

Media Advisory – Nevsun Resources Investors To Face Petition Calling for Divestment Over Abuses at Eritrea Mine

Community members will join Vancouver's Mining Justice Alliance outside Nevsun Resources' Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, May 3rd, to call attention to accusations that the company profits from slave labour at its Bisha gold/copper mine in Eritrea. The group will present a petition and make the case that the company's investors must divest from operations in Eritrea, a country where forced labour is widespread.

When: Wednesday, May 3rd, 8:30 a.m.

Where: Downtown Vancouver's Four Seasons Hotel (791 W. Georgia Street)

See the petitions:

- Sum of Us petition "Slaves in a Canadian-owned mine"
<https://actions.sumofus.org/a/nevsun-slavery>
- Help Stop Profits from Slavery in Eritrea
<https://www.freedomunited.org/advocate/nevsun-in-eritrea/>

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News Release – 180,000 People Worldwide Join Call For Nevsun Resources Investors to Divest Over Abuses at Eritrea Mine

(Vancouver, May 3, 2017) Community members joined Vancouver's Mining Justice Alliance outside Nevsun Resources' Annual General Meeting today to present over 180,000 signatures on petitions calling for the company's shareholders to divest from operations in Eritrea, a country where forced labour is widespread.

Nevsun, whose sole operating mine is the Bisha gold/copper in the north-eastern African nation, benefits from the country's system of indefinite conscription. It's a form of forced labour (or modern slavery) according to the United Nations, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and others.

The Bisha mine is also a major source of income for the repressive regime that has ruled Eritrea since its independence, and the largest source of foreign exchange earnings. Nevsun has consistently denied that it has used conscript labour, including through its subcontractors, as well as asserting that its contributions to the government are used for development and infrastructure improvement. A [UN commission](#) found that the government is guilty of committing “systematic, widespread, and gross human rights violations.” Eritrea is also the worst country in the world for freedom of speech, according to the World Press Freedom Index. At least 17 journalists are behind bars but none of them has ever been tried in court, nor even been charged with a crime.

Canada is a signatory to international conventions on human rights and forced labour, but has no legal restrictions on the international operations of Canadian companies other than rarely-used anti-bribery laws. “We are pressing the federal government to take responsibility and at least implement an Ombudsperson to investigate complaints,” says Jamie Kneen, Communications Coordinator for [MiningWatch Canada](#). “At the same time, it’s fair to ask what kind of business ethics, and what kind of due diligence on the part of investors, allows companies to operate in countries like Eritrea.”

Forty-eight former workers are currently suing Nevsun in the Supreme Court of British Columbia, making it the first time a modern slavery case has been heard in a Canadian court. “The tens of thousands of petition signatories are shocked that a Canadian company can produce goods sold around the world in an environment synonymous with forced labour and human rights violations. The fact that this company is backed by investors that have we have stake in, such as through pension funds, makes our responsibility even more clear” said Joanna Ewart-James, Advocacy Director at [Freedom United](#).

This form of modern slavery is also the primary cause for another crisis. Eritrea is currently producing an incredible number of refugees. Of a population of fewer than 6 million people, 5,000 are leaving every month, with Eritreans make up a large part of the thousands of people desperately trying to reach Europe from the Middle East and North Africa, with many drowning in the Mediterranean or dying along the way.

“Nevsun Resources is helping fuel a refugee crisis by profiting from supporting a repressive regime,” says Daniel Tseghay, a local Eritrean organizer working with [Mining Justice Alliance](#). Tseghay points out that Nevsun’s shareholders include the Canadian Public Pension (CPP) Investment Board. He says, “With the CPP investing in the company, a large number of Canadians are shareholders and therefore complicit in the enslavement of people from my country.”

The groups argue that the company’s investors must divest now.

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