

Mining as fuel for war, is the title and main theme for this issue of The Broken Rifle. War Resisters' International works against war profiteering, supporting local nonviolent campaigns against these corporations. Most of the campaigns that we have worked together with are campaigns targeting well known war profiteers – the arms traders and service suppliers to the military. In this issue we want to take a next step and start to look closer to the connections that the mining industry has with the globalisation of militarism.

WRI sees a need to link the struggles of local communities against the mining industry with the anti-war movement. As you will read in the articles in this issue, the mining industry plays an important role in fuelling local conflicts – especially in Africa as documented in the article by Jan Van Criekeing – but also the minerals extracted are vital in weapons manufacture, as noted by Felix Padel in his article about aluminium.

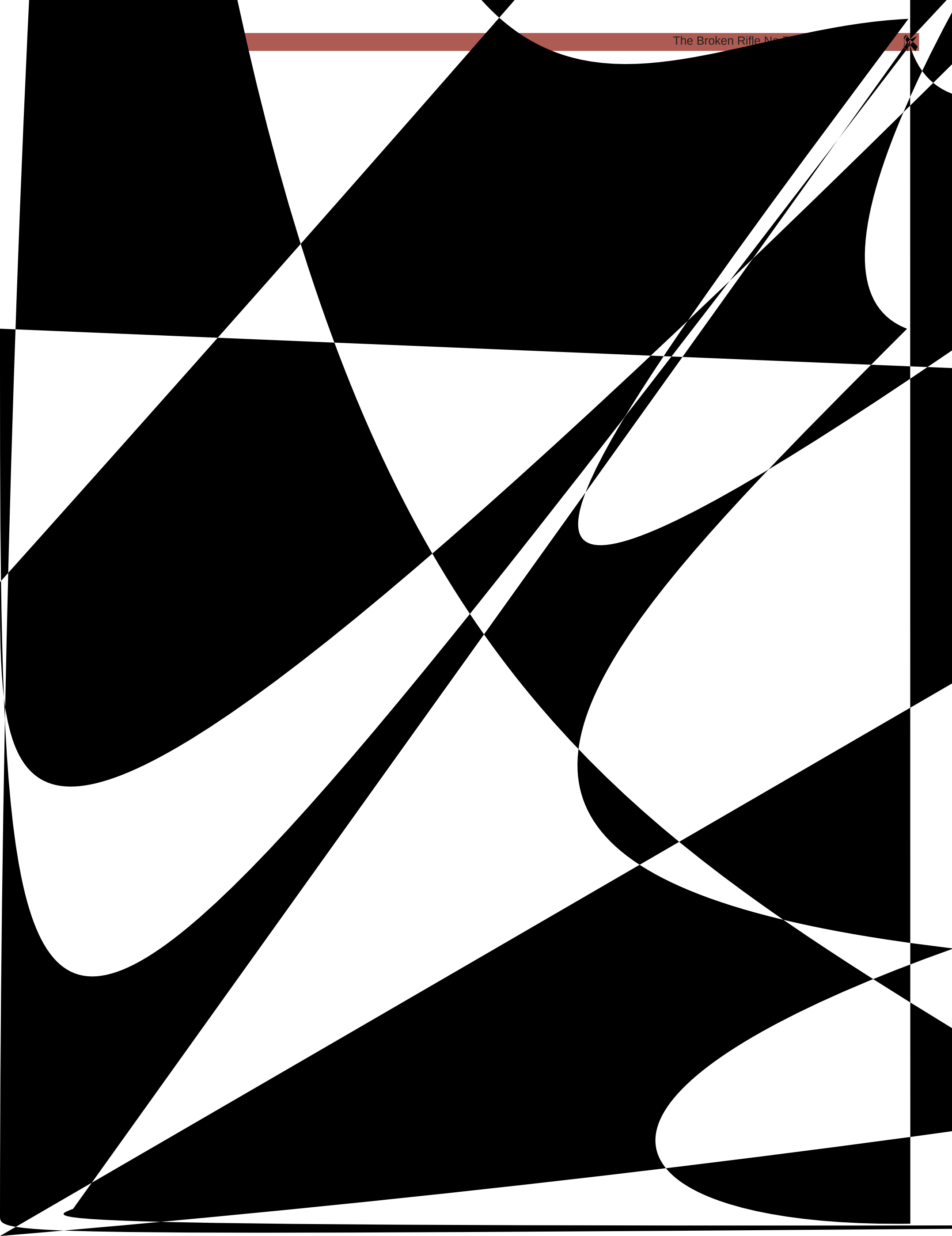
This BR also introduces us to one of the main themes of the seminar WRI is planning in India, 27-30 December 2008: “Linking local livelihood struggles and global militarism”. The seminar will bring together campaigners and researchers from all over the world to analyse the role of states and multinational corporations in depriving local communities of their sources of livelihood. We aim to learn from the experience of nonviolent resistance at various levels – from the community to the global.

Javier Gárate

The Broken Rifle is the newsletter of War Resisters' International, and is published in English, Spanish, French and German. This is issue 77, February 2008. This issue of The Broken Rifle was produced by Javier Gárate. Special thanks go to Felix Padel, Jan Van Criekeing, Xavier Leon, Howard Clark and Andreas Speck. If you want extra copies of this issue of The Broken Rifle, please contact the WRI office, or download it from our website.

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1997, AGC (Ashanti Goldfields Company) security personnel, acting in conjunction with the the Ghanaian police and the military, had killed three artisanal miners.² In one incident in January 1997, 16 artisanal miners were severely beaten by AGC security personnel, and others have been attacked by security guard dogs.

Even as a job source, mining is unsustainable. The destruction of the traditional employment base is followed by the loss of the mine itself. When ore deposits are ex-hausted, the jobs disappear. Most large – scale projects have a lifespan of between 10 and 40 years, after which the mining companies shut up shop and move on to new projects. Any schools, clinics, and other services established by the companies usually lose their funding. When this happens, the miners and communities are generally left to fend for themselves. Since mining is specialized employment, miners typically have few other marketable job skills.

More than in other African countries the Ghanaian civil society is involved in the struggle against human rights abuses at the hands of mining companies and state security agencies and has formed the National Coalition on Mining (NCOM) in solidarity with communities affected by mining. The Ghanaian government, however, has liberalised the mining sector in line with IMF and World Bank prescriptions and is attracting increased investment from transnational mining companies. This increase in foreign investment does not translated into increased employment or government revenue.

Communities affected by mining have for many years recorded and reported affronts to their dignity and violations of their rights, especially social and economic rights. In 2006, NCOM listed

specific instances of savage abuse of citizens' rights by mining companies, the police and the military. These include: violent, illegal arrest and detention of community members; torture of persons illegally arrested and detained; assault and battery (sometimes involving firearms and other deadly weapons) of youth accused of involvement in illegal mining or either trespass on mine property; interference with citizens' constitutional right to publicly protest against activities of mining companies that affect them negatively.

“The 2004 report by the Africa Initiative on Mining, Environment and Society (AIMES) in 2004: ‘The violent arrest, torture, assault and battery of persons illegally arrested and detained; assault and battery (sometimes involving firearms and other deadly weapons) of youth accused of involvement in illegal mining or either trespass on mine property; interference with citizens’ constitutional right to publicly protest against activities of mining companies that affect them negatively.’”

In 2007 AIMES issued a warning against ‘new’ players on the African market: FDI (FDI) Arc’s extrajurisdictional ss-j ct c# s# v# r t# st# # c # s# s# c t t# # # tr # s c s C , l , s # s t# S v v# # t t# extr# t# G G # # c# s# s t# t rv# # t v# # # # v r # t r# # , # s # # r # # Arc ; r t# r t# # s # # c# s# # N t t# # # # v# r # # Arc t t# # # # . # # # t# s# # # v# c s# - # # # # c# s# c # # v# # # c # c t# # v r # -

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During the last weeks of November and during most of December of 2007 a state of emergency (militarization of the zone) was declared in the Province of Orellana in the Amazon region of Ecuador, due specifically to the actions of the inhabitants of the Dayuma settlement who have raise up in protest because of the situation of abandonment on the part of the Ecuadorian government.

This militarization and repression has lead to various arrests and unlawful entry into homes of the residents, violating their Human Rights, only because they demanded that their basic needs be met.

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In the province, one can find well-established state and transnational oil companies such as