 cases, the report documents how the global mining industry has quickly positioned itself as the solution to the climate crisis, with companies and countries alike jockeying to provide the three billion tons of metals and minerals that some estimates say will be required over the next 30 years to power the energy transition.

Mining is already rapidly expanding into fragile and biodiverse ecosystems like the Amazon and other rainforests, glacial areas, salt flats , mountain ranges, and wetlands—areas often of vital importance in providing fresh water, sustaining life, and regulating the climate.

This rush for metals and minerals is becoming an unprecedented financial opportunity for mining companies. However, the sharp increase in extractive pressure for metals and minerals is deepening the environmental and social crisis, turning one of the origins of the climate crisis into an apparent pillar of its solution.

Frontline communities, academics, and activists say that an energy transition that depends on massive mining of new materials without considering for what, for whom, and at what socio-environmental costs, will only reinforce the injustices and unsustainable practices that are already part of the climate crisis itself.

According to Dr. Mariana Walter, researcher at the ICTA-UAB and the Atlas of Environmental Justice, "nearly 20% of the 3550 socio-environmental conflicts documented in the Environmental Justice Atlas are connected to mining. This is the most contentious activity mapped to date. An energy transition based on mining will only expand and intensify these conflicts, both in the global North and South."

More information: The map: ejatlas.org/featured/met_america

Report summary: miningwatch.ca/sites/default/f … nergy_transition.pdf

Provided by Autonomous University of Barcelona

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