

TOP TEN TAHOE MYTHS

#TahoeOnTrial

1. Only non-lethal force was used in April 27 attack against protesters ([Tahoe press release, May 1](#) and [Tahoe press release, July 10](#))

FACT - Spokespeople for Roosevelt hospital in Guatemala City stated that lead bullets were removed from victims. Official documentation prepared by the national hospital of Cuilapa, where three victims were treated, also states that the injuries were caused by firearms. Victims testified to being shot with lead bullets, in addition to rubber bullets, and injuries sustained support that testimony.

2. Injured protesters were taken to hospital and released (Tahoe press release May 1 and Tahoe press release July 10)

FACT – Of the six men seriously injured, one man was hospitalized for 16 days and will require facial re-constructive surgery. Two other men initially admitted and release at local hospitals were later re-hospitalized and held overnight.

3. Alberto Rotondo, Tahoe's security manager, was detained but not charged with any crimes (Tahoe press release, May 1)

FACT – Security manager Alberto Rotondo was detained on April 30, and on May 7, he was charged with obstruction of justice and assault. In a [June 4 press release](#), Tahoe CEO Kevin McArthur did not amend the May 1 statement, nor did he respond to the fact that Rotondo was under house arrest awaiting trial. Instead he stated in a separate interview that he could not comment on the investigation. It was not until [July 10](#) that Tahoe Resources acknowledged the criminal charges filed against their former security manager.

Juan Pablo Oliva Trejo, Rotondo's security advisor, employed by Tahoe, was also arrested, and on May 15 was charged with concealing evidence. He is also under house arrest awaiting trial.

4. There is widespread support for the Escobal project

FACT – There is widespread opposition to the project. 12 community consultations held since 2011 have rejected Tahoe's project. The 8 most recent consultations were held in communities within the municipality of San Rafael las Flores. In each vote people have overwhelmingly rejected the project. The remaining 16 communities plan to have consultations as soon as possible. At least 200 legal objections to the project have been filed with the Ministry of Energy and Mines by individuals who stand to be directly impacted by the operations of the Escobal mine.

5. Mine improves security in San Rafael las Flores ([Tahoe press release June 4](#) and [Tahoe press release July 10](#))

FACT – The Escobal project is generating *insecurity* in San Rafael Las Flores. Guatemalan government declared a state of siege and sent thousands of military troops and police due to increased violence and instability around the Tahoe project. Armed clandestine groups have been implicated in promoting instability, and now two Tahoe employees have been arrested and charged with serious crimes related to violence around the mine.

Fourteen of 26 Committees for Community Development (COCODEs) from the municipality of San Rafael las Flores presented their formal opposition to the proposed establishment of a permanent military base in the region. Two more COCODEs would likely have signed on, except one is in prison, believed to be falsely accused of crimes related to the detention of national police officers, and the other has a pending arrest warrant against him.

6. May 7 hearing during which Rotondo was criminally charged was closed and media was not allowed to attend. “It was in a private, closed judicial hearing and we were told ‘do not speak about it.’” (Ira Gostin Tahoe’s vice-president of investor relations, May 12 interview with Ipolitics.ca)

FACT – Almost all major Guatemalan news outlets, as well as human rights observers, were present in the open and public hearing at which Rotondo was criminally charged. Human rights organizations including Breaking the Silence and the Human Rights Defenders Protection United (UDEFEFUGA) were also there, along with the UN High Commission on Human Rights. For video coverage of the hearing see this [link from GuateVision](#).

7. Accusations against former employees is being perpetuated by the inflammatory and inaccurate Guatemalan press (Tahoe press release May 1 and Tahoe press release June 4)

FACT - Wiretap evidence ordered by Guatemala’s Public Prosecutor’s office has implicated two company employees in recent violence. Four of the six major Guatemalan newspapers printed stories about the arrest and arraignment of Rotondo and Oliva Trejo. Two articles describe the wiretap evidence implicating the men.

8. Tahoe CEO Kevin McArthur characterizes Rotondo as “former contract employee” (McArthur interview with [Northern Miner](#))

FACT – Rotondo and Trejo were working for Tahoe when six people were shot and wounded on April 27, and were working for Tahoe when they were arrested and charged. During the public May 7 hearing, Rotondo listed his home address as located on Tahoe property. In order to gain the privilege of house arrest, Rotondo's lawyers argued that Rotonodo has a contract with the company and therefore would not be a flight risk.

9. The Escobal mine creates significant job opportunities for locals (Tahoe Press release July 10)

FACT – Though there may be direct and indirect employment resulting from the Tahoe mine, estimates are that less than 200 people (1.4% of the total population of the town of San Rafael las Flores, not including the 25 surrounding communities) are employed by the company. These are short-to medium-term – positions which come at a cost of long-term livelihoods. Local farmers have parted with considerable amounts of land and water resources and will have to find jobs to replace previous livelihood opportunities for much longer than the mine’s expected 20 year life span.

10. Tahoe brought much needed police presence to San Rafael las Flores (Tahoe press release June 4 and Tahoe press release July 10)

FACT - The police presence in San Rafael has grown as a result of insecurity generated by the presence of Tahoe’s Escobal project. Since September 17, 2012, local residents have reported that 60 units of the Special Forces of the National Police have been stationed *inside* the mine property. The regular San Rafael police station has 10 regular agents stationed full time in the community.