

# ***BHP Billiton: Mining Juggernaut Wrecking Environmental Havoc All Over the World***

***...NOW THEY HAVE OUR COAST IN THEIR SIGHTS***

If you follow BHP around the world, you'll stumble on a trail of environmental destruction, human rights abuses, and a refusal to take responsibility for any of its actions. This company has been convicted of more environmental offenses than any other Australian company, has destroyed forests and rivers in Papua New Guinea, displaced indigenous people in Colombia, and showed incompetence and ignorance that resulted in the death of eleven mine workers in the small town of Moura in Australia. This is just to name a few of BHP's negligent actions.

Here are some details of these environmental "lowlights," from a company who wants to ship millions of tons of chilled Liquefied Natural Gas off our coast, return it to a gas, and then pipe it along the ocean floor, through our threatened wetlands, and under our homes and school sites. We need new sources of energy in California, but NOT from a reckless company like BHP engaging in their first experiment with LNG, with a giant "floating" facility right off the Malibu coast!

**BHP dumped 80,000 tons of tailings containing copper, zinc, cadmium, lead, and CYANIDE directly into Papua New Guinea Rivers, polluting every day for two decades**

The Ok Tedi River is now biologically dead. All species of fish, turtle, crocodile, and crustacean have been destroyed. The significant biological impacts will last for decades, possibly even centuries. BHP has admitted that compensation for the acid rock drainage would equal \$7 billion each year for fifty years. But they are not going to pay it. BHP and the Papua New Guinea Government have colluded to cover the environmental damage. In the "Compensation Act" secretly drafted by BHP lawyers and Papua New Guinea legislators, local indigenous tribes and communities are restricted from filing claims in Australian court against BHP, allowing BHP to walk away from the massive environmental and social problems that their mine operations are responsible for in Papua New Guinea. (12/08/1999, "BHP Billiton faces OK Tedi Damage", [www.abc.net.au/7.30/stories/s43531.html](http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/stories/s43531.html).)

Will they do the same thing to California???

**Responsible for the worst oil spill in Australian history**

The grounding of BHP's manganese ore carrier "Iron Barron" caused 420 tons of oil to spill into the sea. Environmental regulators from Australia's department of Primary Industries, Water, and Environment cited poor planning and training by BHP as the cause. The spill led to wildlife deaths estimated to be in the tens of thousands, with up to one-third of the Low Head and Ninth Island penguin colonies wiped out. (07/10/95, Iron Baron Oil Spill Incident, [www.amsa.gov.au](http://www.amsa.gov.au))

## **BHP is forcibly displacing communities with no compensation to make way for the expansion of a giant mine in Colombia**

Right now, BHP is conducting a campaign of intimidation and violation of human rights in Colombia. The corporation has bought all the land that surrounds its mine (the world's largest) and controls all the main roads. As a result, the Wayuu villagers (who have lived in the area for generations) now have no access to public transportation, education, health services, or traditional food sources.

Repeatedly, the Wayuu tribe has asked for compensation and help in relocating, but BHP refuses to negotiate with the community. Instead they have evoked a **terror campaign** that includes visits by security forces and denial of indigenous heritage and land rights. This is not limited to just the Wayuu tribe, however. The Afro Colombian communities of Roche, Chancleta, and Patiilla are also targets of the same campaign by BHP to drive these people out of their homes to open more land for mining. (06/04/04, NGO'S Condemn BHP Billiton's Human Rights Abuses in Columbia, [www.foe.org.au](http://www.foe.org.au))

## **BHP was found responsible for deaths of 11 workers at the Moura mine explosion**

In August 1994, an explosion ripped through a mine in Moura, Australia entombing eleven men. It was the third incident of its kind in less than three decades, making Moura one of the most dangerous coal mining locations in the world.

According to the mining warden report, it was ignorance and incompetence on the part of BHP's mine operators that led to the death of the workers. BHP was found responsible for the incident but it threatened to pull out of the town if it had to face liability for the deaths. The town could not absorb the financial hardship of losing the mine. So BHP was not held accountable and the families of the workers were left with nothing. (04/06/95, Report on an accident at Moura Mine No 2, [www.warden.qld.gov.au](http://www.warden.qld.gov.au))

**DON'T LET THIS BIG OIL AND  
MINING COMPANY'S PROFITS WIN OUT  
OVER OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH AND  
SAFETY!**

**UPDATE:** The Coast Guard has suspended the environmental review process for BHP Billiton's floating Liquefied Natural Gas port. While so far only a temporary delay, this is a clear indication that public action can and does work, and that we have the power to protect our homes, schools, air and water from this irresponsible company if we continue to work together.