

## Parex and its activities in the Colombian region of Magdalena Medio

The Canadian oil company Parex became known to the people of Magdalena Medio and the department of Santander, Colombia, when the ANH (National Hydrocarbons Agency) awarded the Block VMM 9 to this company, in the municipality of Cimitarra, Santander. Parex was one of the first companies in Colombia to propose the exploitation of Non-Conventional Hydrocarbon Reservoirs, using the criminal technique of fracking. The company made news again in the region in September 2015 when the Colombian state-owned oil company Ecopetrol reported that "an agreement was signed with the Canadian company Parex Resources to increase the reserves and production of the Aguas Blancas field, located in Simacota, Santander, in the Middle Magdalena region."<sup>1</sup>

Today we know that the Canadian company Parex has activities in the Magdalena Medio in the projects VMM 9 and VMM 11. The company operates these projects directly, hence, is responsible for the documentation regarding the environmental and legal issues of these projects. It is also responsible for the social relations with the potentially affected communities. Since 2014 Parex has signed a series of commercial alliances with Ecopetrol to carry out operations in blocks, fields and oil wells such as Aguas Blancas<sup>2</sup>, Guariquíes, Playón, Coyote 1, and recently, Boranda 1<sup>3</sup>. For these projects operated by Parex, Ecopetrol provides the Canadian oil company with all the legal, environmental and social documents. However, we do not understand why a foreign company operating on Colombian soil does not develop its own instruments of environmental control, and instead supports its activities with third party documents.

On April 12 of this year, a tank truck providing services for Parex crashed on the road that connects the Highway 'Ruta del Sol' to an oil platform in the El Diviso-La Colorada county, Simacota. The tank truck caused a spill of 5,800 gallons of diesel oil in a local farm. Due to heavy rains on the night of April 13 the diesel oil reached La Colorada river first, and the Magdalena river later. There is an evident lack of clarity about the environmental contingency plan that the company is carrying out in the face of this disaster. The company has failed to make publicly available any type of contingency plan.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ecopetrol.com.co/wps/portal/es/ecopetrol-web/nuestra-empresa/sala-de-prensa/boletines-de-prensa/Boletines%202015/Boletines%202015/Ecopetrol-Parex-suscriben-acuerdo-desarrollo-campo-Aguas-Blancas>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.parexresources.com/media/news/?r\\_id=2129424](http://www.parexresources.com/media/news/?r_id=2129424)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.eltiempo.com/economia/sectores/hallazgo-de-pozo-petrolero-en-rionegro-santander-73310>



In the light of these events, we are concerned about the activities carried out by foreign oil companies in general, and Parex in particular, in Magdalena Medio. These companies lack any documents exposing their plans to repair the environmental and social damage inflicted in the communities of Magdalena Medio, due to their operations. This concern is particularly relevant as these communities have worked hard to build conditions of wellbeing and peace, in the aftermath of years of war in the region, which involved paramilitaries in complicity with military and police forces.

Today, we are making a call for foreign companies, and particularly Parex, to clarify the actions and plans regarding the social and environmental wellbeing of the communities where they operate. The related documents must be made publicly available.