

# In Brief

- The RCMP's overview of **missing and murdered indigenous women** in Canada revealed that 1,181 indigenous women have been murdered or have gone missing over the last three decades. The report stated that indigenous women in New Brunswick make up 4 per cent of female murders in the province while accounting for only 2.4 per cent of the female population.
- Larger numbers of **refugees in Canada** are being condemned to automatic, mandatory and indefinite detention and deportation to countries that they fled. Since Harper's Conservatives came into power in 2006, new laws have made it harder for refugees to enter Canada and since 2004, more than 100,000 refugees and other immigrants have been imprisoned and deportations have soared to 15,000 each year. Since September 2013, approximately 200 migrants and asylum seekers have been demanding their release from a maximum-security prison in Lindsay, Ontario. Some have been jailed for as long as seven years. One of the detainees has cancer and is afraid of dying in jail. Others who protest in form of a hunger strike and boycotting their detention hearings have faced reprisals including deportation, lock-up segregation and denial of access to legal counsel. A Roma refugee, Jan Szamko, was refused medical care and died in a Toronto jail in 2009.
- "Most **glaciers in Alaska and British Columbia** are shrinking substantially," stated the U.S. National Climate Assessment, which was released in early May. "This trend is expected to continue and has implications for hydropower production, ocean circulation patterns, fisheries, and global sea level rise." The global decline in glacial and ice-sheet volume is predicted to be one of the largest contributors to global sea-level rise during the century, according to the report.



**The Supreme Court of Canada upheld a national security certificate against Mohamed Harkat of Ottawa (shown here with his wife Sophie Lamarche Harkat). The court ruled that the legal process used to detain Harkat for years was fair and reasonable. The decision means the government can move to deport Harkat, who has argued he faces torture or even death if he returns to Algeria. Harkat, a former pizza delivery man, was born in Algeria, came to Canada in 1995 and was granted refugee status in 1997. Harkat was arrested in 2002 and accused of being an al-Qaeda sleeper agent. He spent four years in custody, and seven more years under house arrest. Harkat was detained without a trial under the provisions of a security certificate, which have been protested across the country by human rights groups and labour unions for detaining or deporting non-citizens or foreign nationals without due process and a fair trial. Photo by Darren Ell.**

## Public memorial held in Toronto after assassination of teenage activist resisting Goldcorp/Tahoe Resources mine in Guatemala



**Over 60 people gathered in front of the Goldcorp office in Toronto on May 1 to commemorate the life of Merilyn Topacio Reynosa Pacheco and to denounce her assassination and the violence around the Goldcorp mines in Guatemala.** Photo by Allan Lisner.

By RACHEL SMALL and JOANNE JEFFERSON

Toronto – On May 1, as Goldcorp announced the year's profits at their annual shareholder meeting in Vancouver, more somber events were happening in Toronto and in Guatemala to hold the same company accountable for the murder of 16-year-old mining resistance activist, Merilyn Topacio Reynoso Pacheco.

In Toronto, over 60 people gathered on Adelaide Street in front of Goldcorp's offices for a memorial to honour Topacio's life and to denounce the violent and cowardly act that killed her. At the same time, Topacio's family, friends and community members were gathering in Guatemala to commemorate her activism and leadership, and to demand justice for her death.

Topacio was assassinated by unknown gunmen on April 13 in Mataquescuintla, Jalapa, Guatemala. Her father, Edwin Alexander Reynoso who accompanied her at the time, was also shot and remains in critical condition. Both Topacio and her father were active in the resistance against Canadian

### Intimidation of shale gas protester

*(continued from page 1)* ...some signs and flags supporting the protest, and those signs were attacked by violent gas supporters."

After his property was attacked last year, Beers wrote down the license plate of the vehicle used by the intruders and turned it over to the RCMP. "To me it seems obvious that they would have wanted to talk to the vandals who attacked our sign last year, but it's my understanding they didn't do that either," he says.

"The provincial government mustered more than 200 RCMP officers out here last year to arrest peaceful protesters trying to protect their land, air and water from shale gas companies," Beers says, " But when a gunman stands by the side of a road and fires more than 20 shots in the direction of people's homes, it takes five days for someone to respond."

It is the seeming inconsistency in the RCMP handling of complaints that dismays many local residents.

Last year a task force of a couple of hundred RCMP officers, special weapons units and armored vehicles was assembled in order to forcibly suppress the peaceful protests of local residents opposing the development of shale gas. This year, however, when a protester's farm is attacked with a volley of gunfire, no response is made for five days.

"The RCMP just pretends to care," Beers says, "We're not safe with them."

*Dallas MacQuarrie is active in the shale gas resistance in Kent County and writes for the NB Media Co-op.*

company Tahoe Resources' Escobal mine, in San Rafael las Flores, Santa Rosa. Topacio, along with her work as the Youth Coordinator of the Resistance in Mataquescuintla, was also a poet and musician.

Canadian company Goldcorp owns a 40% share in the Escobal mining project which Topacio and her father have been resisting in defense of their community's right to prior consultation, self-determination and human rights. At her funeral, Topacio's mother promised: "The resistance doesn't end here, my love."

The Mine Injustice Solidarity Network says that Canadians can honour Topacio's life and her mother's promise by denouncing Goldcorp for their responsibility in this act of violence, as well as in all of the violations of human rights and environmental rights that community members have faced since the mine opened in their region.

Attendees heard some of Topacio's poetry, her favourite

music, and speakers who shared messages of solidarity and a commitment to continue to support this struggle. Candles, flowers, and a large painted banner that said "Rest in Power, Topacio" filled the busy downtown corner as people expressed their collective sadness, anger, and determination, as well as a moment of silence.

As the memorial was taking place, 36 international human rights, environmental justice, and solidarity organizations delivered a letter to Guatemala's Attorney General, Claudia Paz y Paz, demanding justice for the attacks against Alex and Topacio Reynoso. "We condemn this violent attack and call on your office to conduct a full and impartial investigation to ensure that that those responsible are brought to justice," the letter states.

The document also identifies other incidents of violence and injustice that have occurred in communities surrounding the mine, including two occasions when police violently evicted a peaceful, legitimate, and legally located encampment outside the mine. The former head of security for the mine is currently facing charges for shooting peaceful protesters during one of these instances.

After the memorial, participants joined in the annual May Day march through Toronto streets, sharing with hundreds of people the message that Canadian mining companies must be held accountable for their actions. In solidarity with the international M4 movement, many dipped their hands in red paint symbolizing the destruction of health and the environment brought about by Goldcorp's mines.

*Rachel Small is a poet, environmental justice activist and organizer with the Mining Injustice Solidarity Network (MISN) in Toronto. Joanne Jefferson is a writer and facilitator from Nova Scotia now living in Toronto. She recently spent a month in Guatemala visiting communities impacted by Canadian-owned mines.*

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# Community Calendar

For details and updated event listings, visit [nbmediacoop.org](http://nbmediacoop.org). To list your event, email: [community@nbmediacoop.org](mailto:community@nbmediacoop.org).

**Breaking the Silence celebrates 25 years of solidarity, resilience and resistance.** Join the BTS Network for its annual AGM from Fri, June 27 to Sun, June 29 in Tatamagouche, NS. Hear from long-time Guatemalan partners. Learn about BTS's work today and in the future. Families welcome. Children's programming available. Bursaries available. Program Cost: \$176.50 (registration, meals, lodging). For more information or to register, visit: [www.breakingthesilenceblog.com/](http://www.breakingthesilenceblog.com/) or contact [btsmaritimes@gmail.com](mailto:btsmaritimes@gmail.com).

**NB Media Co-op Story Meetings.** Join us at our monthly story meetings in Fredericton where we discuss politics and current events and decide what to put in this paper every month. To find out the meeting time and venue, email [info@nbmediacoop.org](mailto:info@nbmediacoop.org).

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