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THEME FOR 2022 - A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH: FOCUS ON THE THINNEST TO MAKE IT THE THICKEST.

A Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2022 to you all my fellow ATA executives, Other Human Rights Advocates Of Porgera, Victims and not forgetting our faithful international partners. Wherever you are in this special moment reading this remember that a year is about to be passed and another year is to be welcomed- the same usual notion of the twelve months cycle that ends one year and starts with another.

On that note, previous years where a history for us: mere historical footprints placed on top of the cascade of a series of events that we've had journeyed through the thickest and thinnest. Specifically in this work where we all share a common goal to hold at ransom big multi-national transnational companies who recklessly undermines the bad impacts of its mining activities on the indigenous mining landowners as well as other settlers who came to live with them.

As such, those who had been affected were termed as the victims of social injustice where their rights were violated through abusive encounters. The abuse we mentioned referred to as deaths, rapes, injuries and others that occurred in different scenes arising from the action of the Barrick employees or the movement of Barrick's equipment, machines and blasting devices. In fact we've fought for the rights for them - the poor victims following UN Guiding Principles for human rights to ensure remedy for them in the appropriate way as per the BSR 2018 ten recommendations and our fight for an independent Operational Grievance Mechanism (OGM).

Further, the Independent OGM that we talked about is the only choice for the victims if they are to be compensated fairly for the violations they carried. In other words, the external OGM specified by Mining Watch Canada is what we are after at the moment despite Barrick intention to handle the OGM internally. Despite our intention for an Independent OGM, we still succumb to Barrick's intention given the current legal climate where the filing of lawsuit against cooperate companies is vaguely addressed.

However, we only reject Barrick's intention unless there is a legal avenue for us to justify our OGM against that of Barrick. To hold Barrick to respond to our independent OGM will be for us to address in the Canadian Supreme Court (CSC) justifying the types of human rights violations and the type of OGM matching the violations. Thus, we at ATA had been too vocal in the finding of a legal strategy suitable for our cases in order for us to search for justice for our long waited victims.

Moving on, the legal strategy that we talked about stems from the scale of violations under each class of violations and is a matter to be handled by Earth Rights International (ERI). We've had no other option at the moment but to go to court because of our victims cases prolonged for years. Our victims felt they were;

1: DEPRIVED of their human right to justice because Barrick failure to provide an avenue for them to address their cases once and for all.

2: NEGLECTED of their human right to justice **BECAUSE** of us not included in agreements and prolonging the addressing of our cases as per BSR recommendations.

3: DECIEVED of their human right access to justice **BECAUSE** of the prolonged situation of the cases for remedy

4: SIDE-LINED of their human right to justice **BECAUSE** of us not included in agreements

Finally, to close up the remarks we at ATA would like to mark 2022 as a year for us all to work collaboratively unlike our previous past years. We have slid past through 2018-2021 which more likely resembled a period of unfruitfulness caused by the mine closure. However, in 2022 we are facing a new direction with the mining operation starting on April and more likely our work should be more participatory approach between our groups, Barrick and our international partners. Hence, a collaborative approach is needed rather than individual efforts. Thank you so much for all your efforts for 2021 and looking towards a prosperous 2022 for us all.


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CEO - Akal Tange Association (ATA)
