



18 February 2010

**STATEMENT BY THE MINING AND MARITIME UNIONS MEETING IN
PALMDALE, CA ON 16-17 FEBRUARY 2010 REGARDING DISPUTES WITH RIO
TINTO AND GRUPO MEXICO / THE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO**

We, leaders of mining and maritime unions representing workers from Canada, the United States, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand meeting in Palmdale, California on 16 – 17 February, express our serious concern with the violation of workers' rights in Boron, California by Rio Tinto and in Mexico by Grupo Mexico backed by the Government of Mexico.

On 11 February 2010 a Mexican court, without a full examination of evidence, ruled the termination of the collective bargaining agreement between Grupo Mexico and Section 65 of the National Union of Mine, Metallurgical, Steel and Allied Workers of Mexico (Los Mineros).

The court has ruled that 1,200 workers, members of Los Mineros Section 65, are to be dismissed, a strike they initiated in July 2007 is terminated and that the union's collective bargaining agreement with Grupo Mexico is extinguished.

The dispute between Grupo Mexico and Los Mineros is a long-standing one. The Mexican government has allied itself with Grupo Mexico in a more than four-year campaign of repression and abuses of power to eliminate the Los Mineros union, which is that country's strongest independent union, led by Napoleón Gómez Urrutia.

Rio Tinto, a multinational mining giant that many of us have done battle with in the past, locked out nearly 600 members of the ILWU Local 30 at its borax mine and plant in Boron, California. This mega mining conglomerate is trying to force an extremely concessionary contract ultimatum down the throats of Local 30 members and their families.

Rio Tinto has a long and disgusting history with respect to their mistreatment of workers, communities and the environment around the world. The company is currently being sued in U.S. Federal Court because of its treatment of the community and environment in Papua New Guinea.





We intend to escalate the campaigns in defence of workers at Rio Tinto and Grupo Mexico immediately, dramatically and strategically to make them global battles. We will not cease until these workers receive fair treatment.

Statement issued on behalf of the mining and maritime unions coordinating committee by Maritime Union of Australia, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (Australia), SATAWU (South Africa), National Union of Mineworkers (South Africa), CEPPWAWU (South Africa), International Longshore Workers Association (Locals 1422 and 1526), International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Maritime Union of New Zealand, International Metalworkers Federation, International Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers Union.

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Stephen Hunt, USW

Adam Lee, USW

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