

## CHOOSING TO SAVE NATURAL RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EL SALVADOR

The 29 of March 2017 [the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador](#) approves by 69 votes a Law to ban the *exploration, extraction, exploitation and processing of the metallic minerals* in the country, in order to stop the severe damages to soils and water sources generated by this economic activity.

The proposed Law was introduced by the Archbishop of San Salvador, José Luis Escobar Alas, the Auxiliary Bishop Gregorio Rosa Chávez and the Dean of the University José Simeón Cañas (UCA), Andreu Oliva, accompanied by different communities affected by the mining practices.

On March 28, the deputies of the parliamentary [Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change](#) unanimously approved the contents of the Law, in view of its debate in the plenary session of the Legislative Assembly.

Social and environmental organizations and the Catholic church of El Salvador which promoted the Law, together with the lawmakers, considered this approval an historic breakthrough to reducing the environmental impacts on water, air, forests and soils and to ensure sustainable development and welfare of the population.

The Attorney for the Defence of Human Rights also congratulated the Legislative Assembly, the environmental organizations and communities for the approval of the Law, for their commitment in the defense of the environment and natural resources of the country.

The success obtained with the approval of this Law proceeds from the huge campaign realized by environmental organizations and communities, sustained by the Church, to highlight the damages the mining industry causes to the country groundwater reserves. These damages are caused both by the large quantities of water needed to extract the gold as well as by the toxic products as cyanide, quicksilver and other metals used by the mining industry.

All information provided by these campaigns and the low economic profits for the country deriving from



the mining industry compared to the deterioration of natural resources, convinced the lawmakers of all the different parties that participate in the National Assembly to unanimously adopt the Act.

The Law is made of 11 articles. The banning of metal mining includes exploration, exploitation and processing, either over or below the ground; the use of toxic chemicals as cyanide, quicksilver and other is also prohibited in any metal mining process.

With this Act the Government of El Salvador becomes a reference point for all countries committed to protect common goods and biodiversity, avoiding any practice which can threaten the sustainable development and welfare of the population.

### To know more

[Asamblea Legislativa de El Salvador website](#)

[Red Iglesias y Minería website](#)

[Article in elsalvadornoticias.net](#)

[Article in aps.com.sv](#)

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