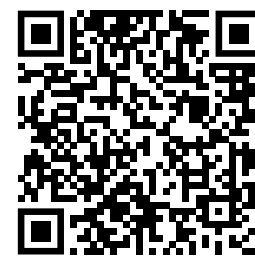




Impacts from drilling campaign in Cáceres



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violating the terms of the planning permission granted for the works, opening new tracks or access roads, making substantial modifications to existing ones and creating platforms for the establishment of drilling rigs that were larger than the ones that had been authorised. In 2018, proceedings were initiated for the 'restoration of the breached urban planning order' imposing the 'immediate suspension, paralyzation and sealing of the works'. The company was finally sanctioned for a serious urban planning infringement, having to pay 26,500 in fines after losing a lawsuit against it. The restoration plan and environmental impact study were also not complied with, leading to another sanction by the Regional Government of Extremadura.

### Civil rights and corporate counterinsurgency

**Freedom of Information obstacles** **Obstacles in public participation**

**Social engineering** **Lawfare / SLAPP**

The administration has repeatedly violated the rights of participation and access to environmental information. Among other shortcomings, the initial public participation procedures for the exploration permits restoration plans only allowed 15 days for comments, which led to their cancellation following claims by environmental groups. When the local council posted the project on its website, the mining company threatened to sue it and claim damages.

For its part, the mining company has deployed an intense social engineering campaign, most recently through the Extremadura New Energies Foundation. This has included sponsoring sports teams, film festivals, hiring local politicians, conducting customised surveys, installing large billboards advertising thousands of jobs, signing agreements with charities, offering training to future mine workers, etc.

The mining company has also taken or threatened legal action (SLAPP) against a journalist who published articles on a series of messages posted on the Australian parent company's shareholder forum, in which it was suggested to bribe local politicians to remove development obstacles.

## Cáceres | España

# San José de Valdeflores

Since the start of the project in 2016, numerous irregularities have been committed, in violation of public participation rights and urban planning regulations. The company has been sanctioned several times while it has deployed an intense social engineering campaign in the city of Cáceres, located just 1 km from the project.

**Project factsheet**

**Status** Projected underground mine / open-pit mine

**Concession** Junta de Extremadura 10343-00, 10359-00

In 2017 an open pit project was proposed, but the company's permits were revoked and in 2019 the project was cancelled. In 2022 a new project for an underground mine was proposed.

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**Minerals** Lithium

1986 and with a population of nearly 100.000, and just metres away from the 'Virgen de la Montaña' shrine, declared as a heritage site (BIC).

So far, only exploration work has taken place, but the opening of new roads and the creation of platforms for drilling caused significant damage until police paralyzed the activities. The Public Prosecutors Office also initiated criminal investigation proceedings. Exploration work was carried out in breach of urban planning rules and also breached the restoration plan and Environmental Impact Assessment that had been approved. Sanctions were imposed for such breaches and their consequences. A Court ruling forced the company to restore the affected areas.

### Permitting, impact assessment and restoration

**Illegal permitting/operation** **EIS breach(es)** **Inadequate restoration plan**

**Administrative neglect**

In 2016 and 2017, two exploration permits were granted in the Sierra de la Mosca. These permits should never have been granted, as urban planning expressly prohibited extractive activities on the affected land. In the end, the permits were annulled as the legally required periods for public participation had been limited. When new exploration permits were applied for, they had to be refused in view of the urban planning incompatibility. This decision was confirmed by a court ruling. Such decisions were later confirmed by a court ruling.

In spite of all this, the drillings and test pits were still carried out,



Billboard by the mining company promising over 1,000 jobs

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### Public funding

**EU funding**

The mining company signed a memorandum of understanding with EIT InnoEnergy, an EU-linked entity, which would provide €800,000 for phase 1 of the project and facilitate raising up to €300 million for subsequent phases. It also became a partner of the Battchain project, where a consortium was seeking €1.2 billion in NEXT Generation EU funds.

### Use of complaint mechanisms

**Administrative complaint(s)** **International remedies**

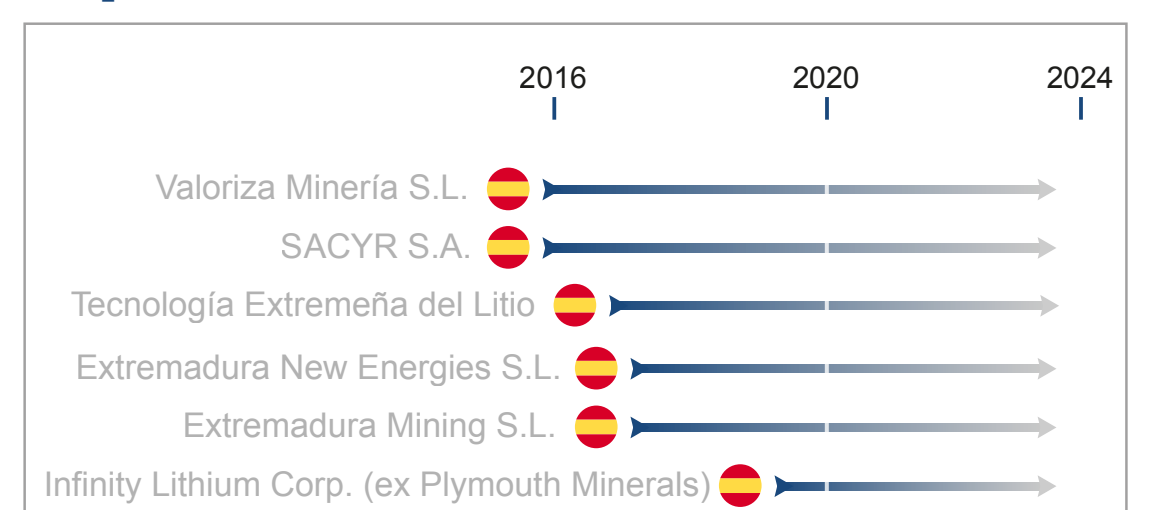
**Criminal proceedings**

Various environmental groups lodged numerous appeals against the infringements committed in the granting of the exploration permits, as well as complaints to the town council, Public Prosecutor's Office, and regional government. They have also intervened in several lawsuits initiated by the mining company.

In the European Parliament, various NGOs registered in 2017, 2018 and 2019 complaints to the Committee on Petitions. Questions were also raised in the European Parliament regarding EU funding.

References and more case studies on [minob.org](http://minob.org). Or scan the QR code on top of this page to directly access this case.

### Proprietaries



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