**PRESS RELEASE**

**SEPTEMBER 25th, 2020**

**The frogs won against mining!**

**Major legal victory for endemic species in Ecuador for the Rights of Nature**

**JUSTICE WAS SERVED IN FAVOR OF NATURE, IN FAVOR OF LIFE!**

Justice was served in favor of nature, in favor of life, on September 24th, 2020. The Ecuadorian Juridical System took a significant step by accepting the precautionary measures in favor of endangered species due to mining, against the omissions of the Ministry of Environment in Ecuador.

After 26 years of constant struggle in Intag to defend dignity and life, where many organizations and individuals have participated, Ecuador sets a unique precedent to the world for the defense of Rights of Nature.

The Constitutional Judge of the Multicompetent Unit in Cotacachi, granted a Protection Action with Constitutional Injunction in favor of the Rights of Nature against the economic interests of transnationals and the omission of the Ministry of Environment of its responsibilities as an environmental authority.

“*Two endemic species of frogs are threatened by the Llurimagua mining project: the Longnose Harlequin Frog and the Confusing Rocket Frog. The case was put forward by environmental and community groups DECOIN, GARN, CEDENMA and the Jambatu Centre. More than three dozen other species including, two several bird species, two species of monkeys, and the spectacled bear are also in danger of extinction from the mining project*,” says Carlos Zorrilla, a founder of DECOIN.

The Constitutional Injunction (*Medidas Cautelares*) was brought to the Cotacachi court in late August to immediately stop the Llurimagua copper mining project. The case argued that extractive activities in all habitats where endemic species are found should be prohibited.

The judicial resolution establishes: **1.** the Ministry of the Environment has a peremptory term of 3 months to comply with the observations of the State Comptroller General regarding the damage caused in the first phase of exploration, **2.** the Ministry of the Environment shall designate for this concession or others with high biodiversity, public or private entities in addition to those contracted by the operating entity, **3.** to validate the Environmental Impact Studies presented, it must consider accredited universities other than those contracted by the operator**, 4.** consider the communities in the area and the local municipality.

Without the approval of the entities described above, the requirements of the sentence will not be understood to have been fulfilled. Furthermore, in the event that the Ministry of Environment does not comply with these requirements within the established term, the license or environmental plan of the operating entity will be revoked.

The court ruled in favor of the Rights of Nature over the economic rights of the mining companies, giving the respondents - the Ministry of Environment and the Attorney General - three months to remedy the illegalities and irregularities detected in the first stage of exploration. This process will be overseen by a number of civil society groups, including universities.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION,**

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