

Protesting for the Environment

A story from Panama

References to slides relate to the PowerPoint available at methodist.org.uk/GlobalRelationshipsResources, with slide 1 opening your service

The Panama Circuit of the Panama Costa Rica District (MCCA) [slide 2] participated in denouncing the contract made between the Panamanian government and a subsidiary of First Quantum Minerals, a Canadian mining company. They joined other Churches in September 2023 to express their grave concern about the potential destruction of the environment in Panama, and more critically, the human cost of such developments [slide 3].

They warned that this contract paved the way for further agreements with mining companies, eventually leading to widespread environmental damage and community displacement. They urged for a suspension of metal mining activities, and for the state to initiate a national consultation and debate that extends beyond the confines of the voices of the National Assembly.

They called for a national dialogue involving the voices of all Panamanians, particularly those whose lives would be directly impacted by extraction activities [slide 4].

In October 2023, the Supreme Court in Panama declared this mining contract unconstitutional – a victory for Panamanian ecumenical voices calling for the protection of their communities and seeking to preserve the environment.



Slide 2

Prayer

Almighty God,

To whom all the gold and silver of this world belong (Haggai 2:8),

we thank you for the natural bounty that you have created in Panama.

From its lush rainforest, to its stunning Caribbean islands, your glory can be seen throughout the land.

But we recognise that there are those who wish to exploit this natural beauty, with its rich mineral and metal reserves, and chose to pursue economic advancement above the wellbeing and development of local communities.

We pray for the Panamanian State and its decisions regarding the exploitation



Slide 3

of Panamanian land and the extraction of minerals.
May you put in them the right spirit to do justice and love kindness (Micah 6:8) in ensuring that economic development helps Panamanian communities flourish in every way.

We pray that you continue to use faith-based organisations, with as the Panama Circuit of the Panama/Costa Rica District of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, to call their government to account and encourage national consultation on major decisions that would have a real human impact.

We thank you for the good plans that you have for Panama.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.



Slide 4

For more information on the Panama Circuit and their fight for environmental justice, read the stories featured in Easter Offering 2024 at methodist.org.uk/EasterOffering