

GRUPO DE LOS CIEN INTERNACIONAL / GROUP OF 100

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INTELLECTUALS AND ARTISTS FROM 30 COUNTRIES IN DEFENSE OF THE HUICHOL (WIXARIKA) PEOPLE

More than 150 intellectuals and artists from 30 countries are appealing to President Felipe Calderón to cancel the mining concessions granted by the Mexican government to Canadian companies to mine silver and gold in in the sacred territory of the Huichol (Wixárika) people. The concessions are in the San Luis Potosi desert, where Wirikuta, the 140,000 hectare sacred reserve of the Wixarika, lies.

Among signers of the statement are three Nobel prize winners: Jean-Marie Le Clézio, Orhan Pamuk y Tomas Tranströmer; poets Homero Aridjis, Yves Bonnefoy, Kjell Espmark, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Rita Dove; writers Paul Auster, Chinua Achebe, Junot Díaz, Peter Matthiessen, Per Wästberg, Simon Schama, Simon Winchester, Norman Manea, Jonathan Safran Foer and Nicole Krauss; Canadian writers Michael Ondaatje, Margaret Atwood and John Ralston Saul; Latin American authors Ledo Ivo, Ariel Dorfman and Sergio Ramírez; filmmakers Alejandro Jodorowsky and Nicolás Echevarría; artists Pierre Alechinsky, Francisco Toledo, Frederic Amat, Manuel Felguérez, Vicente Rojo and Gabriel Orozco.

“The Huichol (Wixárika) people have survived over the centuries throughout Mexico’s history. Their religion, mythology, traditions and ritual objects are present in their daily life and in their extraordinarily beautiful and mysterious ceremonies centering around peyote. Permitting silver and gold mines in Wirikuta, the territory of their sacred sites, is like driving a stake into the heart of the Huichol (Wixárika) culture. Future generations of Mexicans will never forgive the current administration for having been responsible for the physical and spiritual destruction of this emblematic ethnic group which is living proof of the survival of a magical Mexican world,” said Mexican poet Homero Aridjis,

president of the environmentalist Group of 100 and the driving force behind this worldwide protest of the arts community in defense of the Huichol (Wixárika) people.

Santos de la Cruz, a Wixárika spokesman, declared early in November that “The State is killing us and kidnapping our sacred lands. They want to finish us, kill our Mother Earth.” According to the Wirikuta Defense Front, “Wirikuta is the material and cultural foundation on which the Wixárika people’s identity is based. The destruction of Wirikuta implies the destruction of the Wixárika people as we know them.”