

CYPIHER

comics as eyewitness

April 2021

Mongolia

Zambia

Morocco

Turkey

front line defenders



cypher

/ˈsaɪfər/

The dictionary definition of cypher is 'a secret or disguised way of writing'. In many ways, this is the essence of comics storytelling – the image, rather than the word, is a disguise for many words, that can convey meaning, emotion, and can re/frame an entire narrative.

Rap and hip hop culture has taken the word and ascribed a new meaning: 'an informal gathering of rappers, beatboxers and/or breakdancers in a circle, in order to jam musically together.' This, too, we find relevant to this project, in that we are bringing together artists and HRDs in freestyle collaboration of activism and art with the aim of informing, elevating and inspiring.

For us, this captures the spirit of why we are working in comics and guides how we facilitate the process of creative production.

Edited and published by:
Beldan Sezen and Adam Shapiro

Cover art by anonymous.

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adam shapiro

Deep cuts into the earth, scarring the landscape and removing whole mountaintops for small minerals. The physical manifestation of this activity impacts more than just the landscape; it pollutes the water and the air, breaks backs and infects lungs of laborers.

For human rights defenders who challenge mining operations, defend the rights and health of communities and demand better labor conditions, this is one of the most dangerous sectors to work in. The economic power of extractive companies combined with the economic and political interests of local elites, means HRDs face unimaginable odds.

But as these stories show, the struggle is life.

Editorial



beldan sezen

I grew up with “The customer is king” (back then it was still “king”) and “At your service”. Two sentences invented to keep me, the eternal consumer, delusionally happy and coming back. Everything is available in an instant, a dial tone or mouse click away. All fruits at all seasons, every new electronic gadget every half year at my whim. A never ending cornucopia. Unquestioned, for I deserve it, don’t I? As hard as I work – demand and supply - in this fast paced city, meeting my deadlines and work accomplishments become imaginary trophies rewarded by the comfort in which I can accomplish this fast pace of success.

Receiving another convenient delivery at my doorstep while humming that Brecht song ‘The Wife of the (Nazi-)Soldier’. Goering’s question “Do you want butter or canons” collapses today into “Both” for to be able to meet our consuming demands, both comfortable and comforting, “canons’ are sent out to take and secure huge areas of mining operations in regions rich of minerals. Gold, copper, aluminum, silver, titanium, coltan. Just about all our digital technology – mobile phones, laptops, batteries, etc.- require “rare earth minerals”. Regions far, far away are turned into industrial deserts, generating migration, poverty, exceedingly harsh and hazardous labor conditions, uninhabitable places and climate catastrophes. And all for what? To satisfy the primary economic force, profit? Can we really sacrifice large regions and their peoples for the questionable and shortsighted well being of others?

I’m well aware of that our current lives and life supplies have become far more complicated and deeply entwined than a ‘simple’ “Stop the War” bumper sticker. To put a much needed halt to the by now greedy *force of profit*¹, we finally should turn to those inclusive green economy strategies we have tossed aside for far too long. Yes, it’ll ask us for some discomfort or a shift of our existing discomfort and probably lower profit margin for some. Developing sustainable economic strategies like investing in biodiversity² have been proven economically successful as well as keeping the environment, and thus our life source, intact.

Since I, as a consumer, am “king”, I want “butter” as a long-lasting nutrition of quality it once was and not a hollow selling gadget that destroys lives and leaves me unsatisfied and in need of my next fix. For that, I must alter my demands for instant comfort and turn the “canons” around in order to prevent “going Green” to become another superficial profitable gadget.

April 2021

1 Levinsky, R.: *The story of my accident is ours*, 2013

2 Agriculture, forestry and fisheries products, stable natural hydrological cycles, fertile soils, a balanced climate and numerous other vital ecosystem services depend upon the conservation of biological diversity. Food production relies on biodiversity for a variety of food plants, pollination, pest control, nutrient provision, genetic diversity, and disease prevention and control. Both medicinal plants and manufactured pharmaceuticals rely on biodiversity. Decreased biodiversity can lead to increased transmission of diseases to humans and increased healthcare costs. The outdoor tourism industry relies on biodiversity to create and maintain that which tourists come to see, as does the multi-billion dollar fishing and hunting industry.

Mongolia

Centerra Gold's Gatsuurt project is about a two-hour drive north from Mongolia's capital Ulaanbaatar, in the sparsely populated Selenge province. The area is home to springs that are tributaries of the Selenge river, which flows into the Russian lake Baikal. The province boasts some beautiful scenery: forests, farmland and pasture.

Mongolian activists see the Centerra open pit mine as a threat to the local way of life, aside from the public dispute with Centerra over the right to access and worship Mount Noyon, a sacred place in Mongolian culture and history which, according to local accounts, has been fenced off on legal grounds shrouded in ambiguity. A government keen to attract foreign investment, has repeatedly sided with corporate mining interests, despite an active environmentalist movement across the country.

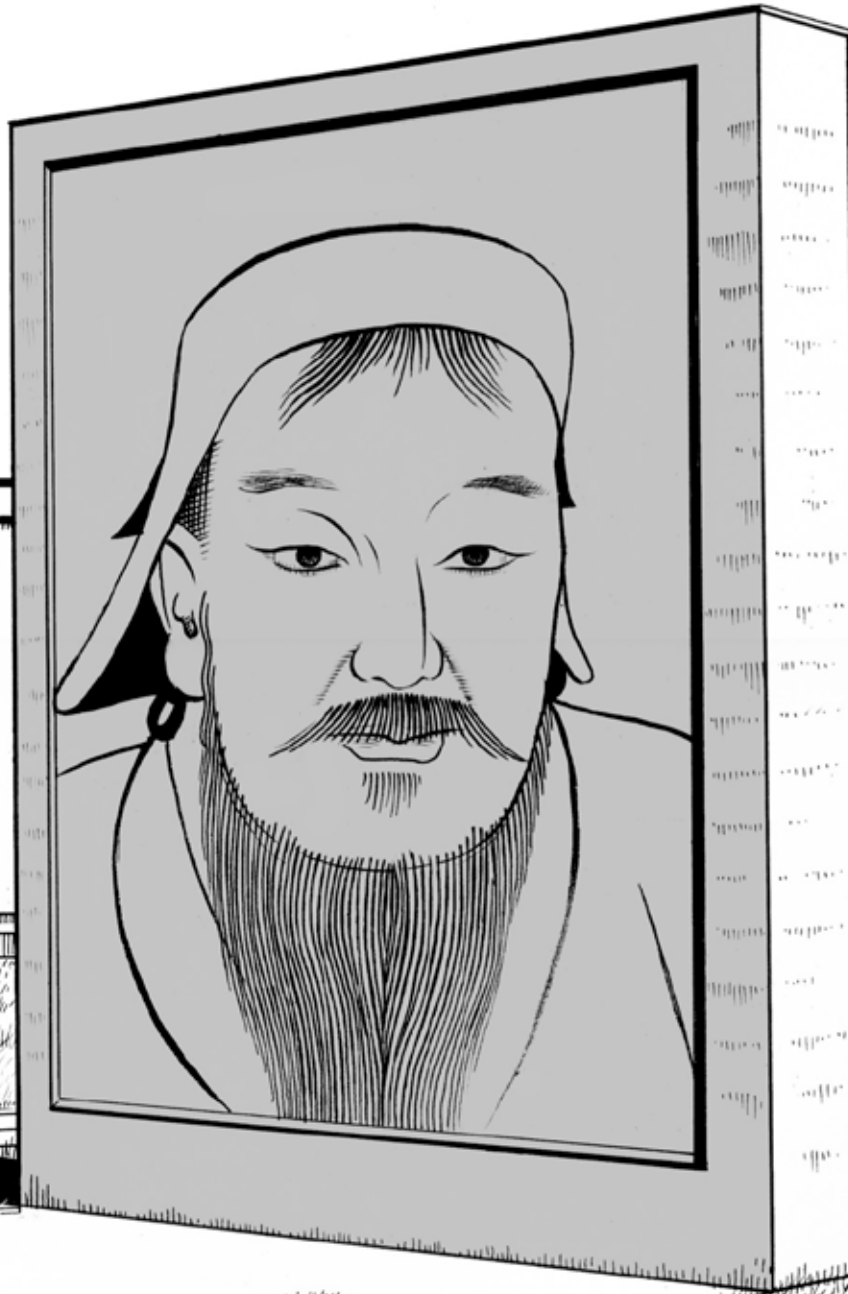
Aside from gold, Mongolia is rich in minerals and other natural resources that are sought after by some of the largest corporate mining interests in the world. Environmental defenders and anti-corruption activists face well-financed opposition that is tied to political power in the country, in an effort to preserve the land, way of life and health of the Mongolian people.

Artist: Jon Sack

Jon Sack is an artist and writer whose books include *La Lucha* (Verso, 2015) and *Windows on the World* (Fantagraphics, 2020). He is based in the UK.

jonsack.com

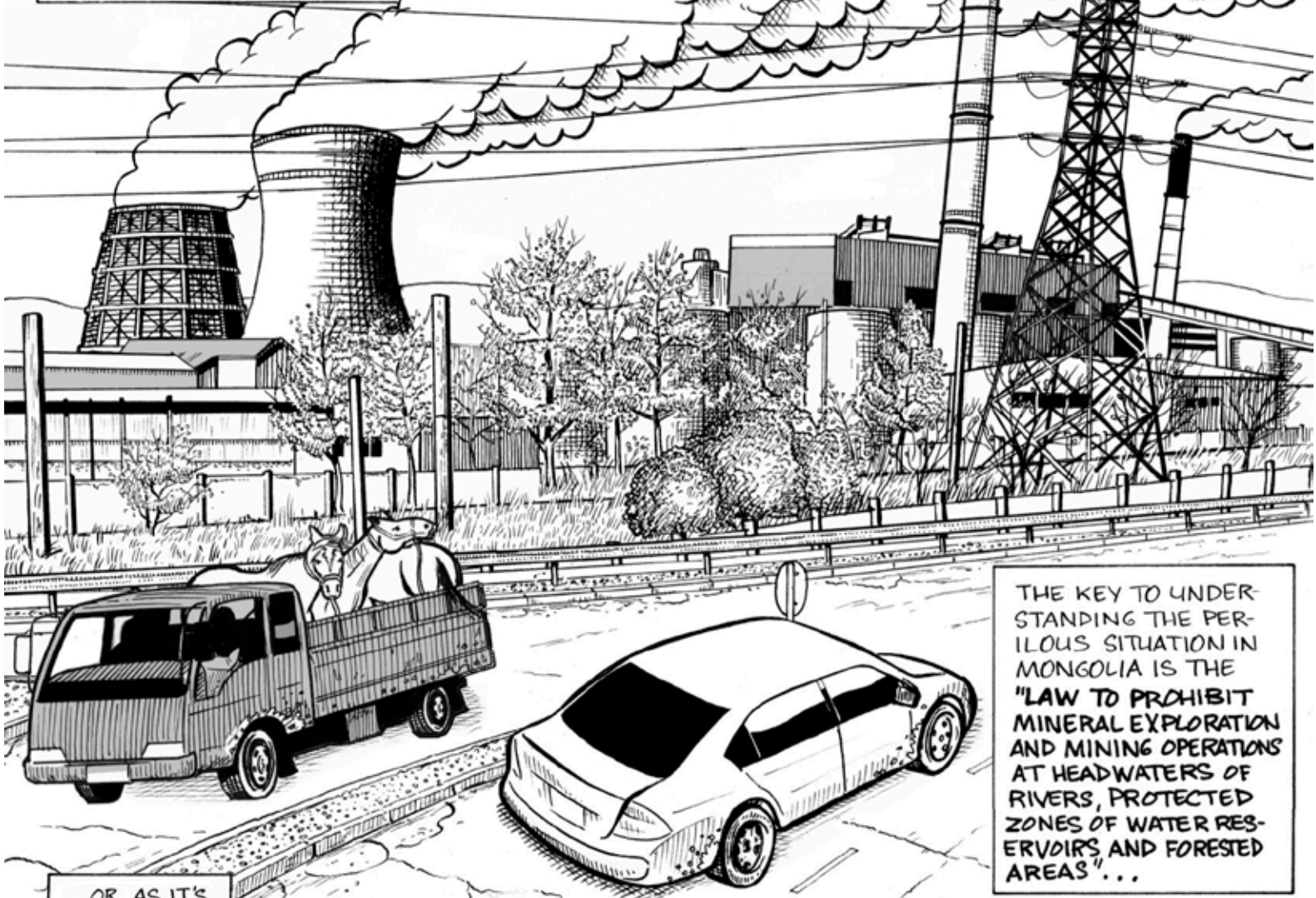
LEAVING CHINGGIS KHAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON A COLD AND SUNNY MORNING, WE PASS A LARGE MURAL OF THE FOUNDER OF THE MONGOL EMPIRE OF THE SAME NAME...



AS WE HEAD TO DOWNTOWN ULAAN-BAATAR, MONGOLIA'S CAPITAL, WE PASS A LOT OF INFRASTRUCTURE LEFT OVER FROM ITS SOVIET ERA, AWKWARDLY JUXTAPOSED NEXT TO MORE MODERN LOOKING BUILDINGS.

WE'RE IN MONGOLIA TO MEET WITH LOCAL ACTIVISTS WHO HAVE BEEN CAMPAIGNING AGAINST MINING... IN PARTICULAR, GOLD MINING ...

...IN PARTICULAR, AGAINST CANADIAN BASED CENTERRA GOLD.



THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE PERILOUS SITUATION IN MONGOLIA IS THE "LAW TO PROHIBIT MINERAL EXPLORATION AND MINING OPERATIONS AT HEADWATERS OF RIVERS, PROTECTED ZONES OF WATER RESERVOIRS, AND FORESTED AREAS"...

... OR, AS IT'S (THANKFULLY) KNOWN IN MONGOLIA, THE -

LAW WITH THE LONG NAME

1924

2015



AFTER SETTLING INTO OUR HOTEL,



WE MEET SOLONGO ZORIGT, AN ACTIVIST WITH RIVERS WITHOUT BOUNDARIES. WE WALK A SHORT DISTANCE TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT STORE TO MEET OUR TRANSLATOR KHAS, AND SUKHGEREL DUGERSEREN, DIRECTOR OF OYU TOLGOI WATCH, A MONGOLIAN NGO.

WE GO TO A CAFE ATOP
THE DEPARTMENT STORE...

I'LL TRY
TO GIVE YOU A
BRIEF HISTORY
OF THIS LAW...

IN THE
LATE 90s AND EARLY
2000s, MONGOLIA LIBER-
ALIZED ITS MINING INDU-
STRY, ISSUING LICENSES TO
ABOUT 40% OF MONGO-
LIAN TERRITORY.

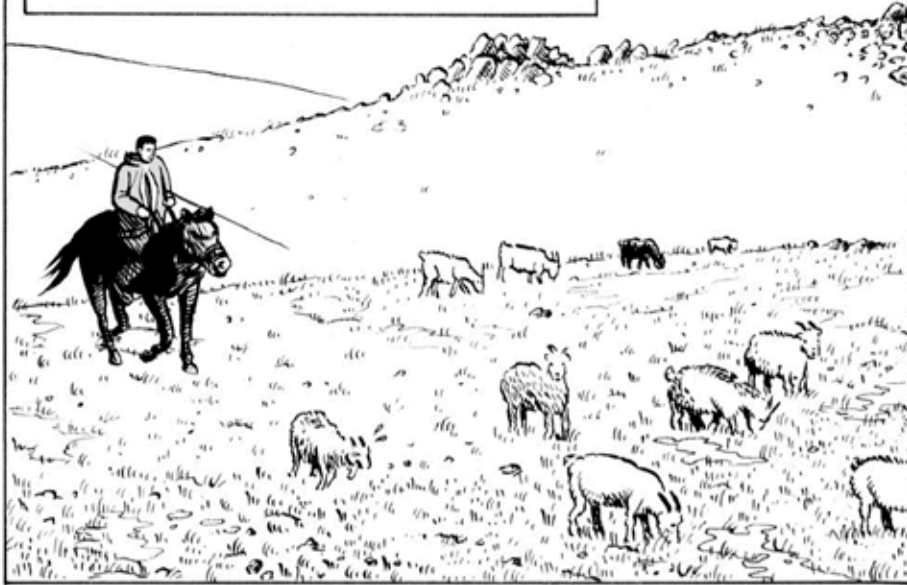
SOLONGO

SUKHGEREL

THIS THREATENED
NOT ONLY IMPORTANT
WATER SOURCES AND
GRAZING LANDS FOR
ANIMALS ...



"... BUT ALSO NOMADIC HERDERS,
AND CHALLENGED TRADITIONALLY
HELD VALUES AND RIGHTS TO LAND!"



"IN 2009, THE UNITED
MOVEMENT OF MONG-
OLIAN RIVERS AND
LAKES (UMMRL) WAS
FORMED BY TSETSEGE
MUNKHBAYAR AND
OTHER
LOCAL
LEADERS,
WHO WERE
ABLE TO
PRESSURE
THE GOVERNMENT
INTO ADOPTING THE
LAW WITH THE LONG
NAME. THE LAW
WOULD CREATE PRO-
TECTION ZONES
AROUND VULNERABLE
SOURCES OF WATER,
AND ALLEVIATE TENSION
BETWEEN HERDERS
AND MINERS..."

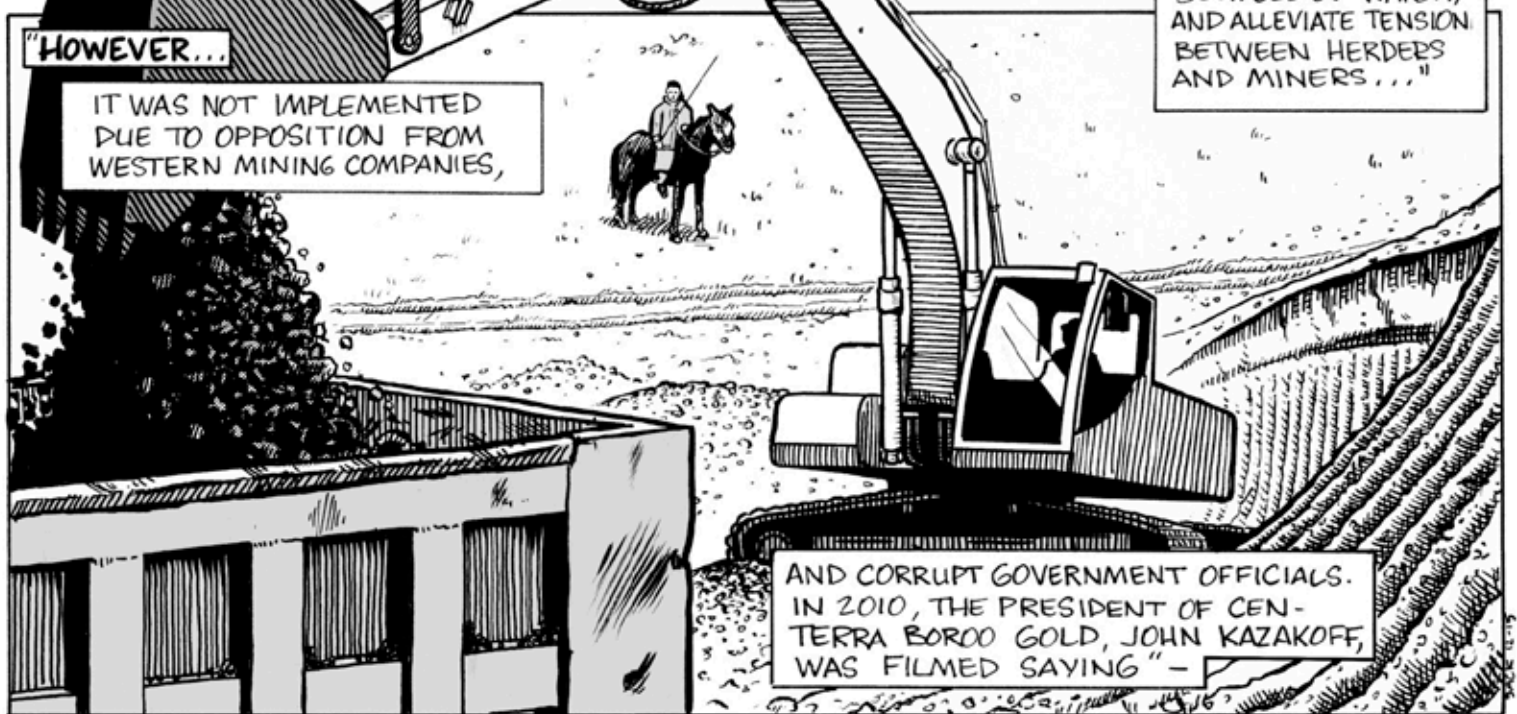


"HOWEVER..."

IT WAS NOT IMPLEMENTED
DUE TO OPPOSITION FROM
WESTERN MINING COMPANIES,



AND CORRUPT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.
IN 2010, THE PRESIDENT OF CEN-
TERRA BOROO GOLD, JOHN KAZAKOFF,
WAS FILMED SAYING " -





... CURRENTLY, THERE'S A LOT OF LOBBYING BY THE MINING ASSOCIATION TO AMEND THE LAW, AND IT WILL BE AMENDED EVENTUALLY.

GIVEN THE LEVEL OF OPPOSITION TO IMPLEMENTING THE LAW, IN 2011, UMMRL, WITH FIRE NATION ALLIANCE.

ORGANIZED AN INGENUOUS OCCUPATION OF THE CENTRAL SQUARE IN ULAAN BAATAR, TURNING THE SQUARE INTO A HUGE NOMADIC CAMP.



"HUNDREDS RODE INTO THE CITY ON HORSEBACK FROM MANY REGIONS OF MONGOLIA, DEMANDING PROTECTION OF THEIR LAND AND FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO FULLY IMPLEMENT THE LAW WITH THE LONG NAME ..."



"SOME EVEN SHOT ARROWS AT THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING ..."

"AFTER THE OCCUPATION, UMMRL SUCCESSFULLY SUED THE GOVERNMENT TO FORCE IT TO IMPLEMENT THE LAW, IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS, MINING COMPANIES WERE FORCED TO STOP WORKING IN AREAS WITH RIVERS AND FORESTS, AND PROTECTION ZONES WERE DELINEATED."

"IN SPITE OF THIS PROGRESS, IN 2013, THE GOVERNMENT WAS RESHUFFLED, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAW WAS SCRAPPED. AN AMENDMENT TO THE LAW THAT WOULD ALLOW MINING TO RESUME IN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS WAS PROPOSED IN A SPECIAL SESSION OF PARLIAMENT IN SEPTEMBER. ON SEPTEMBER 16, REPRESENTATIVES FROM 11 NGOs STARTED A PROTEST OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENTAL PALACE AND ATTEMPTED TO DELIVER A PETITION AGAINST THE AMENDMENT TO PARLIAMENT..."



"SOME OF THE PROTESTERS, INCLUDING MUNKHBAYAR, WERE PICTURED WITH OLD HUNTING RIFLES..."

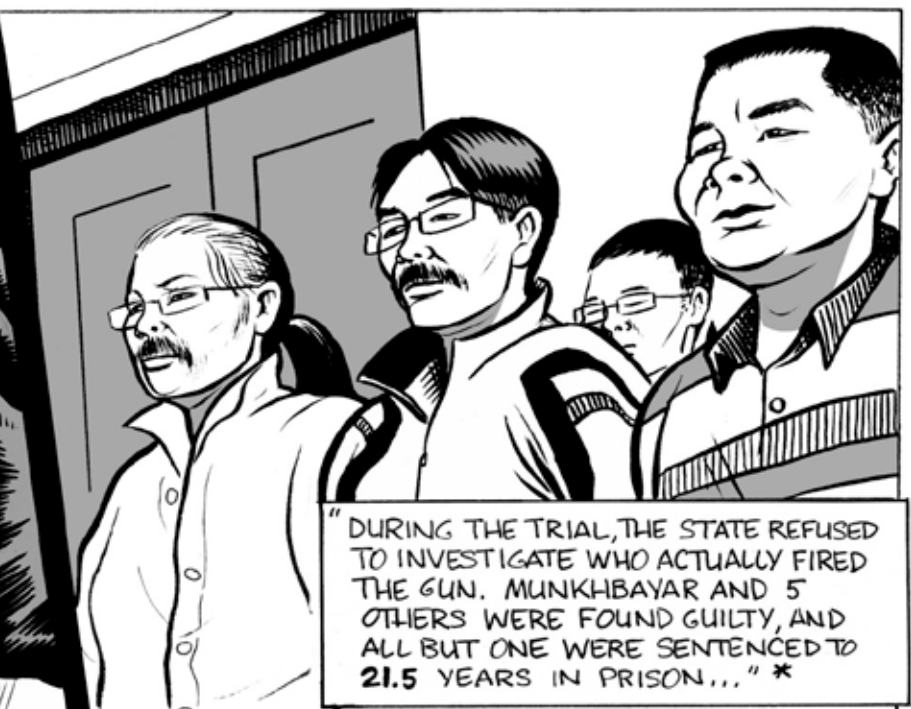
STATE SECURITY OFFICIALS SUDDENLY ARRESTED 3 PEOPLE, INCLUDING MUNKHBAYAR...

A RIFLE WAS ACCIDENTALLY DISCHARGED DURING THE MELEE. IT WAS NOT FIRED BY MUNKHBAYAR, AND ACCORDING TO THE POLICE, IT WAS NOT ON PURPOSE, AND NO ONE WAS HARMED..."



THE MEDIA, UNDER GOVERNMENT INFLUENCE, SMEARED THE PROTEST AS A 'MASS MURDER ATTEMPT'...


HE AND 5 OTHERS WERE NONETHELESS ARRESTED.



THE COVER OF 'TOIM' MAGAZINE READS 'GREEN TERROR'.

"DURING THE TRIAL, THE STATE REFUSED TO INVESTIGATE WHO ACTUALLY FIRED THE GUN. MUNKHBAYAR AND 5 OTHERS WERE FOUND GUILTY, AND ALL BUT ONE WERE SENTENCED TO 21.5 YEARS IN PRISON..." *


*THE SENTENCE WAS LATER REDUCED BY AN AVERAGE OF 72%




"IN JANUARY 2015, THE AMENDMENT WAS PASSED ON THE EVE OF THE MONGOLIAN NEW YEAR, ALLOWING CENTERRA TO RESUME MINING AT THE GAATSURT MINE. IN FEBRUARY, GROUPS FROM THE MOUNT NOYON AREA CAME TO ULAAN-BAATAR TO BEGIN A HUNGER STRIKE IN PROTEST OVER THIS DECISION..."

"... MOUNT NOYON, WHICH IS CONSIDERED SACRED BY MANY, IS VERY CLOSE TO THE GAATSURT MINE."

"THOUSANDS CAME TO SUPPORT THE HUNGER STRIKERS AT THE PROTEST CAMP, INCLUDING SHAMANS AND INDEPENDENT MPs. DESPITE THIS, THE AMENDMENT WAS PASSED ON THE EVE OF THE MONGOLIAN NEW YEAR. THIS WOULD ALLOW MINING TO RESUME FOR 2 YEARS..."



THAT ABOUT COVERS THE BASICS OF THE LAW WITH THE LONG NAME. TOMORROW YOU'LL BE GOING TO GAATSURT, AND YOU'LL SEE FOR YOURSELVES..."



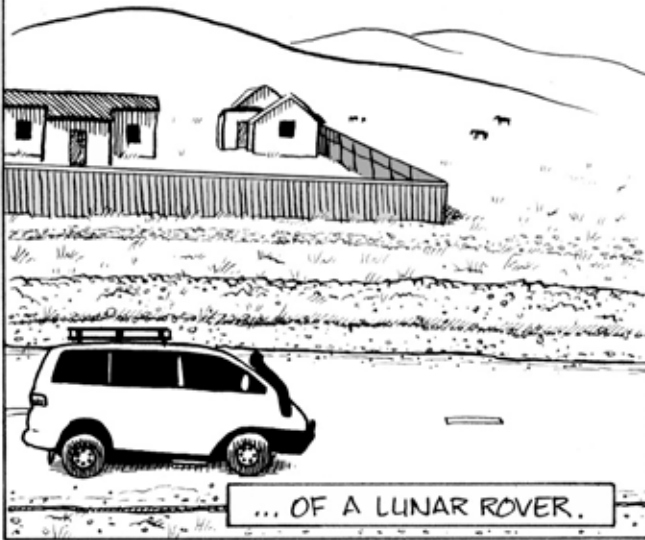
"OVER 300 RIOT POLICE BROKE UP THE CAMP... ALL BECAUSE OF 11 HUNGER STRIKERS..."

WE SET OFF EARLY THE NEXT MORNING . . .

DRIVING 3 HOURS NORTH



.. IN A 4x4 MINI VAN THAT REMINDS ME...



... OF A LUNAR ROVER.

I NOTICE THAT THE STEERING WHEEL IS LOCATED ON THE RIGHT HAND SIDE...



... EVEN THOUGH WE'RE ALSO DRIVING ON THE RIGHT HAND SIDE OF THE ROAD.

WHICH MAKES PASSING OTHER VEHICLES-



A BIT OF A GUESSING GAME.

AFTER A COUPLE OF HOURS, WE PULL OVER FOR A BREAK. WHILE SETTING UP FOR AN INTERVIEW.



... A BAND OF WILD HORSES SUDDENLY GALLOPS OFF.

BAATARKHUYAG, FROM FIRE NATION, EXPLAINS WHY MINING NEAR MOUNT NOYON IS SUCH A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE...

THE FIRST MONGOL EMPIRE, CALLED XIONGNU, WAS ESTABLISHED MORE THAN 2200 YEARS AGO...

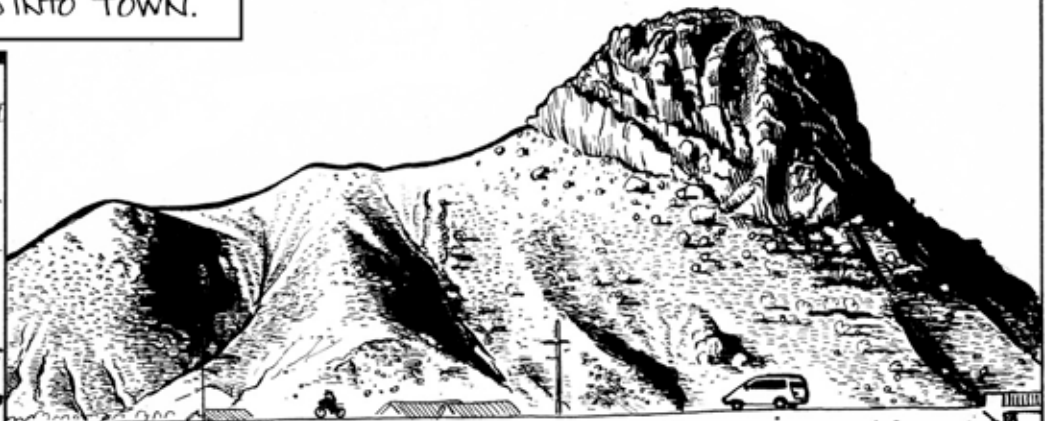
KINGS AND QUEENS OF THE XIONGNU EMPIRE WERE BURIED AT MOUNT NOYON. THERE'S OVER 220 TOMBS IN SUJIGTIIN VALLEY, WHICH FACES THE SOUTH WEST...

THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF THE LARGEST PERMAFROST FORMATION IN EURASIA ENDS HERE AT MOUNT NOYON. BECAUSE THIS MOUNTAIN GIVES LIFE TO HUMANS, ANIMALS AND NATURE...

... WE WORSHIP THIS MOUNTAIN IN OUR HEARTS.



HEADING TO THE NEAREST TOWN TO THE MINING SITE - A RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF ABOUT 25,000 CALLED MANDALA - WE VEER OFF THE MAIN ROAD AND ONTO A DIRT TRACK. WE'RE MET BY A MAN ON A SMALL MOTORBIKE, AND FOLLOW HIM ALONG A BUMPY ROAD INTO TOWN.



WE PASS BY A NEARBY MOUNTAIN RESEMBLING A LION. LOCAL LORE HAS IT THAT IT KEEPS A PROTECTIVE WATCH OVER THE REGION...

WE FOLLOW THE MAN ON THE MOTORBIKE, A LOCAL HERDER NAMED UVGUNKHUU SANJID, TO A HOTEL FOR LUNCH...



WE PARK NEXT TO A CAR...

NINJA MINER.



...COVERED IN MUD.



YES, NINJA.

NINJA MINERS ARE PEOPLE WHO MINE WITH THEIR OWN EQUIPMENT, WORKING INDEPENDENTLY. TECHNICALLY, IT'S ILLEGAL.



AFTER LUNCH, UVGUNKHUU TRAVELS WITH US TO AN OLD GOVERNMENTAL BUILDING ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN. WE ARE MEETING TSERENNADMID OSORBAL, WHO STARTED THE 'LET'S SAVE MT. NOYON MOVEMENT,' AND WAS ONE OF THE HUNGER STRIKERS MENTIONED EARLIER. WEARING A FLAMBOYANT PURPLE SWEATER, SHE WALKS WITH CRUTCHES, THE RESULT OF A RECENT KNIFE ATTACK.

ЭЭНИЙ БАЙР

IF CENTERRA EXPLOITS THE SITE AT MOUNT NOYON, ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN, EVEN A REVOLUTION.

TODAY'S ISSUE ON MT. NOYON SHOWS THE TRUE FACE OF TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS. CENTERRA GOLD PREYS ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THEY PREYED ON KYRGYZSTAN AT THE KUMTOR MINE IN THE SAME WAY.

HAVE YOU BEEN THREATENED DIRECTLY BY CENTERRA?

NO NO DIRECT THREATS - THEY DO IT INDIRECTLY.

I KNOW THE PERSON WHO HIRED AN ASSASSIN TO STAB ME. THERE IS TALK...

OF \$1000. MY LEGS ARE WORTH \$1000.

ON THE DRIVE BACK TO TOWN, WE AGAIN ABRUPTLY PULL OFF THE ROAD...

SURROUNDED BY HIS COWS, UVGUNKHUU DESCRIBES CHANGES TO THE KHARAA RIVER.

THE KHARAA RIVERS JOINS THE SELENGE RIVER, WHICH FLOWS INTO LAKE BAIKAL, THE LARGEST FRESH-WATER LAKE IN THE WORLD.

WHEN THE MINING STARTS AGAIN, ALL THE RIVERS COMING OUT OF MT. NOYON WILL BE CONTAMINATED.

" WHEN GAATSURT LLC WAS MINING THE
SITE CENTERRA WILL EXPLOIT AT MT. NOYON,
HAIRLESS LAMBS AND CALVES WERE BORN . . .
I LOST ABOUT 80% OF MY ANIMALS."

LATER THAT NIGHT, AT LUVGUNKHUU'S
HOUSE . . .

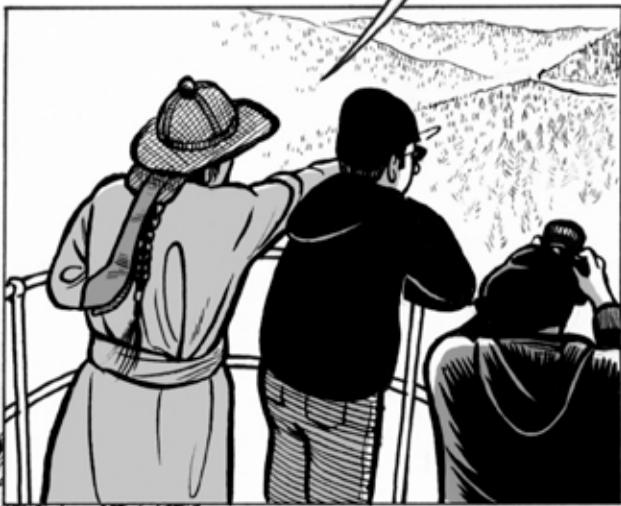


AAAOOOOOO AAOOOOOO

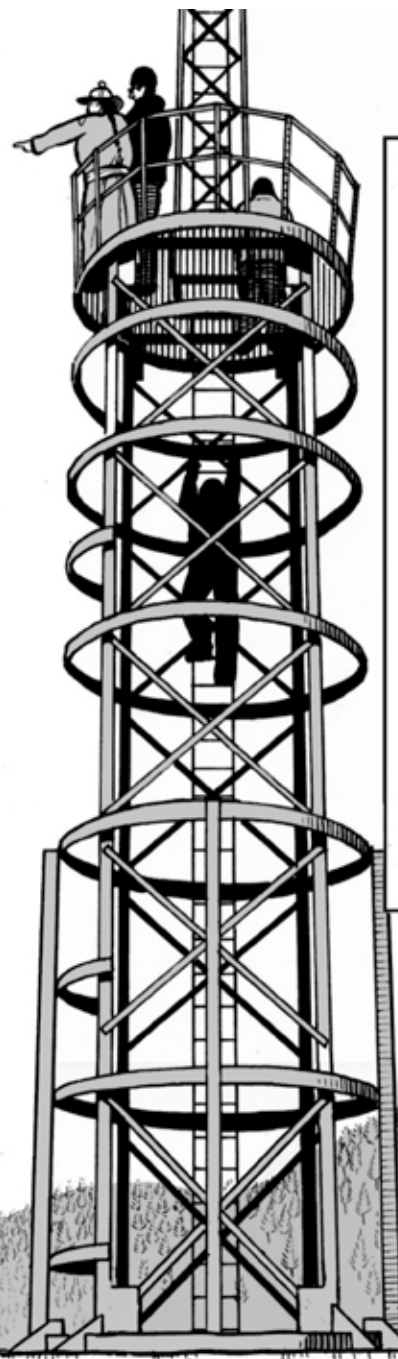
IF THINGS
ARE NOT SETTLED
PEACEFULLY,
THINGS ARE
GOING TO GET
UGLY.

THE NEXT DAY, WE HEAD OUT TO UVGUNKHUU'S SUMMER CAMP IN A SLEEPY VALLEY, WHERE HE HAS A GER. LATER ON, WE DRIVE TO THE MINE ENTRANCE, ABOUT 5 MILES AWAY. WE STOP AT A CELL PHONE TOWER, ERECTED BY CENTERRA, NEAR THE ENTRANCE, TO GET A BETTER VIEW.

THE MINE IS JUST AROUND THAT BEND OVER THERE.



JUST TO BE CLEAR- THE GAATSURT MINE WAS PREVIOUSLY OWNED AND OPERATED BY A MONGOLIAN COMPANY, GAATSURT LLC, THAT SOLD ITS CLAIM TO CENTERRA. THE MINE IS CURRENTLY NOT OPERATING ON AN INDUSTRIAL SCALE, AS IT WAS SUSPENDED IN 2010. HOWEVER, THE AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW WITH THE LONG NAME, ALONG WITH THE DESIGNATION OF THE MINE AS A SITE OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE, COULD SEE THE MINE RESUME OPERATIONS AT FULL CAPACITY... .. SOON.



AS WE PASS THE ENTRANCE AGAIN, UVGUNKHUU HAS AN IDEA...

WE'RE IN! I PROMISED TO GIVE THEM A BOTTLE OF MILK ON THE WAY OUT.

HEY! BE DISCREET... THE NINJA MINERS MIGHT THROW ROCKS AT YOU IF THEY SEE YOU...



QUICK! LET ME OUT!

I WANT TO TALK TO THESE GUARDS...

15 MINUTES LATER...



AS WE DRIVE THROUGH THE SITE, WE DON'T SEE CENTERRA'S NAME ANYWHERE. WE DRIVE THROUGH A LOW VALLEY, AND UP A PATH TO A CLEARING OPPOSITE A TERRACED HILL WHERE HUNDREDS OF NINJA MINERS DIG DEEP FOR GOLD.



FOR ABOUT THE LAST DECADE, HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF MONGOLIANS, ACROSS THE COUNTRY, HAVE BECOME NINJA MINERS, EARNING AN AVERAGE OF \$10 USD A DAY. THE WORK IS BRUTAL AND DANGEROUS, BUT STILL HAS THE POTENTIAL OF PROVIDING AN INCOME THAT EXCEEDS WHAT MOST DOCTORS OR TEACHERS EARN. BUT I'M PERPLEXED: IF THIS IS ILLEGAL, WHY ARE THEY ALLOWED ACCESS HERE, ON CENTERRA'S PROPERTY? THERE IS A THEORY, SOLONGO EXPLAINS, THAT CENTERRA ALLOWS NINJA MINING HERE BECAUSE IT CREATES A "PROBLEM": ILLEGAL AND IR-RESPONSIBLE DIGGING UP OF THE EARTH.

THE "SOLUTION," OF COURSE, AS ARGUED BY CERTAIN MPs, WOULD BE TO LET A "RESPONSIBLE" COMPANY LIKE CENTERRA TO DO THE MINING AND LAND RECLAMATION, AND DRIVE OUT THIS ILLEGAL ACTIVITY... CENTERRA KNOWS THE NINJA MINERS ARE HERE - THE GUARDS LET THEM IN!



CENTERRA HAS ALSO CLAIMED THAT THE POPULAR OPPOSITION TO THE MINE IS ABOUT EXTORTING MONEY FROM CENTERRA THAN ABOUT PROTECTING A CULTURALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY IMPORTANT AREA. CENTERRA USED THE SAME TACTIC AT THE KUMTOR MINE IN KYRGYZSTAN...

... SPEAKING OF WHICH...

THIS IS KUMTOR GOLD MINE, OWNED AND OPERATED BY CENTERRA.



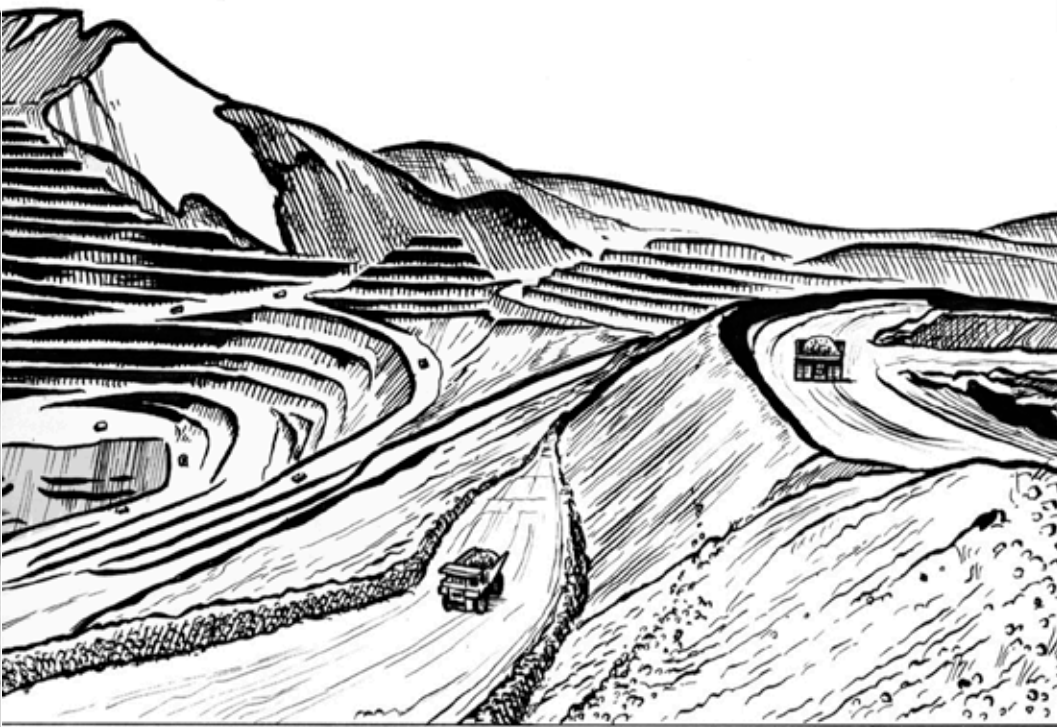
LOCATED NEAR CHINA, IT'S THE LARGEST OPEN PIT MINE IN CENTRAL ASIA...



ALMOST FROM ITS INCEPTION KUMTOR, HAS BEEN MIRED IN BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION SCANDALS.

IN 2013, LARGE SCALE PROTESTS ERUPTED IN THE NEARBY TOWN OF SARRU, OVER KUMTOR'S SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT. THE ARMY WAS CALLED IN AND A TEN DAY STATE OF EMERGENCY WAS DECLARED. SCORES OF ACTIVISTS WERE ARRESTED AND ALLEGEDLY TORTURED IN JAIL. THE MINE CONTRIBUTES NEARLY 25% OF ALL INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT IN KYRGYZSTAN AND IS HEAVILY BACKED BY THE EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT.





GIVEN ITS HISTORY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND POLITICAL CONTROVERSY, WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE INSIGHTFUL TO VISIT THE AREA AS A WAY TO FORETELL WHAT MAY BE IN STORE FOR MONGOLIA. WE TRAVELED TO SARRU AS A PART OF A DELEGATION WITH NGOs BANK WATCH AND OYU TOIGOL WATCH. AS SOON AS WE ARRIVED IN SARRU, WE WERE GREETED BY ANGRY LOCALS THREATENING VIOLENCE UNLESS WE LEFT. WE WERE LATER TOLD THAT THE STATE SECURITY SERVICES HAD VISITED SARRU THE NIGHT BEFORE AND WARNED LOCALS THERE WOULD BE DIRE CONSEQUENCES IF THEY DID NOT EXPEL US FROM TOWN. THEY CLAIMED WE WERE AMERICAN SPIES...



RETURNING TO OUR GUESTHOUSE IN KARAKOL, WE DISCOVERED WE WERE BEING FOLLOWED.

THE SECURITY SERVICES EVENTUALLY ARRIVED AT OUR GUESTHOUSE, THREATENING ARREST AND DEPORTATION.



WE WERE EVENTUALLY ALLOWED TO LEAVE...



...BUT WERE FOLLOWED EVERYWHERE BACK IN THE CAPITAL BISHKEK...

* ACTUAL SONG PLAYING WHILE UNDER SURVEILLANCE IN A CAFE

BACK IN MONGOLIA, NEAR MT. NOYON -



INITIAL ESTIMATES SHOWED THERE WERE 200 TONS OF GOLD BENEATH OUR FEET HERE, BUT THAT'S BEEN DOWNGRADED TO 70 TONS...

WHEN 1000 KG OF GOLD IS EXPLOITED, THE LIFE OF 1000 PEOPLE IS DESTROYED, AND THE ENVIRONMENT IS RUINED FOR 1000 YEARS...

AS WE LEAVE, WE PASS SOME SECURITY GUARDS. LIVGUNKHUU GETS OUT AND MARCHES TOWARDS THEM.



WHEN HE SUGGESTS THE GUARDS SHOULD PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND NOT LET THE NINJAS ON SITE -



HOW CAN I? THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!



WE SOON HEAD BACK TO ULAANBAATAR, AND THE NEXT DAY WE PRESS ON, DRIVING HUNDREDS OF MILES SOUTH...



SUDDENLY WE VEER OFF THE MAIN ROAD AND DRIVE THROUGH A FIELD . . .

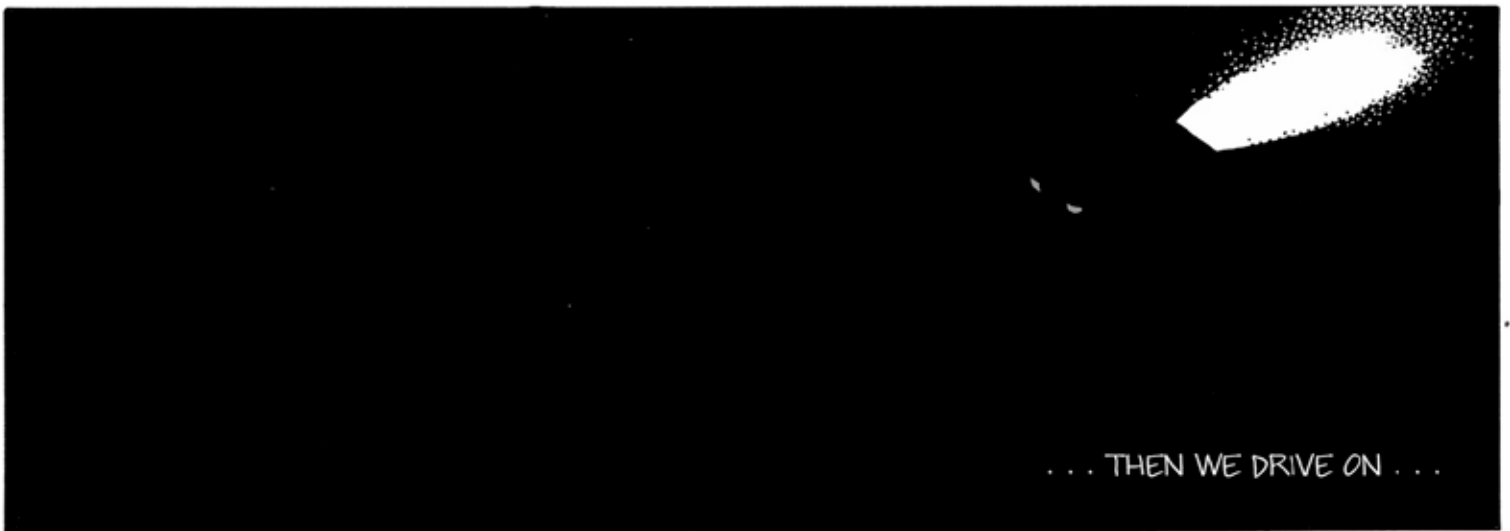
. . . UNBOUNDED BY FENCES OR ROADS . . .

. . . DURING A BLIZZARD . . .



AS THE BLIZZARD SUBSIDES, WE STOP AT A GER FOR A QUICK CHAT WITH A COUSIN OF OUR DRIVER . . .

IT FEELS LIKE WE'RE ON THE MOON.



. . . THEN WE DRIVE ON . . .

THE NEXT DAY, WE CONTINUE TO THE WEST TOWARDS A RANGE OF SNOW CAPPED MOUNTAINS. FOLLOWING TIRE TRACKS, SOMETIMES STRAIGHT UP MOUNTAIN PASSES, WE EVENTUALLY ARRIVE AT THE SMALL TOWN OF LIYANGA, NEAR THE ONGII RIVER.

THE TWO LOCAL RIVERS THAT FEED THE ONGII - THE BUURULJIT AND THE UULD - HAVE BEEN SEVERLY AFFECTED BY ILLEGAL MINING ...

WE MEET THE SECRETARY OF THE CITIZENS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, DAVAASUREN DAVAADAGVA, IN HIS OFFICE IN A PINK GOVERNMENTAL BUILDING.

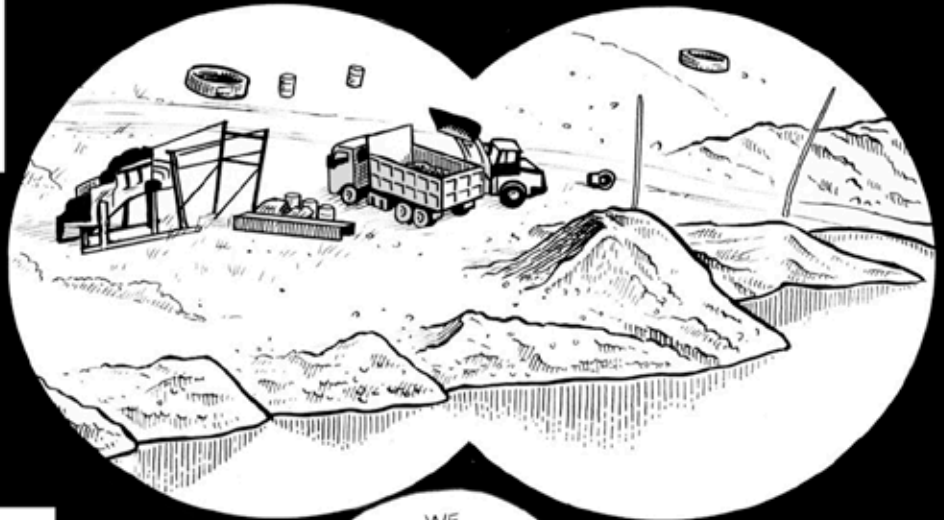
THE MINING LICENSE HAS BEEN ISSUED TO THE COMPANY, BUT ITS LOCATION WAS AN AREA UNDER SPECIAL PROTECTION, SO WE ASKED TO CANCEL THE LICENSE. THE COMPANIES QUICKLY CHANGE THEIR NAMES OR TRANSFER TO DAUGHTER COMPANIES.

SO WE ARE SUING THEM ALL.



"THERE'S BEEN THIS AMENDMENT TO THE LAW WITH THE LONG NAME, RIGHT? I THINK SETTING THE WATER PROTECTION BUFFER AT 50 METERS FROM THE RIVER'S EDGE IS TOO SHORT A DISTANCE BEFORE IT WAS 200 METERS, RIGHT?"

"TIRES AND CHAINS FROM SEVERAL TONS OF MACHINERY WILL DESTROY THE AREA, AND NOTHING WILL BE LEFT WITHIN 50 METERS..."



WE'RE NOW STANDING ON A RIDGE OF A SMALL MOUNTAIN, OVERLOOKING A MINING OPERATION IN A VALLEY BELOW...

WE ARE NOW AT LULD VALLEY IN UYANGA, WHERE MINING COMPANIES ARE EXPLOITING THE GOLD.

THE BIGGEST GROUP OF DEPOSITS IS HERE - THE LULD RIVER DEPOSIT.

TSERENKHAND, LEADER OF THE ANGR NUDEN MUNDLUKHEI MOVEMENT, EXPLAINS CHANGES TO THE ONGII RIVER AND ITS TRIBUTARIES.

IN 2011 AND 2012, AN EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE PROCESS OF GOLD EXPLOITATION ON THIS DEPOSIT...

WAS EVALUATED AT \$16,170,000 USD. THE WATER SOURCE FOR THE RIVER IS HERE, BUT THE MINING COMPANY IS DRILLING NEXT TO IT...

ALL OF THIS AREA SHOULD BE PROTECTED UNDER THE LAW WITH THE LONG NAME.



WE DRIVE NW FOR 5 MILES, INTO THE VALLEY OF THE BUURUJUUT RIVER. THIS IS A WIDE OPEN PLAIN, WHERE NUMEROUS SMALL SCALE MINING SITES ARE OPERATING. WE DRIVE STRAIGHT INTO ONE TO HAVE A LOOK AROUND, JUST METERS AWAY FROM THE RIVER.

THE MAJOR RIVERS THAT WOULD FLOW INTO THE ONGII RIVER WERE THESE RIVERS—THE BUURUJUUT AND THE UULD. MANY NOMADS USED TO LIVE ALONG THE UULD RIVER...

THEY HAD A NOMADIC LIFESTYLE, BUT DUE TO ILLEGAL MINING ACTIVITY, THEY HAVE MOVED HERE, NEAR THE BUURUJUUT RIVER.

DIGGERS DUMP TONS OF EARTH INTO HOPPERS LIKE THIS...

... WHERE WATER AND MUD FALL THROUGH AND COLLECT INTO A POND...

WATER SPRAYS THE EARTH INTO A ROTATING BARREL...



THIS IS ONE OF MANY SIMILAR OPERATIONS IN THIS VALLEY, EACH WITH ITS OWN WORKERS' CAMPS AND STORES. THERE IS NOT A TRACE OF THE LULD RIVER LEFT IN SATELLITE IMAGERY, JUST A LONG, BARREN SCAR, POCK-MARKED BY MINING SITES.

...WHILE ROCKS ARE CHANNLED INTO ANOTHER PILE.



LATER ON, WE VISIT A PLANTATION, OWNED BY A COUPLE, OYUNGEREL AND CHIMID.

WE STARTED THIS PLANTATION IN 2004 TO HELP PROTECT THE RIVER BASIN AND TO INCREASE THE INCOME OF HERDERS.

MUNKHBAYAR HAD THE IDEA OF PLANTING SEABUCK THORN HERE...

... PEOPLE WANTING TO DIG GOLD HERE AND IF THAT HAPPENED...

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, THE VEGETATION HERE WAS VERY RICH, AND THE RIVER WOULD OVERFLOW 3 TIMES A YEAR. THE ELDERS USED TO TALK OF...

... THE GRASS WOULD GROW LIKE A SILK PATTERN ON A ROBE... IN OTHER WORDS, IT'D BE VERY SCARSE!

BACK INSIDE THEIR GER, OYUNGEREL WEIGHS A KILO OF SEABUCK THORN BERRIES FOR US...

AFTER OUR ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS WERE IGNORED BY THE GOVERNMENT, WE TOOK PART IN THE PROTEST THAT BROUGHT 100 HORSES TO U.B.* FOR 7 DAYS - THOUGH I DIDN'T GO...

BUT I WENT!

TAKE A LOOK AT MY PHOTOS!

HERE, A YOUNGER CHIMID SITS WITH MUNKHBAYAR WITH ONE OF THE FIRST SEABUCKTHORN PLANTS. THERE ARE NOW HUNDREDS OF PLANTS HERE...

... AND HERE'S CHIMID AT THE PROTEST WITH TSERENNAMID, FROM EARLIER IN THE STORY.

WE GET LOST SEVERAL TIMES ON OUR SLOW JOURNEY BACK TO ULAAN BAATAR, AND STOP FREQUENTLY TO ASK DIRECTIONS.

AS OUR DRIVER MEETS WITH A FAMILY TO ASK DIRECTIONS (AND BE OFFERED THE CUSTOMARY WHITE, SALTY TEA), I STAND OUTSIDE WITH SO LONGO, WATCHING MICE PLAY IN THE DRY GRASS AS THE SUN SETS. SHE CASUALLY SAYS -

OH LOOK!
I THINK THAT'S A
DEER STONE... YES, I'M
SURE IT IS. THIS HAS BEEN
HERE SINCE THE
BRONZE AGE!

I'M SUDDENLY AWARE OF HOW THIS LAND HAS SCARCELY CHANGED IN 3000 YEARS, AND NOMADS, SUCH AS THE FAMILY WE'RE ASKING DIRECTIONS FROM HAVE EXISTED IN PLAINS LIKE THIS FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS AS WELL. AND YET... LESS THAN AN HOUR AWAY, THE VALLEY AND RIVER BEDS ARE RAPIDLY BEING CHANGED, IRREVERSIBLY, IN THE NAME OF WEALTH AND PROGRESS...

END



Zambia

In the Zambian Copperbelt region, communities living around the mines and smelters of Vedanta's copper subsidiary Konkola Copper Mines staged two days of protests in Chingola town on 1st and 2nd August 2015. They decried KCM's continued pollution of the River Kafue and local streams, which have left the water devoid of life, and communities with long term health problems and without clean water. Most of the protesters are also victims of the major pollution of the river Kafue by Vedanta in 2006, which affected up to 40,000 Zambians.

With expanded investment in the mining sector by China over the last few years, exploitation of Zambia's mineral resources are increasingly out of the control of Zambians, a situation made worse by the heavy foreign debt incurred by the government.

Human rights defenders continue to organize to try to clean up the mining sector and hold companies and the government accountable for environmental damage, health issues and labor rights violations. With presidential elections in 2021, and inequality a major issue for the electorate, the mining sector is under intense scrutiny, even as violations persist.

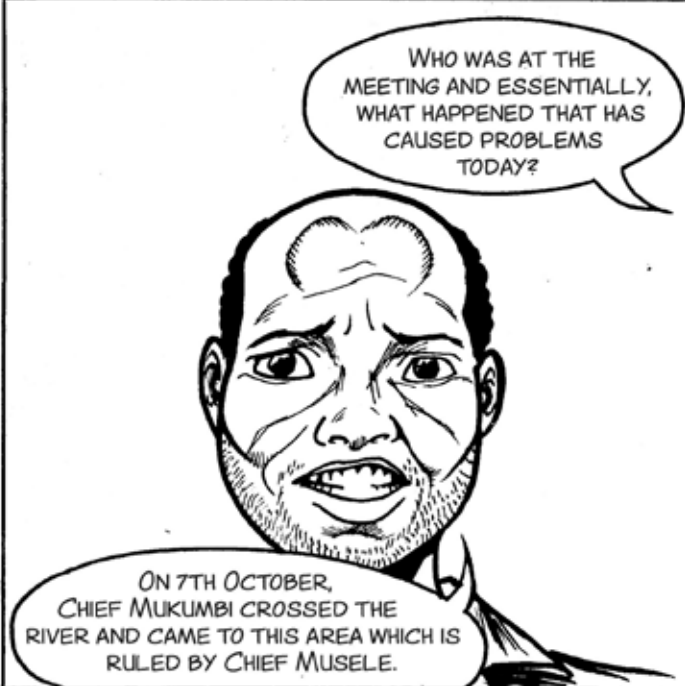
Artist: anonymous



ELIJAH CHISOMBO,
KASANTI VILLAGE
HEADMAN.

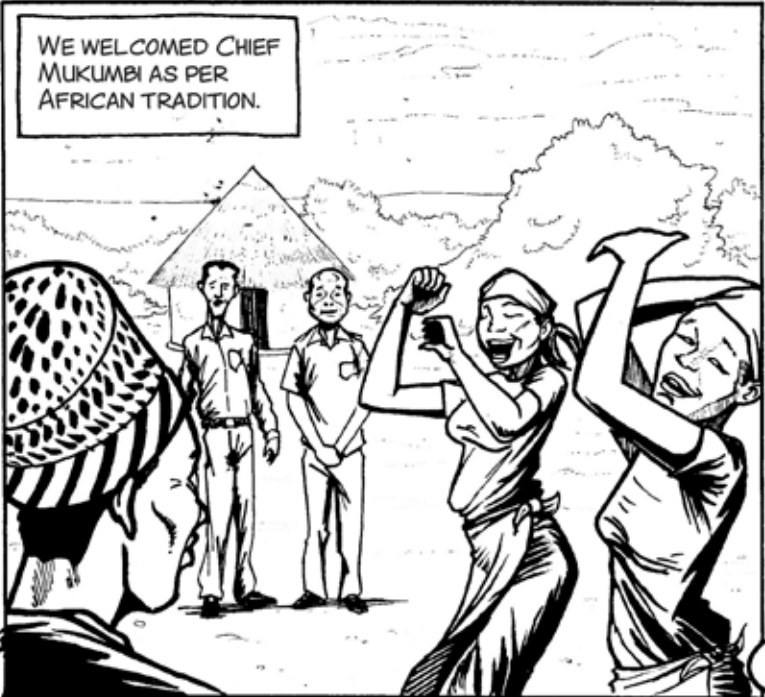


CAN YOU TELL US IN YOUR WORDS, WHAT HAPPENED AT THE MEETING?



WHO WAS AT THE MEETING AND ESSENTIALLY, WHAT HAPPENED THAT HAS CAUSED PROBLEMS TODAY?

ON 7TH OCTOBER, CHIEF MUKUMBI CROSSED THE RIVER AND CAME TO THIS AREA WHICH IS RULED BY CHIEF MUSELE.



WE WELCOMED CHIEF MUKUMBI AS PER AFRICAN TRADITION.



AFTER THE PLEASANTRIES, CHIEF MUKUMBI BEGAN TO EXPLAIN THE BOUNDARIES OF HIS CHIEFDOM.







I THEREFORE DECLARE THAT WITHIN SEVEN DAYS, THE PEOPLE OF KANSANJI SHOULD VACATE THE AREA. I DON'T WANT THEM IN MY CHIEFDOM.



AFTER SEVEN DAYS I WILL RETURN WITH MY FORCES, AND I WILL MOVE THROUGH EACH VILLAGE, ASKING THEM WHO GAVE THEM PERMISSION TO SETTLE THERE.



IF I FIND OUT THAT MUTAMBARIKA DID NOT GRANT THEM STAY, I WILL HAVE THEM ARRESTED. AND IF THEY RESIST, I WILL DESTROY THEM.



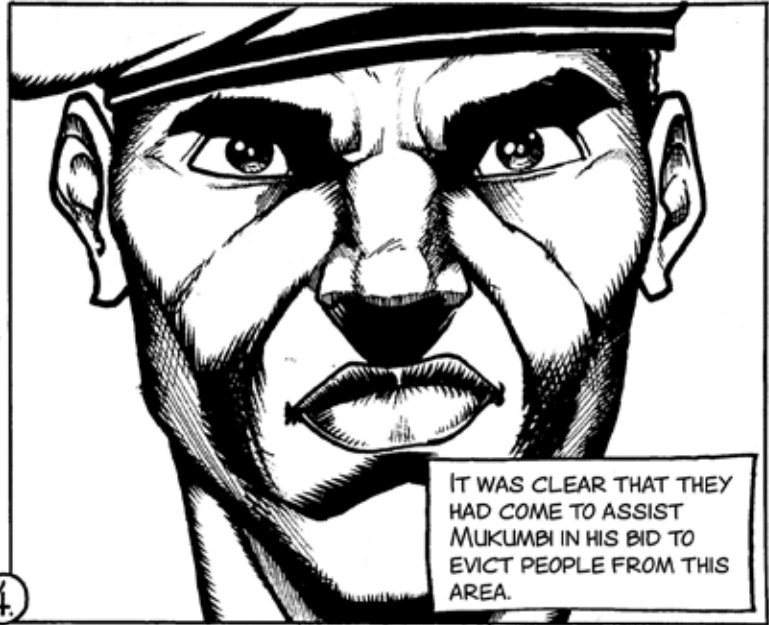
ONLY THEN WILL I BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN THOROUGHLY THE DECLARATION OF MWEMBEJI AS THE ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE OF THE NEW DISTRICT.



AT THE MEETING, MUKUMBI WAS IN THE COMPANY OF THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL SERVICE, A DIVISION OF THE ZAMBIA DEFENSE FORCES.



THEY USUALLY TALK ABOUT AGRICULTURE IN THIS AREA BUT THIS TIME, THEY DID NOT.



IT WAS CLEAR THAT THEY HAD COME TO ASSIST MUKUMBI IN HIS BID TO EVICT PEOPLE FROM THIS AREA.

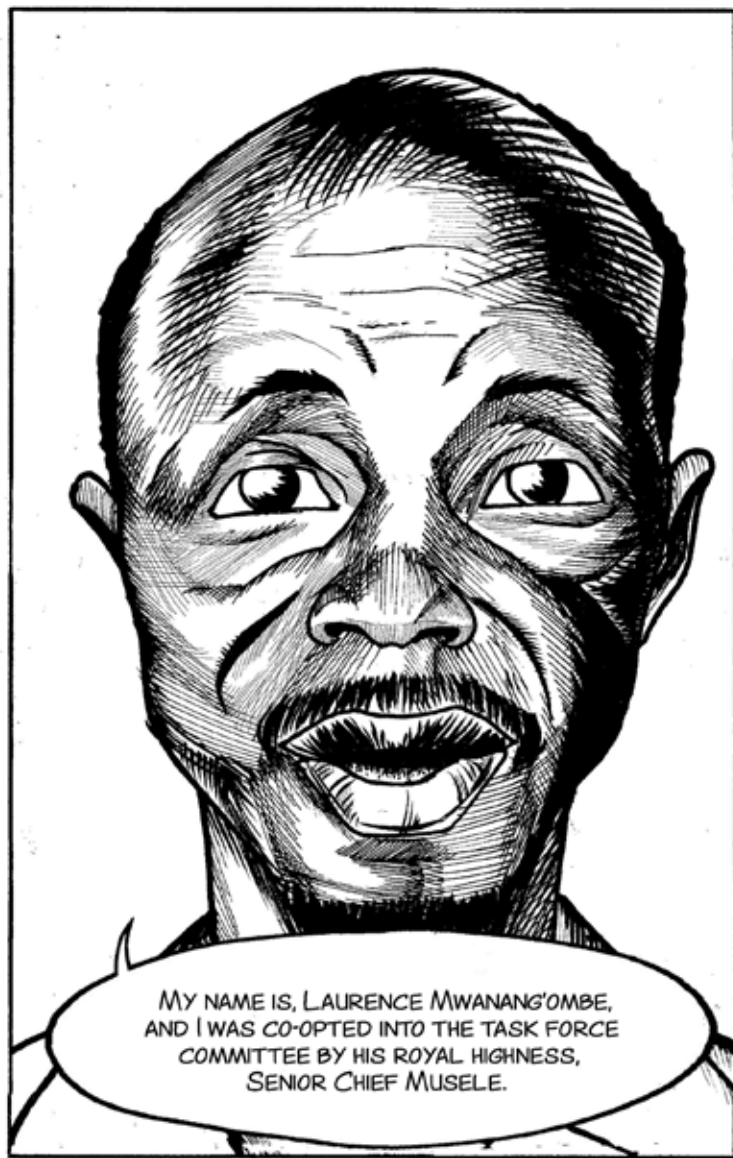


THAT WAS THE DAY
I SAW THE OMEN.

THAT WAS THE DAY
I SAW THE OWL.

IN OUR CULTURE,
OWLS ARE AN
INDICATOR OF ILL TO
COME.

I KNEW THEN THAT
THINGS WOULD NOT
BE WELL.



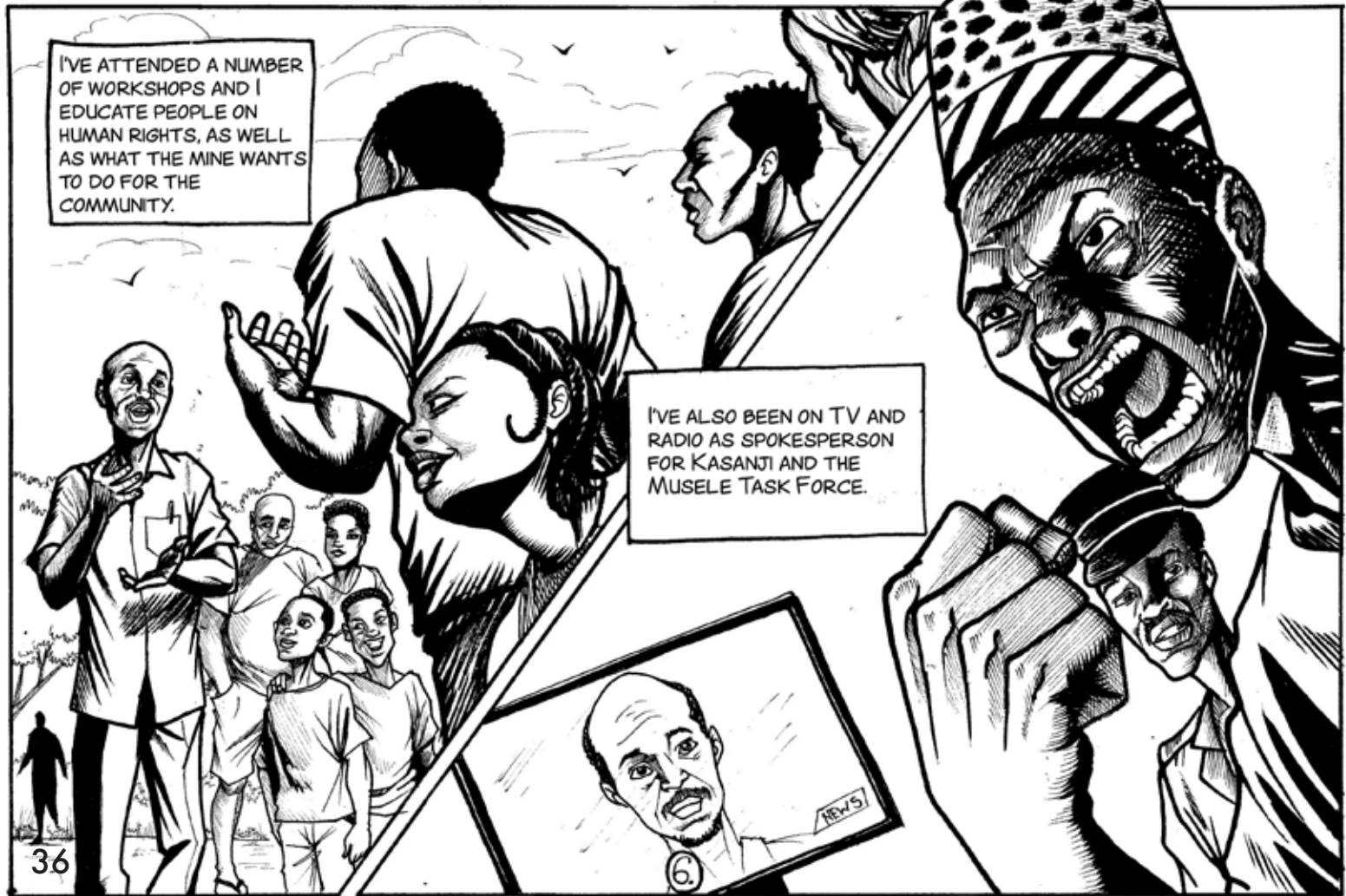
MY NAME IS, LAURENCE MWANANG'OMBE, AND I WAS CO-OPTED INTO THE TASK FORCE COMMITTEE BY HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS, SENIOR CHIEF MUSELE.



THE CHIEF FELT THAT AS A RETIRED TEACHER, I HAD THE SKILLS TO HELP THE COMMUNITY.

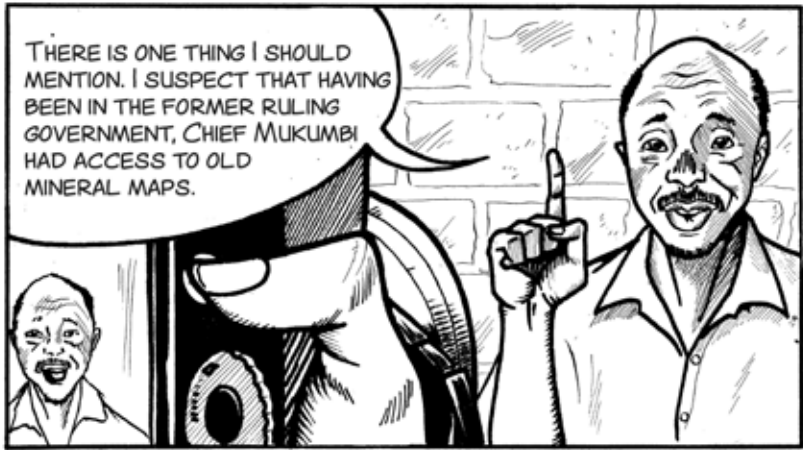


THE TASK FORCE COMMITTEE IS THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS.



I'VE ATTENDED A NUMBER OF WORKSHOPS AND I EDUCATE PEOPLE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AS WELL AS WHAT THE MINE WANTS TO DO FOR THE COMMUNITY.

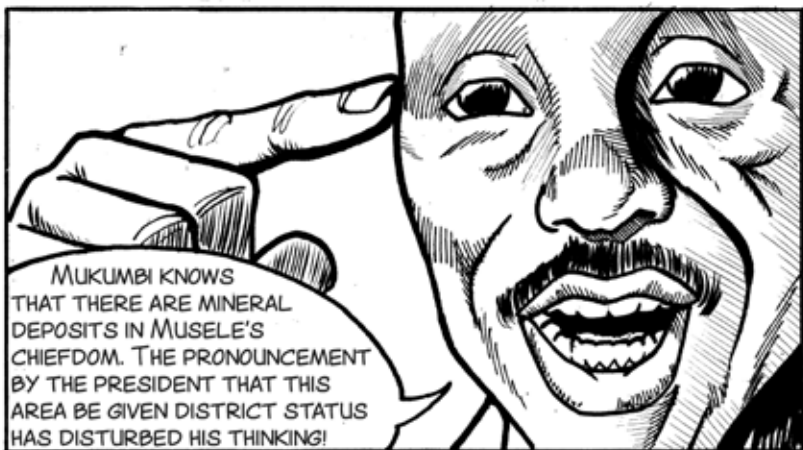
I'VE ALSO BEEN ON TV AND RADIO AS SPOKESPERSON FOR KASANJI AND THE MUSELE TASK FORCE.



THERE IS ONE THING I SHOULD MENTION. I SUSPECT THAT HAVING BEEN IN THE FORMER RULING GOVERNMENT, CHIEF MUKUMBI HAD ACCESS TO OLD MINERAL MAPS.



THE INVESTOR ALSO HAS MAPS SIMILAR TO CHIEF MUKUMBI'S. THEY KNOW THERE ARE OTHER TYPES OF MINERAL DEPOSITS TOO. SOME IN THE MUSELE CHIEFDOM.



MUKUMBI KNOWS THAT THERE ARE MINERAL DEPOSITS IN MUSELE'S CHIEFDOM. THE PRONOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT THAT THIS AREA BE GIVEN DISTRICT STATUS HAS DISTURBED HIS THINKING!



THE INVESTOR WANTS TO PROFIT FROM THE MINERALS, SO THEY APPROACHED OUR CHIEF BEFORE TALKING TO THE GOVERNMENT.



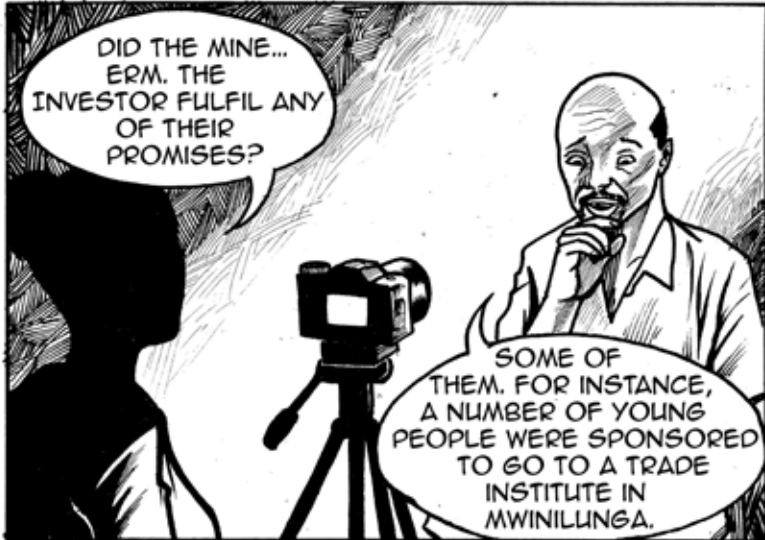
WHEN THEY SAW THAT THE CHIEF WAS AGREEABLE, THEY APPROACHED THE GOVERNMENT.

THE INVESTOR MADE THEIR NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE THE ELECTIONS IN 2011.

NATIONAL LEADERS WOULD NEED MONEY FOR THEIR CAMPAIGNS...



THE CHIEFDOM HAD SPECIFIC AREAS OF INTEREST TO THE INVESTOR. AND SO, PEOPLE WERE RELOCATED. A LOT OF VERBAL PROMISES WERE MADE.



DID THE MINE... ERM. THE INVESTOR FULFIL ANY OF THEIR PROMISES?

SOME OF THEM. FOR INSTANCE, A NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE WERE SPONSORED TO GO TO A TRADE INSTITUTE IN MWINILUNGA.



BUT A NUMBER OF PROMISES REMAIN UNFULFILLED.



HIS HIGHNESS BEGAN TO WORRY. HIS SUBJECTS WERE TALKING.



FAMILIES HAD BEEN TORN APART. PROSTITUTION WAS ON THE RISE. THE WATER SUPPLY WAS NOT FIT FOR CONSUMPTION...



THE CHIEF NEEDED TO DO SOMETHING.



THE TROUBLE IS THERE IS NO LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES OF INVESTMENT. AND SO, HIS HIGHNESS FORMED THE TASK FORCE TO TACKLE THIS.



I'M GLAD HE RECRUITED ME. OUR PEOPLE HAD BEEN FORSAKEN. WE'VE MADE PROGRESS IN GETTING THE INVESTOR AND THE PEOPLE TO TALK.

I JUST HOPE THE PEOPLE HAVEN'T
LOST FAITH IN US COMPLETELY.



SIR, THERE
ARE SOME WOMEN
OUTSIDE WHO SEEK
AN AUDIENCE
WITH YOU.



THANK YOU
FOR AGREEING
TO SEE US.

WE'RE FROM WANTAMBO VILLAGE AND WE FEEL WE'VE BEEN UNJUSTLY TREATED BY THE MINE. WE'VE TOLD OUR STORY MANY TIMES, BUT OUR COMPLAINTS HAVE NOT BEEN HEARD.



WE WERE RELOCATED FROM OUR HOMES AND PROMISED HOUSING, JOBS AT THE MINE, NEW FARMING LAND AND MORE... WHAT WE GOT WAS AN UNFINISHED CLINIC, CONTAMINATED WATER AND RESTRICTIONS.



WE'VE NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO FARM FOR FOUR YEARS AND OUR SETTLEMENTS ARE FENCED OFF. HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO MAKE A LIVING? ... PERHAPS SOMEONE ELSE SHOULD SPEAK NOW...



IT'S HARD TO MAKE A LIVING BECAUSE MANY WOMEN THAT GOT JOBS AT THE MINE WERE LET GO AFTER A YEAR AND WERE NOT PAID.



OUR HUSBANDS ON THE OTHER HAND HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED BY THE MINE AND HAVE MORE MONEY. THEY ARE MARRYING MORE WIVES AND THIS IS HARD ON US...



...IT'S HARD ON THE CHILDREN...



SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED...

PROSTITUTION IS ON THE RISE BECAUSE OF OUR HUSBANDS' NEWFOUND MONEY...

WE HAVE BEEN FENCED OFF FROM FARMING LAND...

GENDER ROLES HAVE CHANGED NOW AND THE WOMEN ARE DOING THE HEAVY LIFTING...

WE CERTAINLY HOPE YOU CAN HELP US SOMEHOW...

...BECAUSE OUR OWN HEADMAN
CANNOT. HE DEFIED THE MINE AND
STAYED ON HIS LAND WHEN WE
WERE RELOCATED...



I APOLOGISE FOR COMING HERE AT THIS HOUR. MY NAME IS LAURENCE I REPRESENT THE MUSELE TASK FORCE. I HEARD ABOUT YOUR REFUSAL TO LEAVE THIS AREA.



ARE YOU HERE TO CONVINC ME TO LEAVE? BECAUSE I WON'T.

NO. I'D LIKE TO HEAR YOUR SIDE OF THE STORY.



YOU SEE THAT CLAY POT BY YOUR FEET? THAT WAS WHAT OUR PEOPLE USED TO COOK BEFORE THE WHITE MAN CAME. BEFORE THE MINE. THE FOOD WAS EVEN MORE PALATABLE.



I CANNOT SIMPLY MOVE BECAUSE THE MINE SAYS TO. MY ANCESTORS LIVED OFF THIS VERY LAND.



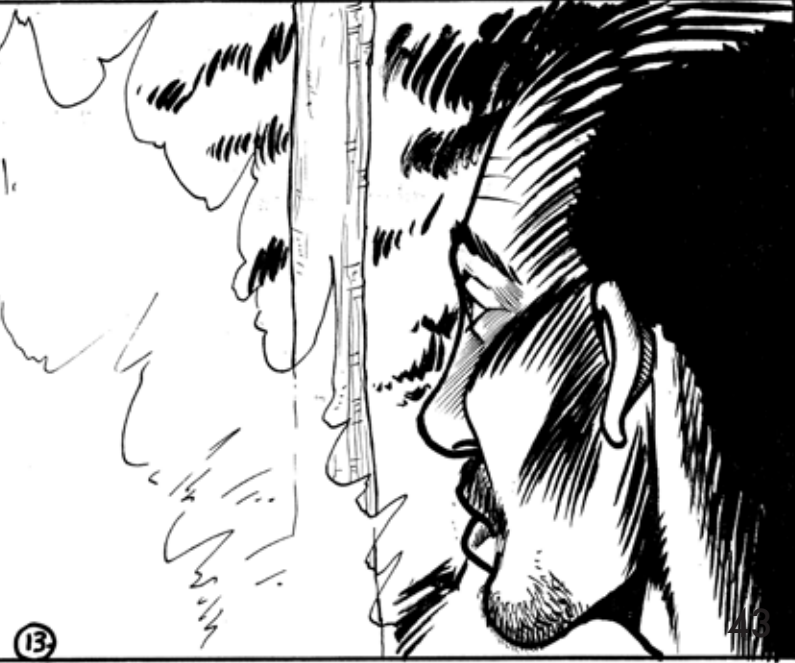
I DO NOT WISH TO UPSET THEM.



THE GOVERNMENT COLLECTS TAXES FROM THE MINE, BUT THESE TAXES DO NOT HELP THE COMMON MAN IN THE OUTSKIRTS.



THESE 'INVESTORS' RUINED OUR WAY OF LIFE AND THEY'RE ASKING ME TO VACATE LAND THAT HAS BEEN OURS FOR GENERATIONS!



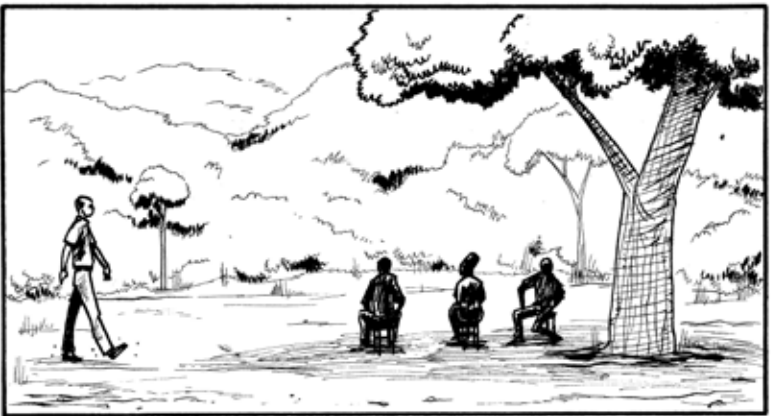


WE KNEW THE FORESTS WELL, WHERE WE COULD GATHER TASTY MUSHROOMS AND COLLECT SWEET HONEY FROM THE BEES...

...TODAY WE HAVE RESTRICTIONS ON OUR OWN LAND. WE'RE TOLD WHERE TO FARM, BUT ANIMALS DWELL THERE...

THE MINE COLLABORATED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES TO STOCK SOME FISH TO HELP SUSTAIN US. I'M CERTAIN THAT WATER IS CONTAMINATED...

I STILL CANNOT LEAVE OUR LAND. WHERE WILL I GO? THE MINE WON'T EVEN EMPLOY ME. IF YOUR TASK FORCE REALLY WANTS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, I SUGGEST YOU SEEK HELP.



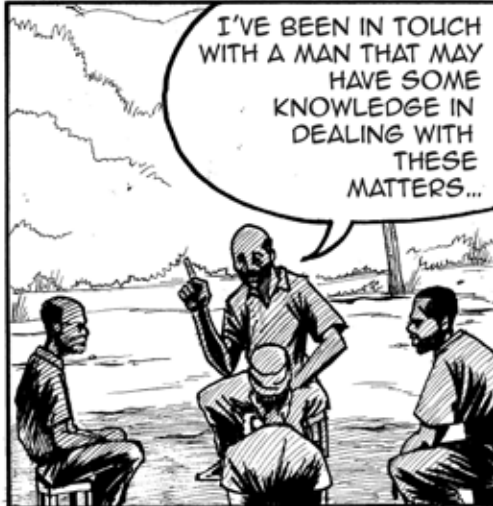
MR. CHISOMBO!
HOW ARE YOU?
TO WHAT DO WE
OWE THIS
PLEASURE?



I'VE BEEN DEEPLY
SADDENED BY WHAT
I LEARNED ABOUT
THE WOMEN FROM
WANTAMBO. THE MINE
HAS TAKEN THEIR
HOME AND I FEEL
I MUST DO
SOMETHING.



I JUST
RETURNED FROM
WANTAMBO
MYSELF AND
SPOKE WITH
THE HEADMAN
THERE. I FEAR
THE WORST
IS YET
TO COME.



I'VE BEEN IN TOUCH
WITH A MAN THAT MAY
HAVE SOME
KNOWLEDGE IN
DEALING WITH
THESE
MATTERS...



HE HAS BEEN
WORKING WITH CATHOLIC
COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE
AND PEACE AND SPEAKING
OUT ON CORRUPTION BY
A MINE IN HIS HOMETOWN.



WELCOME
TO
CHINGOLA

WE MUST PAY
HIM
A VISIT...



I HAVE TO ASK, DON'T YOU THINK IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO MEET AT A... QUIETER PLACE?



NO, A PUBLIC PLACE IS SAFER FOR ALL OF US. YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN THEY'RE WATCHING.



THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO MEET WITH US, EUGENE. THIS IS ELIJAH CHISOMBO, HE'S THE HEADMAN OF KANSANJI.

MY PLEASURE.



IN FACT... I SHOULD TURN OFF MY PHONE NOW THAT YOU'RE HERE...



HERE...



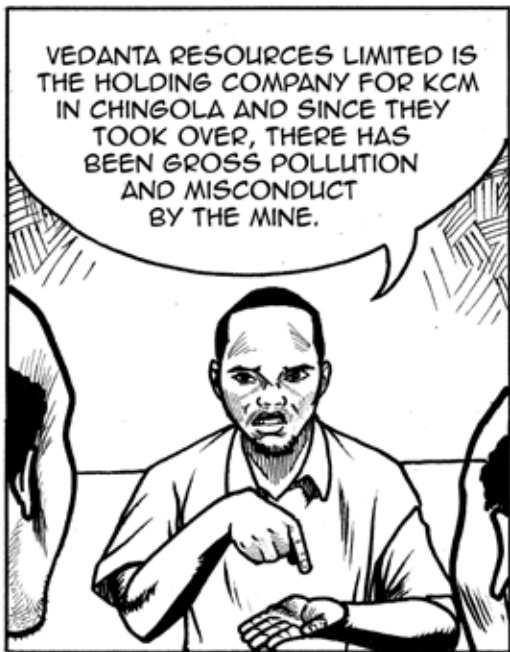
THAT WAS MY BROTHER... NOW WE CAN BEGIN. WOULD YOU LIKE SOMETHING TO DRINK?



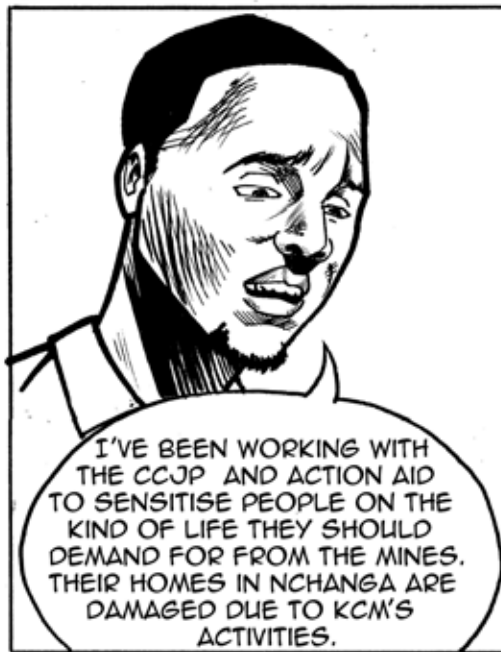
YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT NEVER KNOWING WHEN THEY'RE WATCHING. WHO ARE "THEY"?



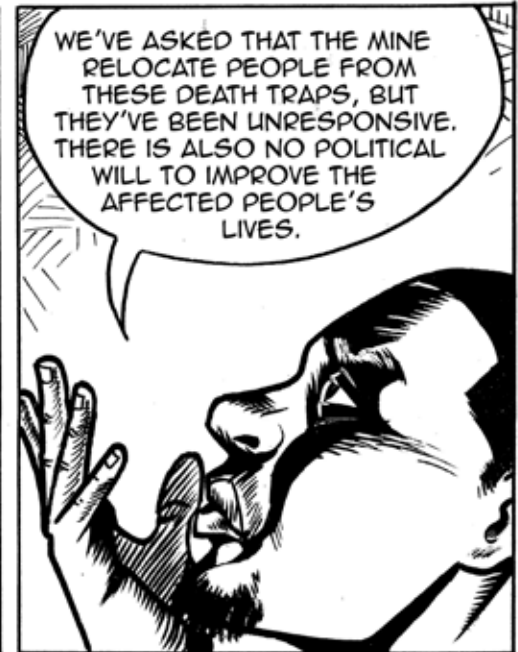
I'VE BEEN SPEAKING UP AGAINST ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICES FOR YEARS NOW. "THEY" ARE ANYBODY FROM THE GOVERNMENT TO MANAGEMENT AT KONKOLA COPPER MINES AND VEDANTA.



VEDANTA RESOURCES LIMITED IS THE HOLDING COMPANY FOR KCM IN CHINGOLA AND SINCE THEY TOOK OVER, THERE HAS BEEN GROSS POLLUTION AND MISCONDUCT BY THE MINE.



I'VE BEEN WORKING WITH THE CCJP AND ACTION AID TO SENSITISE PEOPLE ON THE KIND OF LIFE THEY SHOULD DEMAND FOR FROM THE MINES. THEIR HOMES IN NCHANGA ARE DAMAGED DUE TO KCM'S ACTIVITIES.



WE'VE ASKED THAT THE MINE RELOCATE PEOPLE FROM THESE DEATH TRAPS, BUT THEY'VE BEEN UNRESPONSIVE. THERE IS ALSO NO POLITICAL WILL TO IMPROVE THE AFFECTED PEOPLE'S LIVES.



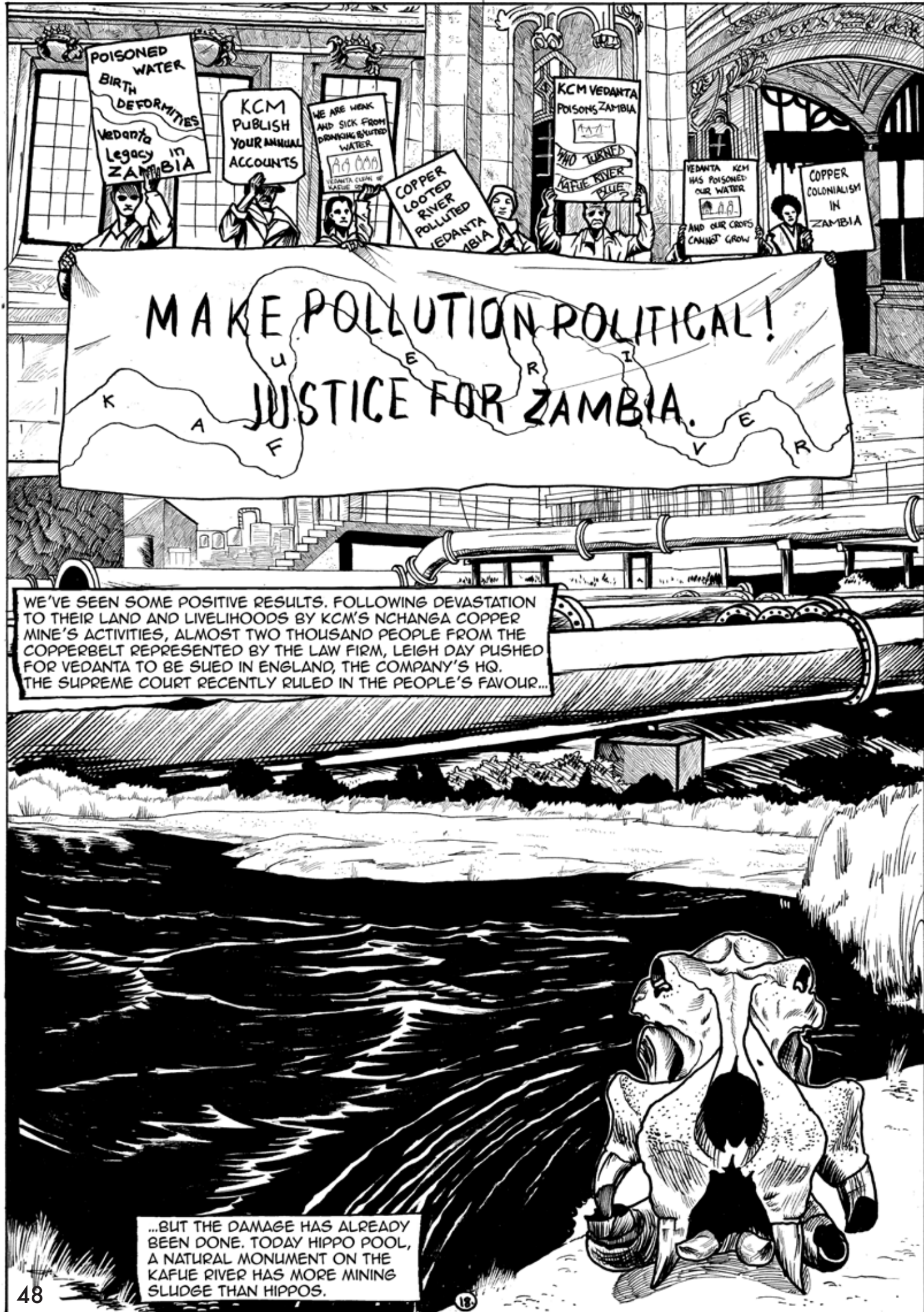
NEW GOVERNMENT MINISTERS HAVE COME AND GONE. THEY COME IN PROMISING TO MAKE VEDANTA AND KCM PAY FOR THEIR PRACTICES BUT NOTHING HAPPENS. I'M CERTAIN THEY'RE TAKING BRIBES.



THIS IS SAD. WE CAME HERE SEEKING ADVICE. HAVE YOUR EFFORTS AND THOSE OF OTHERS YIELDED NO POSITIVE RESULTS?



THEY CALL ME AN ENEMY OF THE GOVERNMENT. I'VE RECEIVED DEATH THREATS AND BRIBES FROM KNOWN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND MANAGEMENT OF KCM.



POISONED WATER
BIRTH DEFORMITIES
VEDANTA Legacy in ZAMBIA

KCM PUBLISH YOUR ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

WE ARE WEAK AND SICK FROM DRINKING POLLUTED WATER

COPPER LOOTED RIVER POLLUTED VEDANTA ZAMBIA

KCM VEDANTA POISONS ZAMBIA
WHO TURNED KAFUE RIVER BLUE

VEDANTA KCM HAS POISONED OUR WATER AND OUR CROPS CANNOT GROW

COPPER COLONIALISM IN ZAMBIA

MAKE POLLUTION POLITICAL!
JUSTICE FOR ZAMBIA.

WE'VE SEEN SOME POSITIVE RESULTS. FOLLOWING DEVASTATION TO THEIR LAND AND LIVELIHOODS BY KCM'S NCHANGA COPPER MINE'S ACTIVITIES, ALMOST TWO THOUSAND PEOPLE FROM THE COPPERBELT REPRESENTED BY THE LAW FIRM, LEIGH DAY PUSHED FOR VEDANTA TO BE SUED IN ENGLAND, THE COMPANY'S HQ. THE SUPREME COURT RECENTLY RULED IN THE PEOPLE'S FAVOUR...

...BUT THE DAMAGE HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE. TODAY HIPPO POOL, A NATURAL MONUMENT ON THE KAFUE RIVER HAS MORE MINING SLUDGE THAN HIPPOS.

THANK YOU FOR SHARING THIS INFORMATION WITH US.



SO WHAT WOULD YOU SUGGEST WE DO, EUGENE?



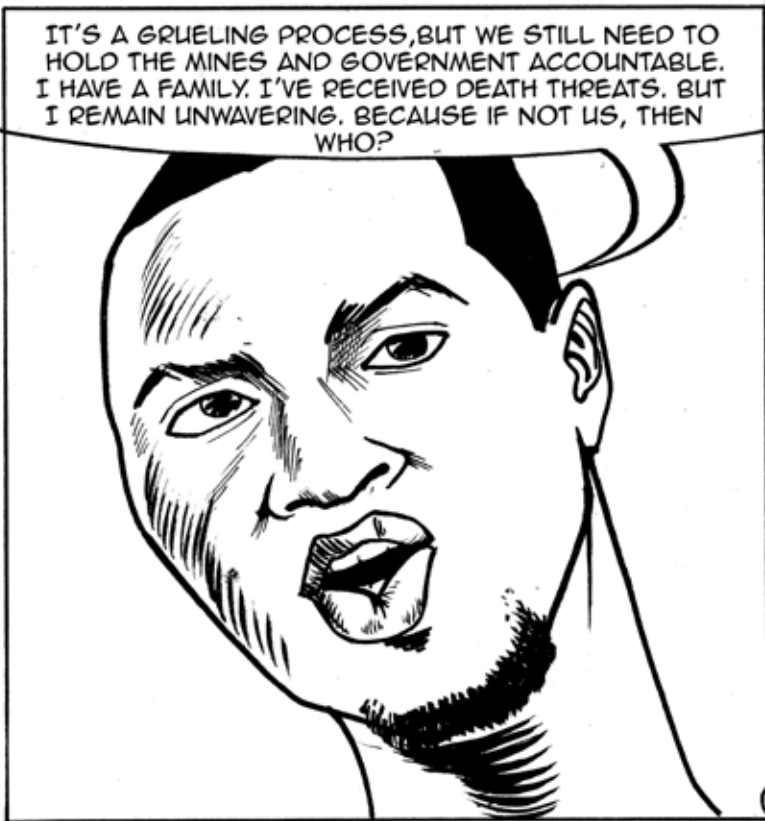
YOU COULD START BY LOBBYING AND PUTTING PRESSURE ON YOUR COUNCILORS. ORGANISATIONS LIKE ACTION AID AND THE CCJP ARE REALLY HELPFUL.



I MEAN WHAT CAN WE DO NOW!? YOU JUST TOLD US THAT POLITICIANS DON'T HAVE OUR INTERESTS AT HEART...



THESE THINGS TAKE TIME, LAURENCE. THE LAWSUIT AGAINST VEDANTA WAS FILED IN 2015 AND THE COMPANY KEPT APPEALING TO HIGHER COURTS. THE SUPREME COURTS IN LONDON ONLY RECENTLY GAVE THE GO AHEAD FOR THE CASE TO BE TRIED IN ENGLISH COURTS.



IT'S A GRUELING PROCESS, BUT WE STILL NEED TO HOLD THE MINES AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE. I HAVE A FAMILY. I'VE RECEIVED DEATH THREATS. BUT I REMAIN UNWAVERING. BECAUSE IF NOT US, THEN WHO?



DON'T MENTION IT. I'LL PUT YOU IN TOUCH WITH SOME OF MY CONTACTS.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, EUGENE.



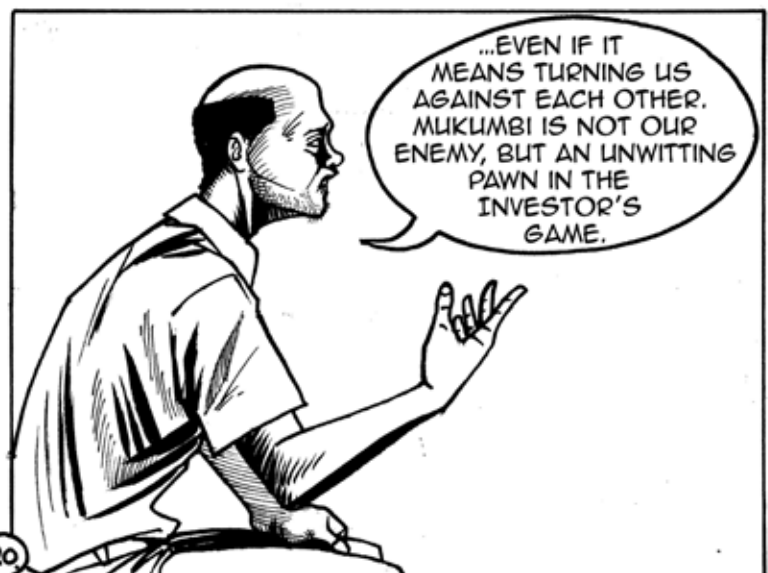
THANK YOU FOR SEEING US, YOUR HIGHNESS, YOUR TASK FORCE MEMBERS...



I COME BEARING SOME BAD NEWS. IN OUR INVESTIGATIONS, WE'VE COME TO REALISE THAT EVEN WITH ALL THEIR PROMISES AND INVESTMENT, THE MINE DOES NOT REALLY HAVE OUR BEST INTERESTS AT HEART.



THEY'RE PURELY HERE FOR PROFIT AND WILL DO ANYTHING TO ACHIEVE THIS...



...EVEN IF IT MEANS TURNING US AGAINST EACH OTHER. MUKUMBI IS NOT OUR ENEMY, BUT AN UNWITTING PAWN IN THE INVESTOR'S GAME.

THE INVESTOR WILL NOT GO OUT OF THEIR WAY TO ENSURE THAT WE ARE SAFE AND EARNING A LIVING. WE NEED TO DO THAT OURSELVES...

WE'VE BEEN TOLD ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF ANOTHER MINE AND IF WE DO NOT KEEP OUR OWN IN CHECK, THEY WILL CONTINUE TO POISON OUR LAND AND REAP PROFITS.

DO NOT POISON THE LAND !!!

WHAT ABOUT FUTURE GENERATIONS

WE WANT TO FEEL SAFE

OUR PEOPLE ARE BEAUTIFUL AND OUR LAND EVEN MORE SO. WE MUST DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO ENSURE IT STAYS THAT WAY...



Morocco

In 2011, residents of Imider in Morocco's rural southeast shut down a silver mining company's water pipe on a nearby mountain to protest the damages to their health and livelihoods. on August 20, 2011 when villagers climbed Mount Alebban to shut off a valve on an SMI pipeline that was diverting water from the mountain's reservoir to flush the silver mine.

This direct action turned into the longest sit-in protest encampment in Moroccan history. Perched on a rugged mountain top, the camp has become a living archive of decades of struggle manifested in documents, drawings, poetry and songs.

The protest movement and its organizers faced intense repression from the government, while the community was forced to endure hardship.

On 17 September 2019, villagers of Imider, led by the Movement on the Road 96, decided to dismantle the protest camp of Albban, after 8 years of continuous struggle and resistance. The Movement has been investing in it since 2011, for years it organized strong local mobilization against the grabbing of water resources by Managem, the mining company which destroyed their livelihood, impoverished the local population, polluted and drained the groundwater, and refused to hear the local population's distress calls and appeals to respect their rights to access to water.

The day following the Movement's decision, local authorities bulldozed the camp.

Artist: anonymous

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[.]



Water shortage, unemployment
pollution, diseases.....




We are all suffering,
our children are sick,
and some people...



Some people didn't have enough
strength and they...



Died.



We couldn't stay silent,
so we started protesting...

They tried to stop us
many, many times but
we kept struggling and
resisting.

Many of us made big sacrifices
for this noble cause,

In 2015, more than
30 people were
jailed.

I was one of the first
to be arrested.

We were pepper
sprayed
and then I fainted...

I woke up later,
at the police station...

They didn't tell me why I was there, they didn't
let me call my family or a lawyer...

And the next day...

I was brought before the court.
There wasn't a formal investigation or interrogation.



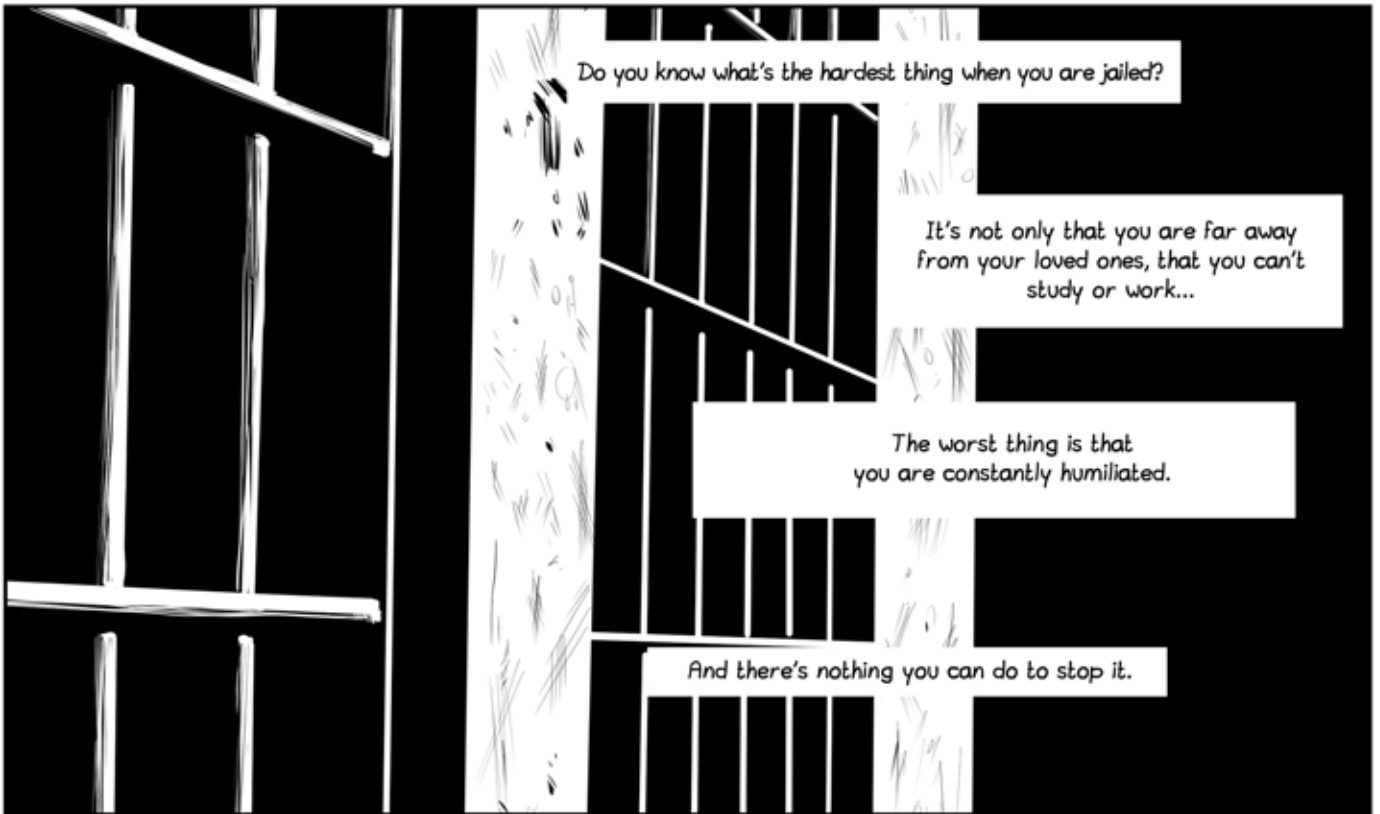
Only a few family members and colleagues were allowed in. I had no lawyer to defend me and no witnesses...

Yes, it's illegal, but you know...rules are made by those who can break them, without facing any consequences.



Together with three other activists, I was sentenced to 2 years and a half in jail.





Do you know what's the hardest thing when you are jailed?

It's not only that you are far away from your loved ones, that you can't study or work...

The worst thing is that you are constantly humiliated.

And there's nothing you can do to stop it.




We were often refused family visits, phone calls, any communication with the outside world.



And we were jailed in prisons far from where our families live.

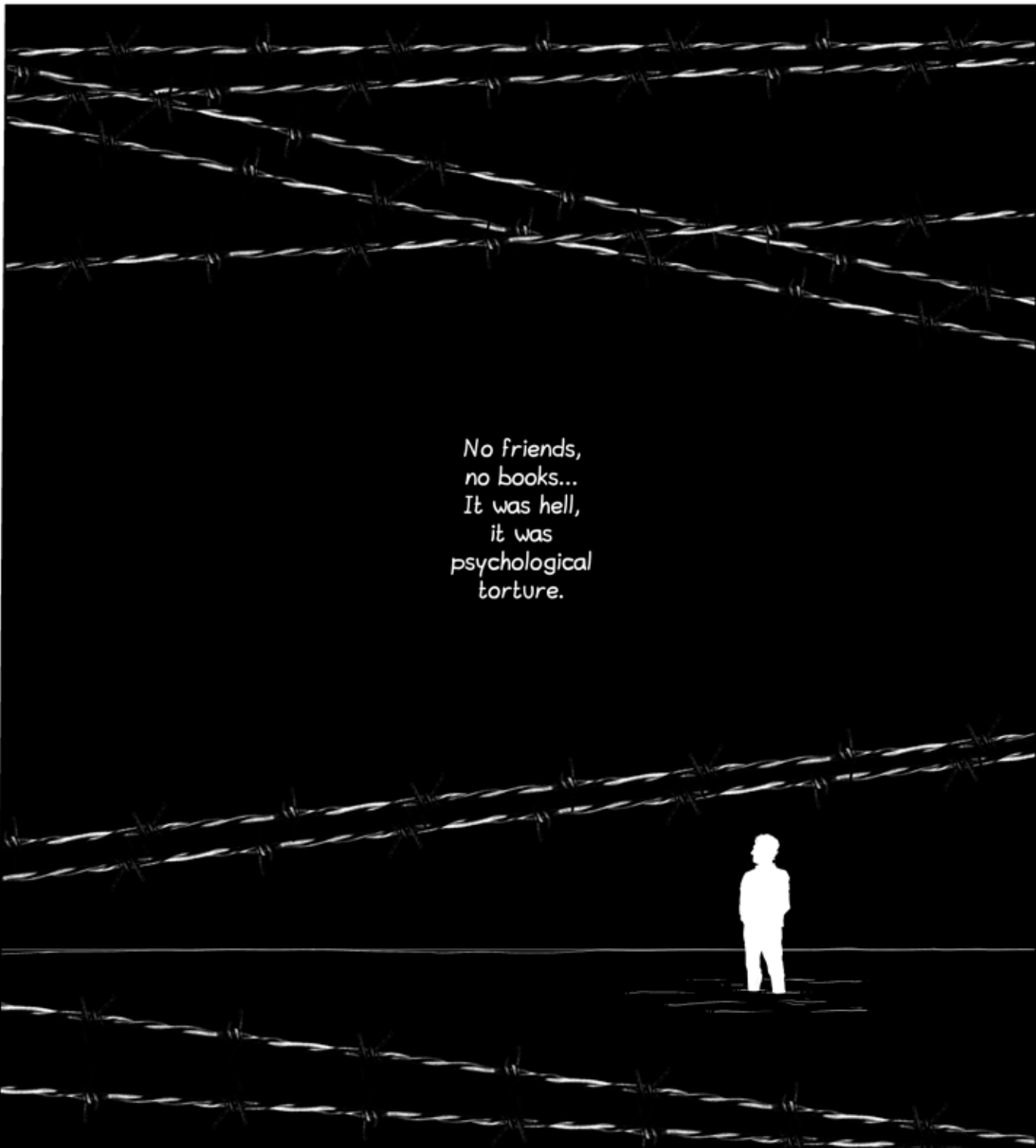
They made us feel loneliness and rejection.

It worked pretty well i would say.

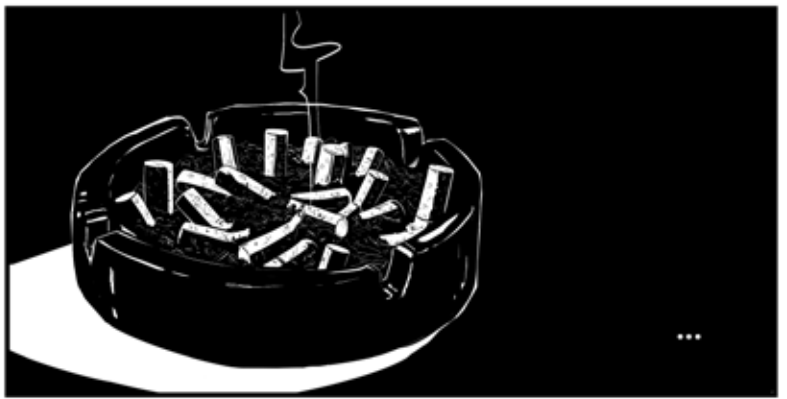



We asked to
get some
books to
continue to
study;
first they
ignored us...

then they refused.




No friends,
no books...
It was hell,
it was
psychological
torture.






But to understand
what I'm talking about,
you have to
leave this room.



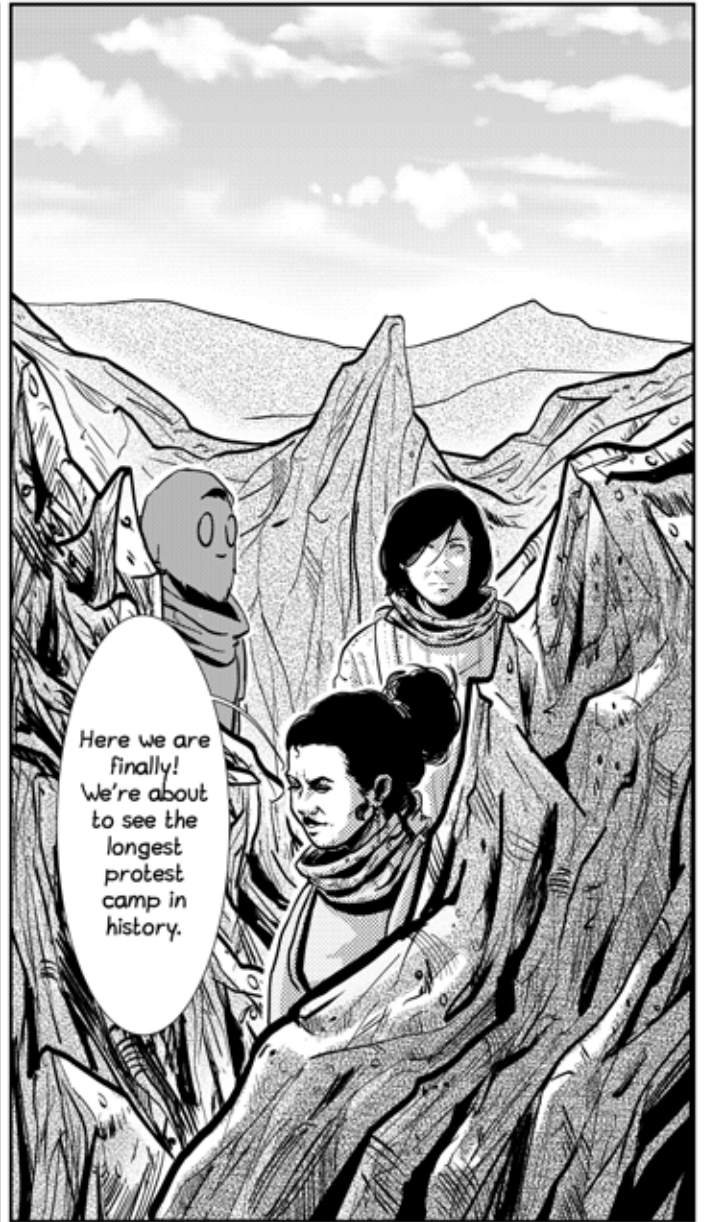
You should pack
your things and
leave Rabat.

But try to be
discreet and stay
undercover...

The police have surveillance
on the camp all the time.
But you need to go there...



...IMIDER



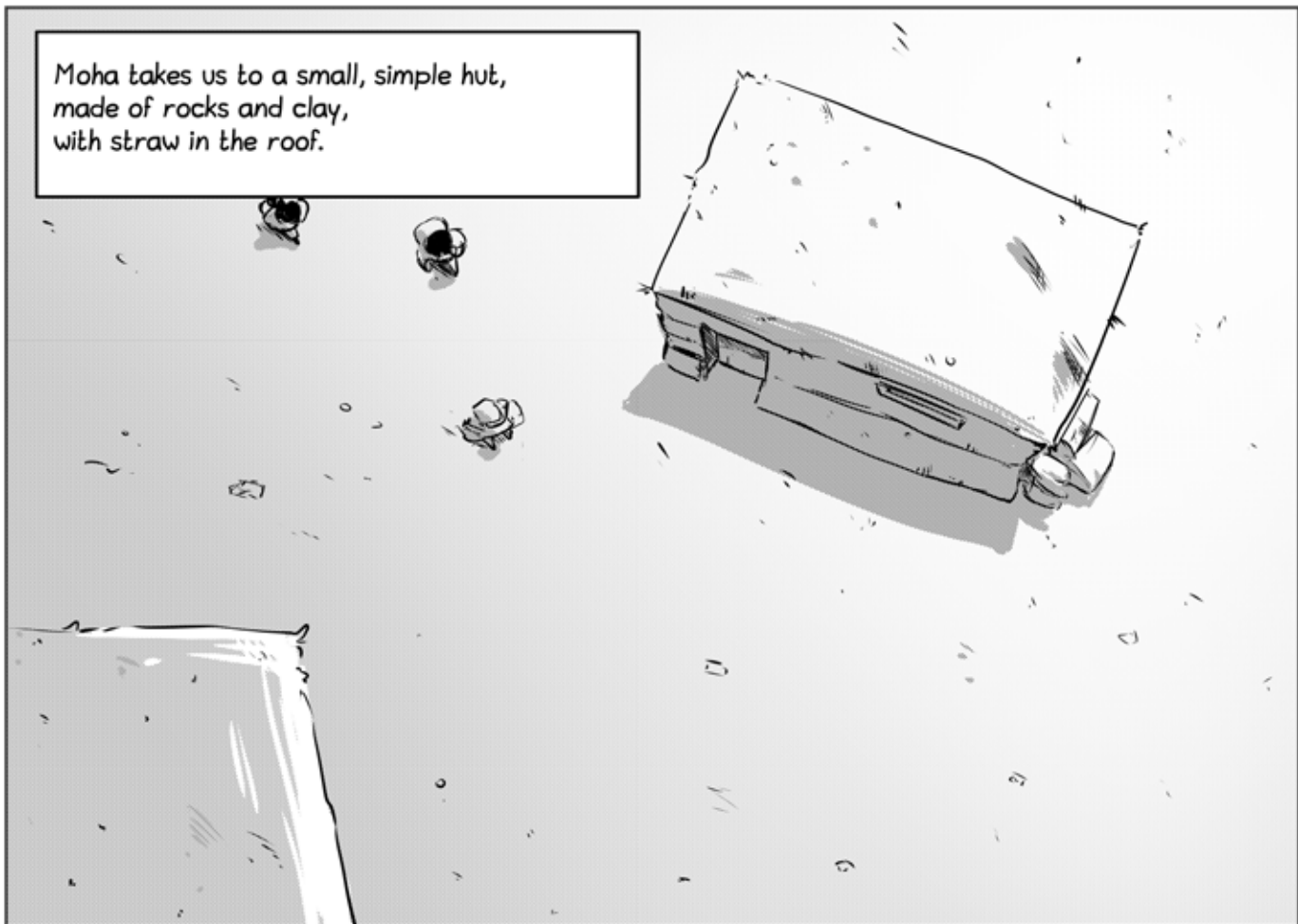
Here we are finally!
We're about to see the longest protest camp in history.

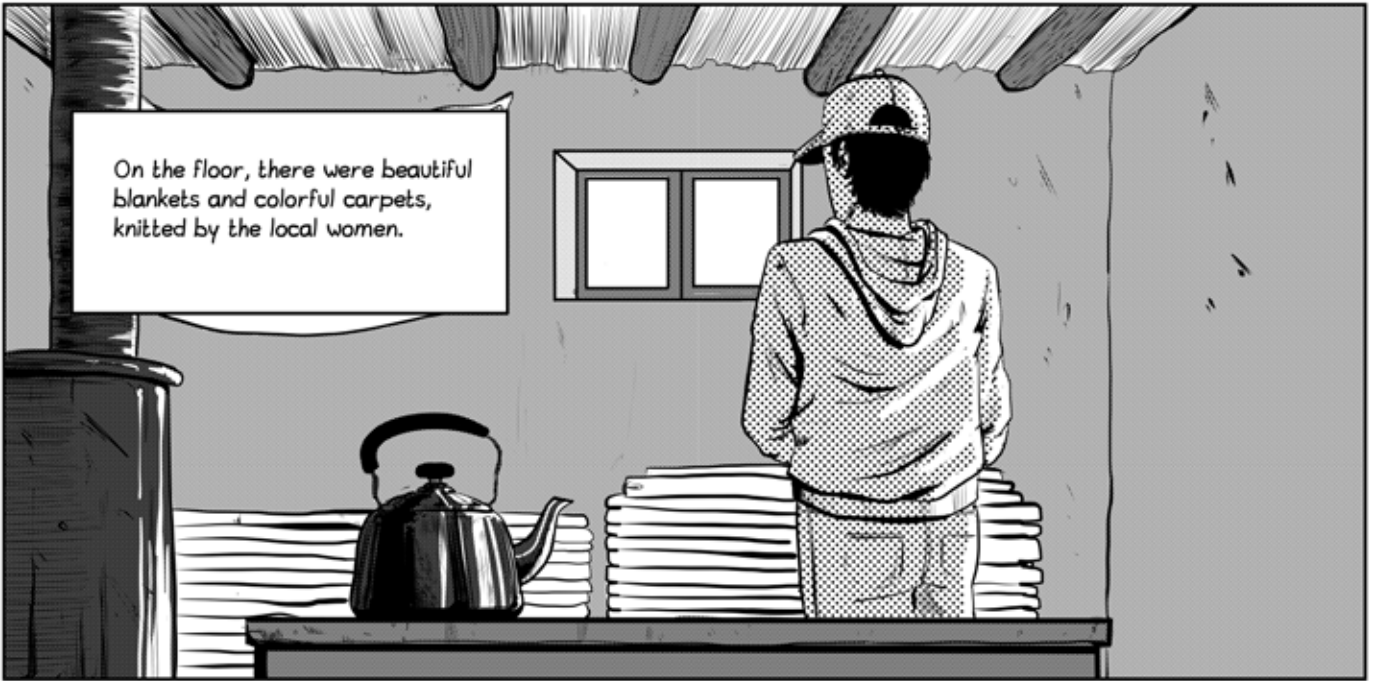


The sit-in has been going on for over 7 years now!



Moha takes us to a small, simple hut,
made of rocks and clay,
with straw in the roof.





On the floor, there were beautiful blankets and colorful carpets, knitted by the local women.



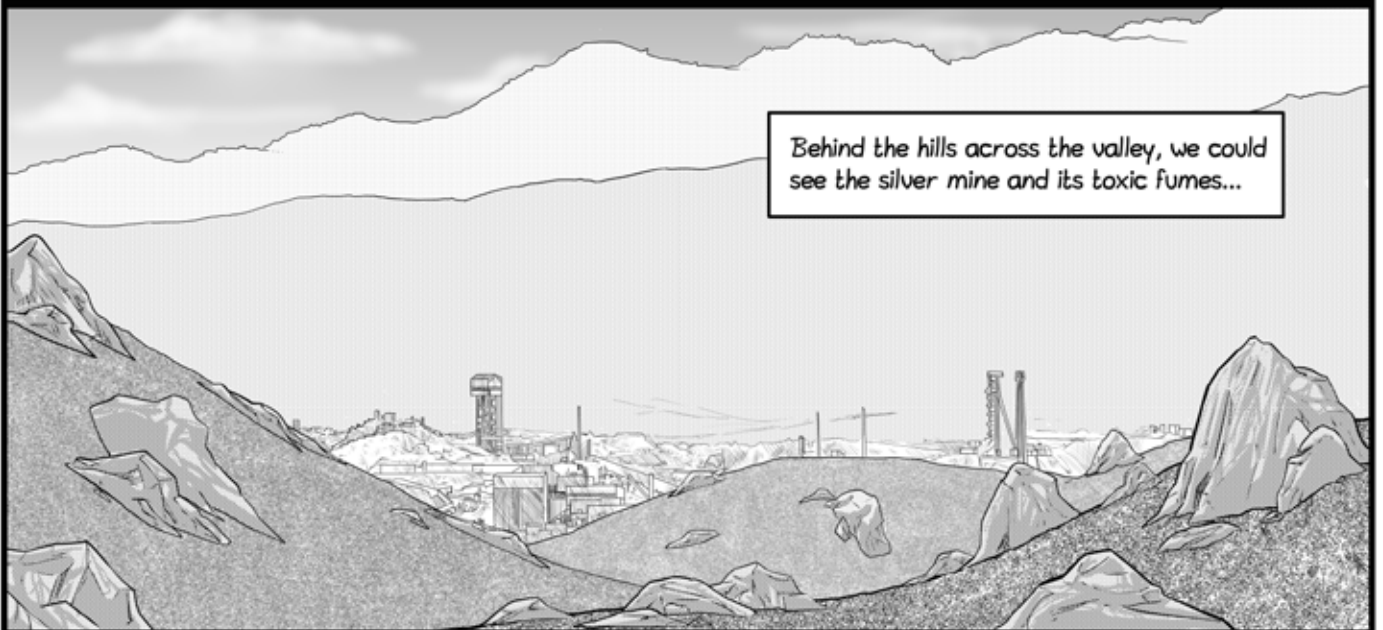
We started chatting with Moha, while waiting for the tea to be ready. We were welcomed as if we were family!



The camp is on the top of a hill, Mount Alban.



Behind the hills across the valley, we could see the silver mine and its toxic fumes...



Next to it, the soil had turned white...



And life had started to fade...





This is because of the mercury, cyanide and other toxic waste that is dumped here.



No trees can grow over there...
The land itself has been...



Killed...

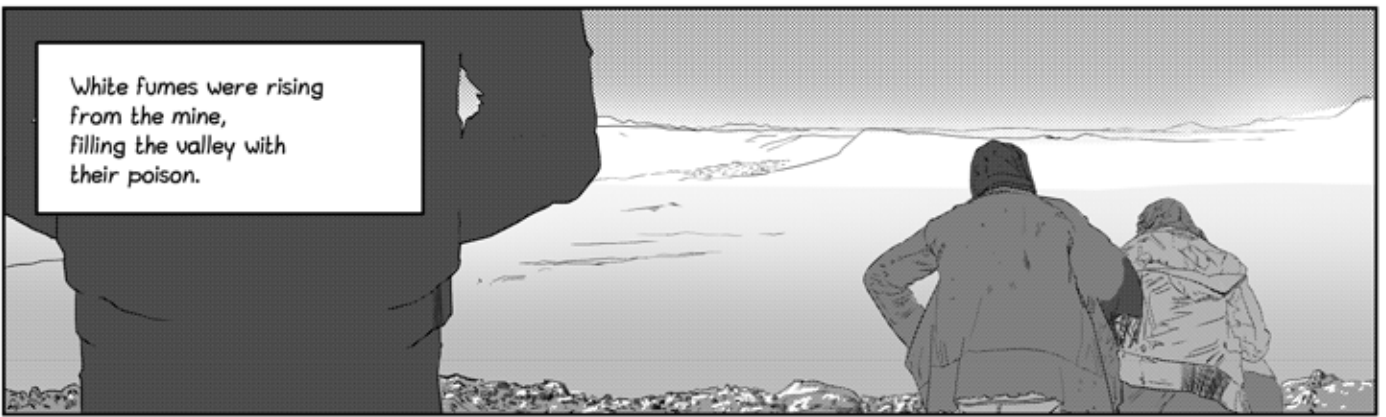


...

An old lady and a young girl were sitting together, not too far from us, staring at the valley in front of them...



White fumes were rising from the mine, filling the valley with their poison.



*AZUL : Hello

Azul!

Only Moha and a few other people in the camp can speak Darija, the Moroccan Arabic dialect.

The lady and the little girl are speaking in Tamazight, the language of the Amazigh people.

Long
time
ago ...

This valley was green...
We had olive trees, fig trees, and small
vegetable gardens...

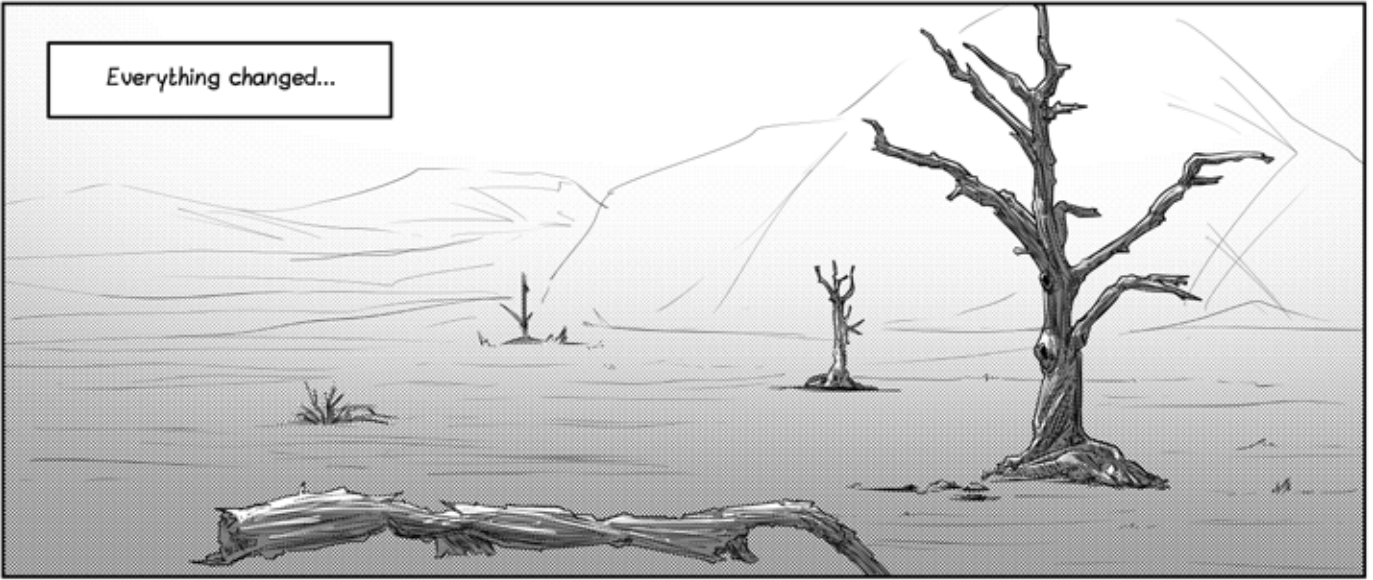
We weren't rich, but we had everything
we needed...



But then,
they built this silver mine...



Everything changed...



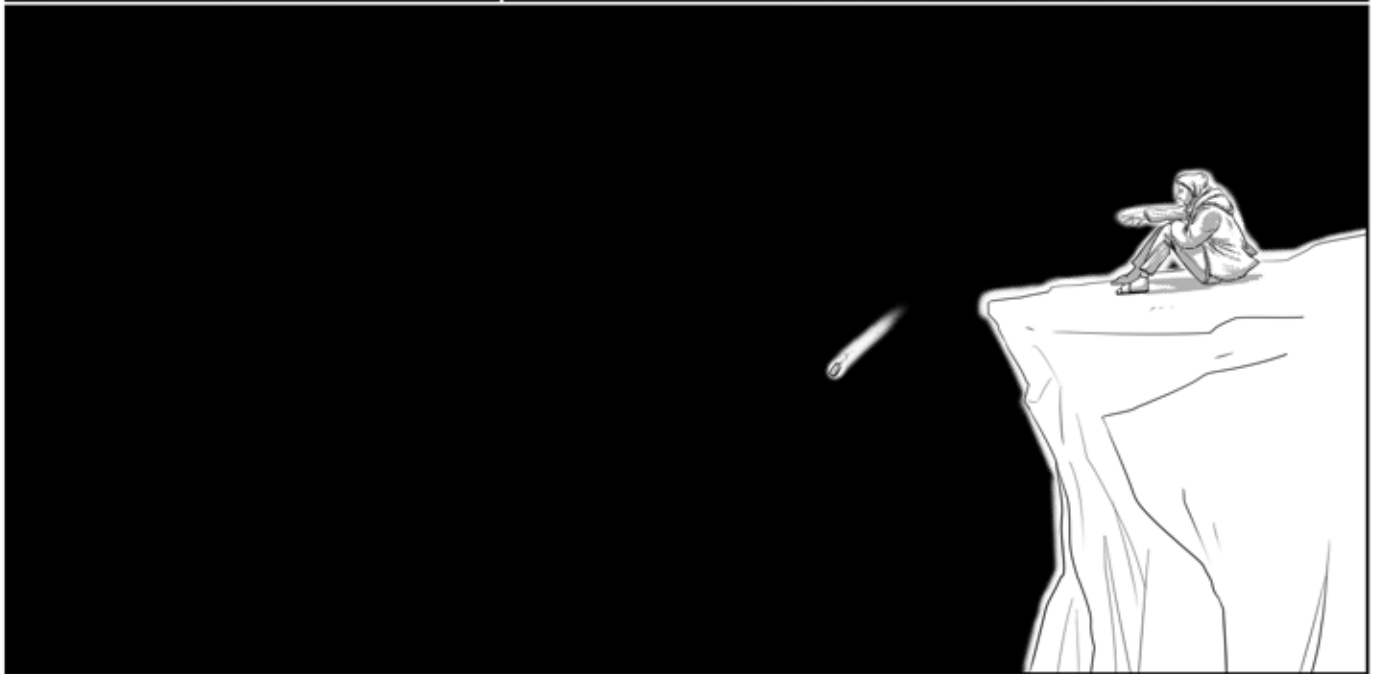
The mine is run by the SMI, a subsidiary of Managem, and the Moroccan royal family is the main shareholder of the company. Since it started extracting silver in 1978, SMI has been steadily expanding its operations, but none of the profit has trickled down to the local population...

This silver is mainly sold to European countries, to produce electronic devices, medical equipment, or shiny jewels...





But for us,
that silver
doesn't shine



The mine has polluted everything: the air, the water, the soil...
and it has drained the already scarce water resources we had before.

Follow me, we're going to visit someone who can tell you how much
suffering this mine has caused.



Walking along a rock path down the mountain, we go to the village of Imider, half an hour walk away.



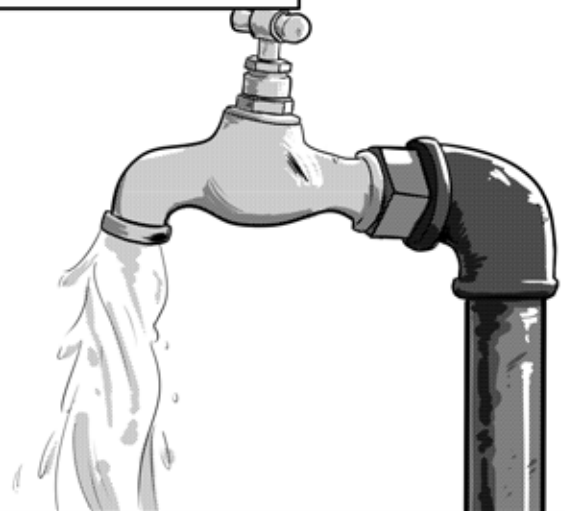
Aicha welcomes us with a cup of tea, and she starts telling us her story. A story of oppression and injustice.

They have taken all our water After they started exploiting the well on top of Mount Albban, every time we opened the tap, only a few drops would come out.



In some houses, water turned red and people started getting sick...

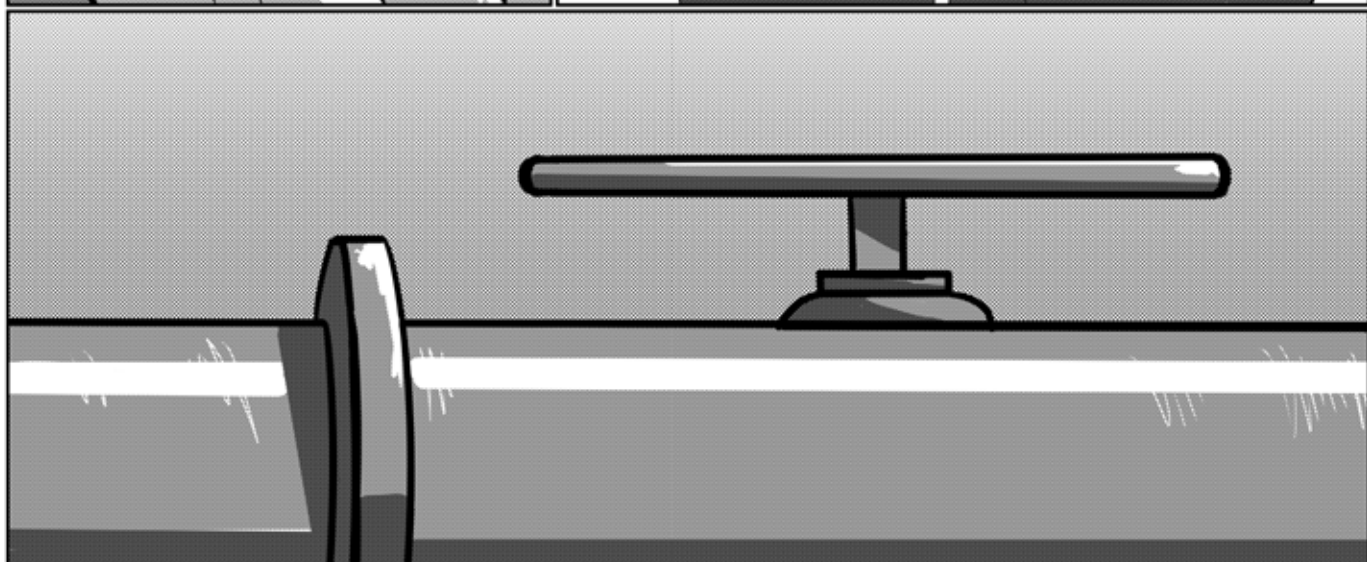
We hadn't experienced this before...

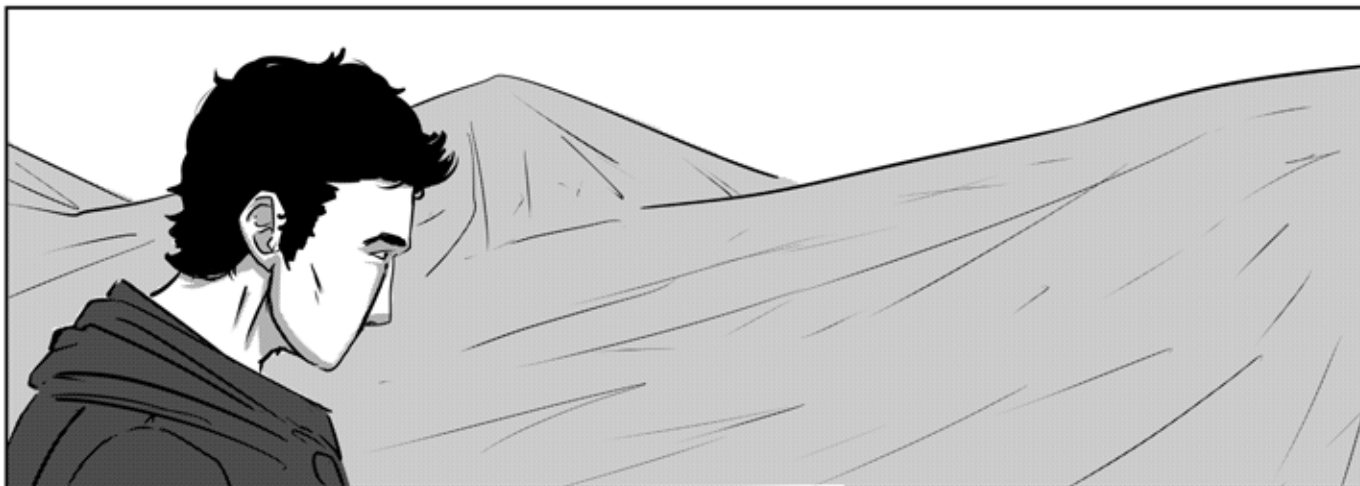


They were suffering from serious allergies and diseases, that nobody had seen before...



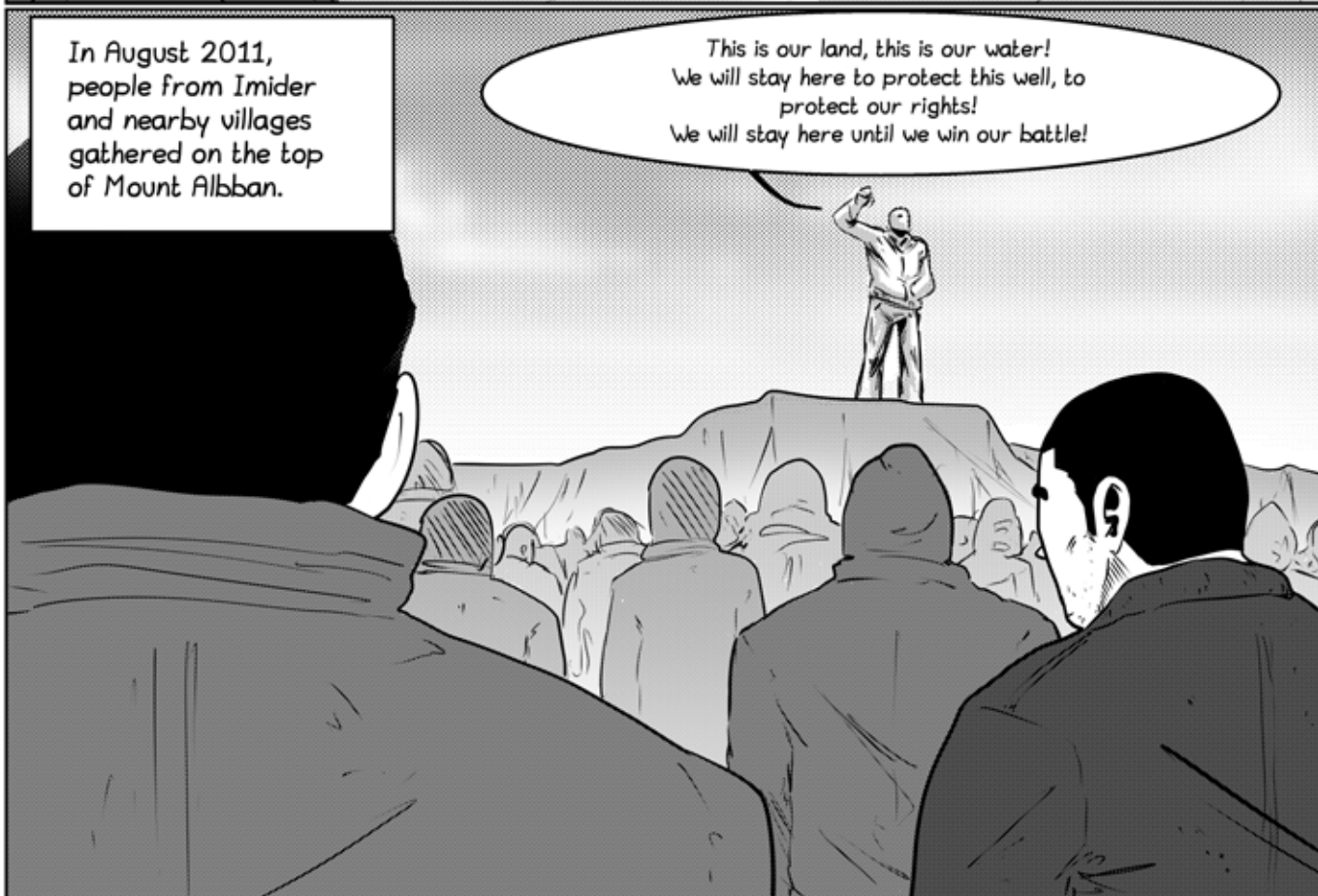
This is why in 2011 we decided to close down the valve of the well. It was the only way to keep some water for our village, and to protect our land.





In August 2011, people from Imider and nearby villages gathered on the top of Mount Albban.

This is our land, this is our water!
We will stay here to protect this well, to
protect our rights!
We will stay here until we win our battle!



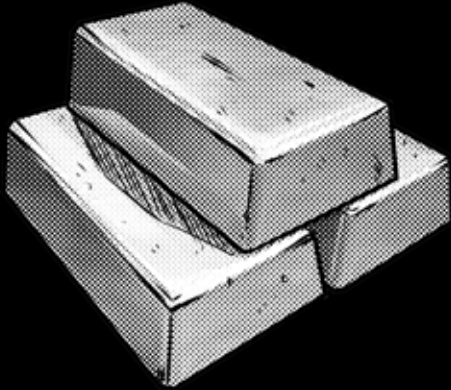
The protest was peaceful but the mining company immediately called the police. In the first few months, 33 activists were arrested and jailed on trumped-up charges, and many were severely beaten.





My son was one of the first to be arrested...

They accused him of having stolen 18 grams of silver from the mine.



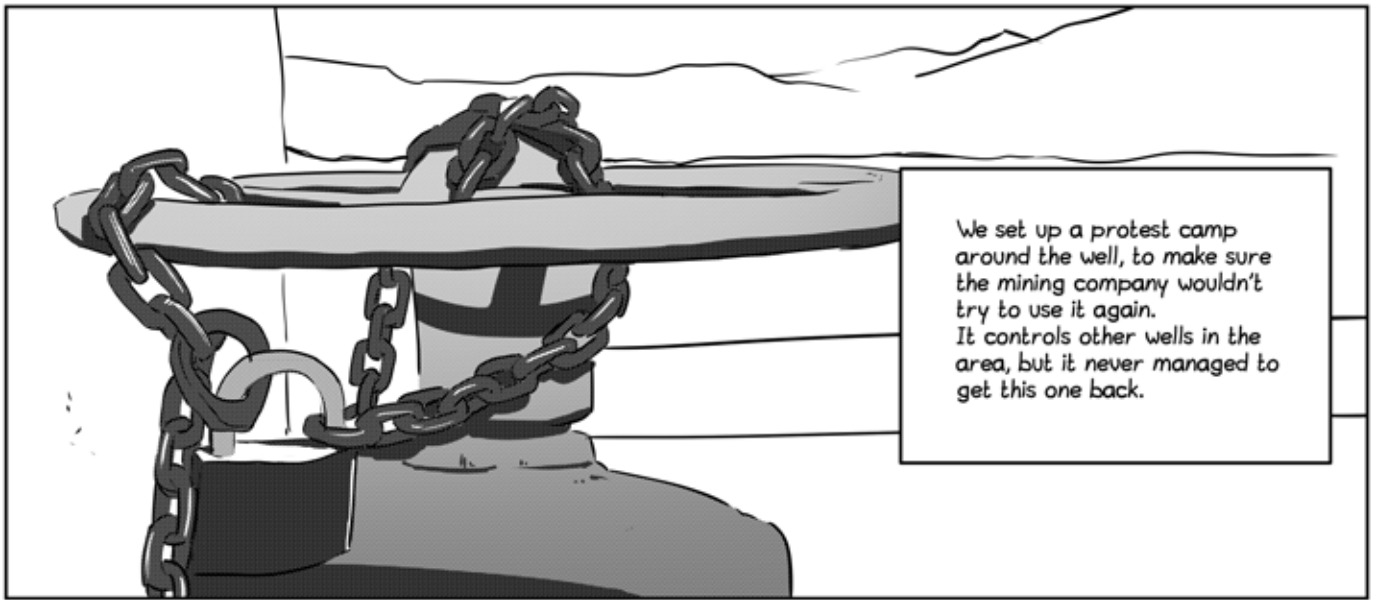
He was innocent...

They just wanted to show everybody what could happen to those protesting against the mine.



He was only 21. Instead of studying or working, he ended up spending 4 years in jail.

Despite the threats and the arrests, the community stayed united and strong



We set up a protest camp around the well, to make sure the mining company wouldn't try to use it again. It controls other wells in the area, but it never managed to get this one back.

I thought we would only stay here for a couple of days.



Seven years later, we are still here.



Then the days went by, the weeks, the months, the years..

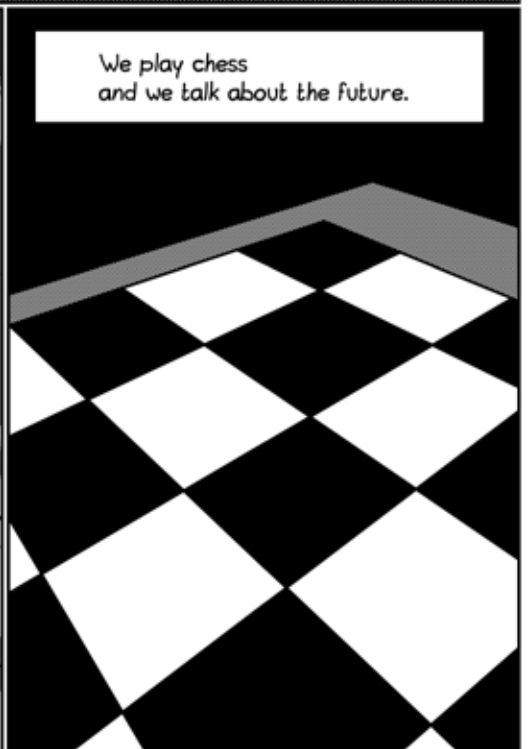




*At night, you could almost forget about the mine.
Under a sky with a million stars,
Imider's valley seems the most uncontaminated place on earth.
No trace of human activity for miles and miles,
no sound but the barking of dogs.*



*After dinner,
we stay inside the hut all together.*



*We play chess
and we talk about the future.*

The first protests started in the 1980s.



Then there was another protest in 1996

And this is why we call our movement, "Road 1996".



Neither Forget Nor forgive. We will Never Give up!

Almost three decades have passed, but our demands haven't changed.



I wish the mine wasn't here, but we can't do much about that, so we are asking the company at least to employ local people and to respect high environmental standards...



We are just asking them
not to dump their waste
in our land,
and to stop using all our water

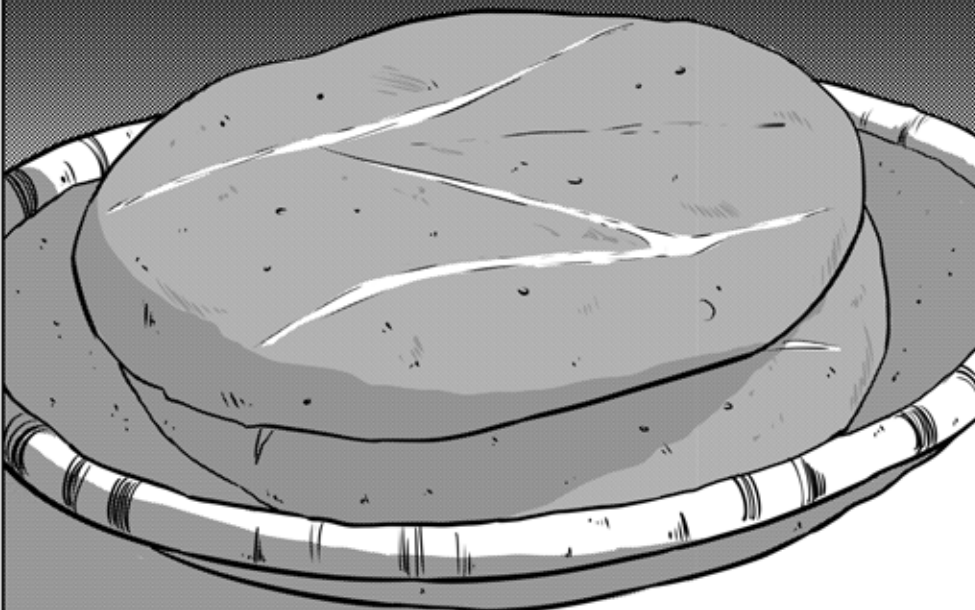


But they have turned a blind eye to our requests.

In the morning, the women wake up to bake "agrom", the bread, using the same recipe they learned from their grandmothers.



One of the finest Moroccan breads, simple but delicious.



The outside is crunchy, but it's fluffy inside, and it goes well with olive oil or butter...



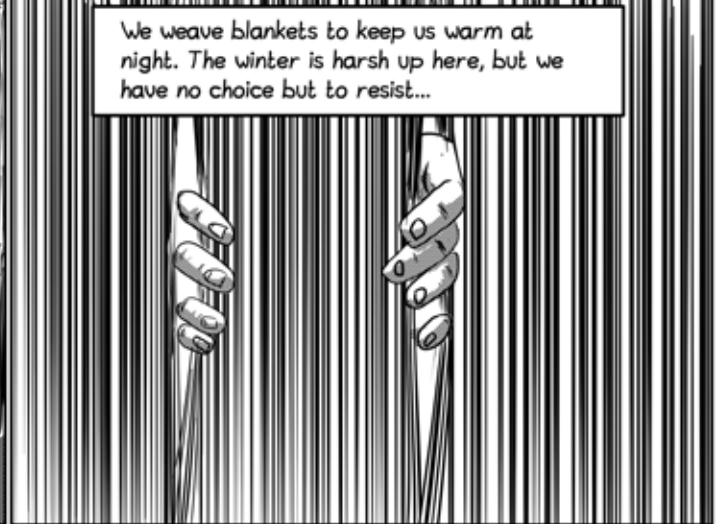
We take turns, so that there's always someone here in the camp.



We sleep in these huts, we cook inside here



We weave blankets to keep us warm at night. The winter is harsh up here, but we have no choice but to resist...



Usually only a dozen of people remain in the camp, but once a week everyone goes up there for "Agraw".



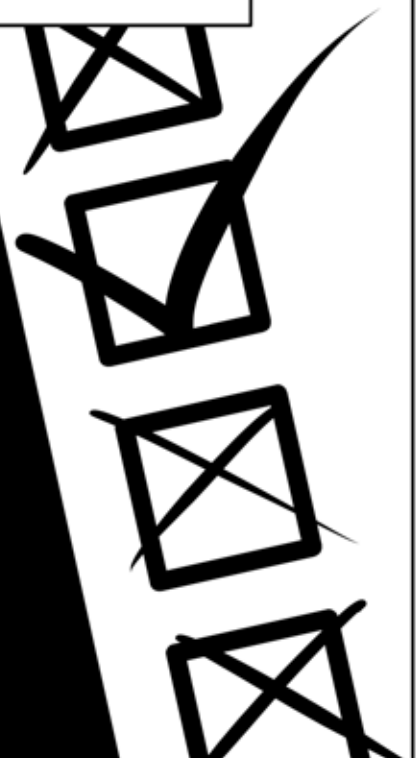
An ancient tradition of the Amazigh people, Agraw is a democratic form of decision-making. The villagers sit down in a circle and discuss the community's problems, new strategies and forms of protests, or future activities...



During Agraw, men occupy half of the circle and women the other half, but everyone - no matter their age or gender - has the chance to express their ideas.



Only after consensus among all participants is reached, important decisions can be taken.





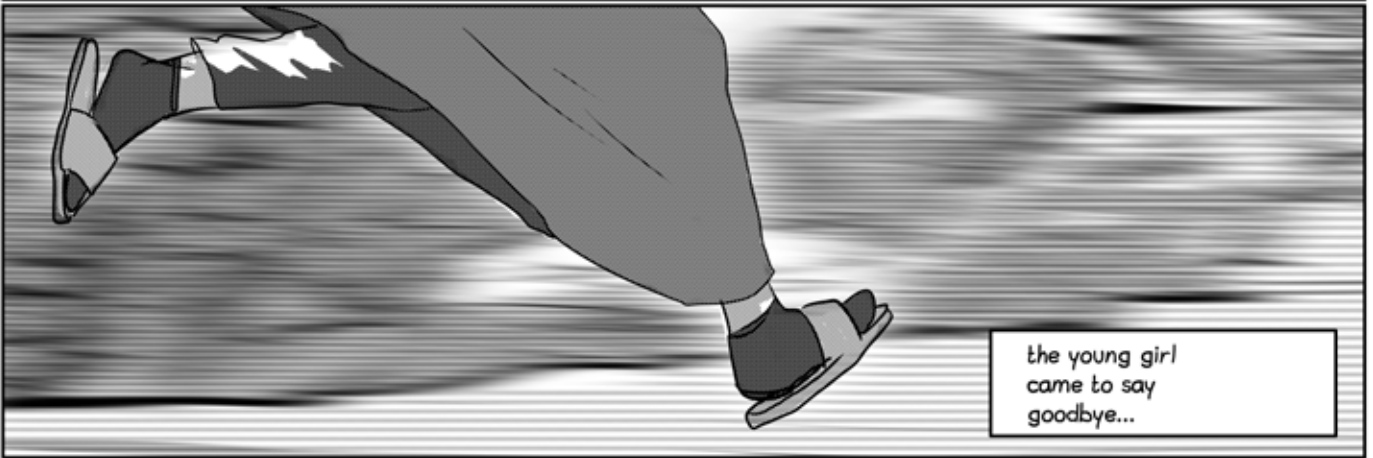
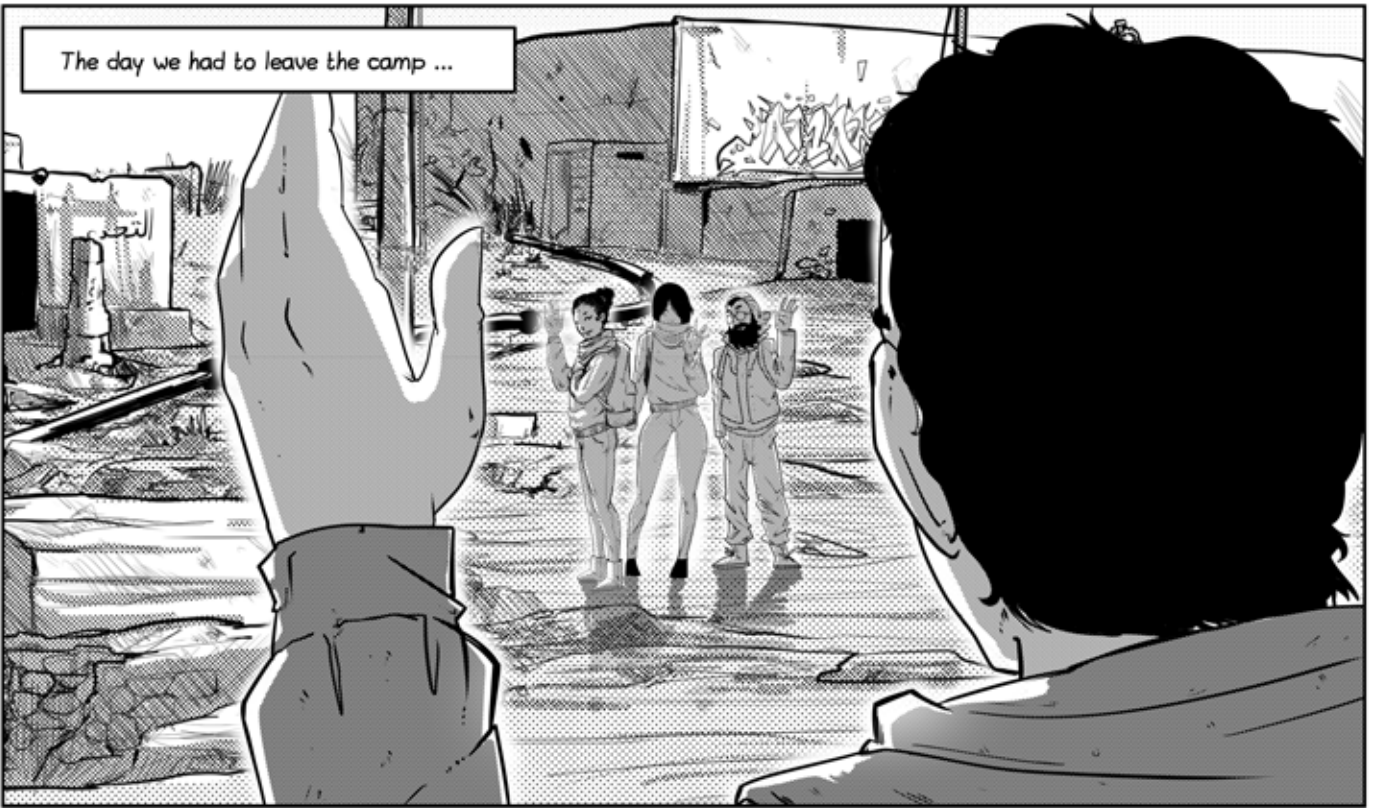
Sometimes we wonder how we managed to resist for so long.



We share the same struggle with other indigenous and environmental defenders around the world...

We are not alone, and this gives us hope.

The day we had to leave the camp ...



the young girl
came to say
goodbye...



This is the land of our
ancestors, we won't give up.
I don't know when it will
happen, but one day we'll see
again some beautiful olive
trees here, I am sure. They
will smell like the ones my
grandmother always speak
about.



Turkey

“The top of Artvin is more valuable than gold”

Mines, dams, and access roads have already scarred much of the landscape around Artvin, where activists rallied in recent years to prevent a gold mine from being constructed in Cerattepe, part of the mountainous recreational area.

The Cerattepe hill overlooking the city of Artvin in Turkey’s northeast is one of the country’s most idyllic areas of natural beauty. The area is one of the most biodiverse in Turkey, home to more than 600 plant species, 26 of which are distinct to the area, and hundreds of animal types including roe deer, wild boar and grey wolves.

Yet, mining companies have long coveted Cerattepe, which is home to huge reserves of copper, gold, silver and mercury. In 1988 and 1989, the ministry of Energy and Natural Resources issued mineral exploration and preliminary operation licenses to the Canadian company, Cominco despite the results of an earlier field exploration that the MTA (Mineral Research and Exploration) had carried out. Ever since then, the people in Artvin have struggled to stop the gold and copper mining efforts offering alternative plans for a successful economical way to benefit not only the region, but all of Turkey and keeping the environment in tact.

Having been successful with stopping foreign investors to carry out their mining efforts in the past, all changed with the efforts of the current administration. With their ruthless short term profit driven goals benefitting a few their use of administrative resources, executive and juridical forces, have left the people of Artvin in a “forever fight” for the survival of their homes and the environment.

The Green Artvin Association, led by its President, Nur Neşe Karahan, has led protests to stop the eradication of a forest that would make way for an open pit mine in the area. Local activists have blocked roads and have been confronted by police and security forces.

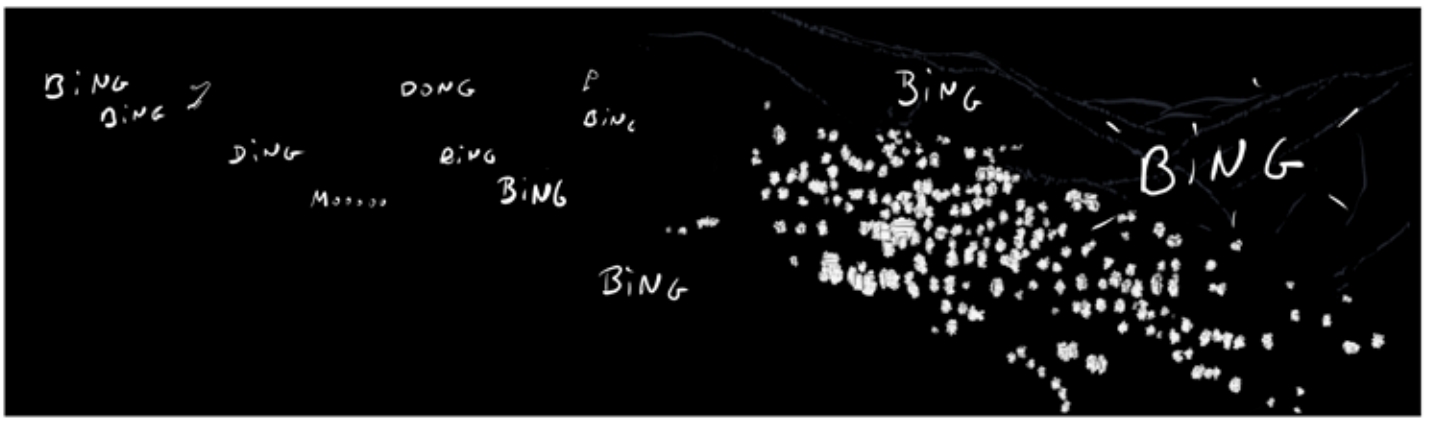
yesilartvindernegi.org

Artist: Beldan Sezen
beldansezen.com

Artvin, Turkey

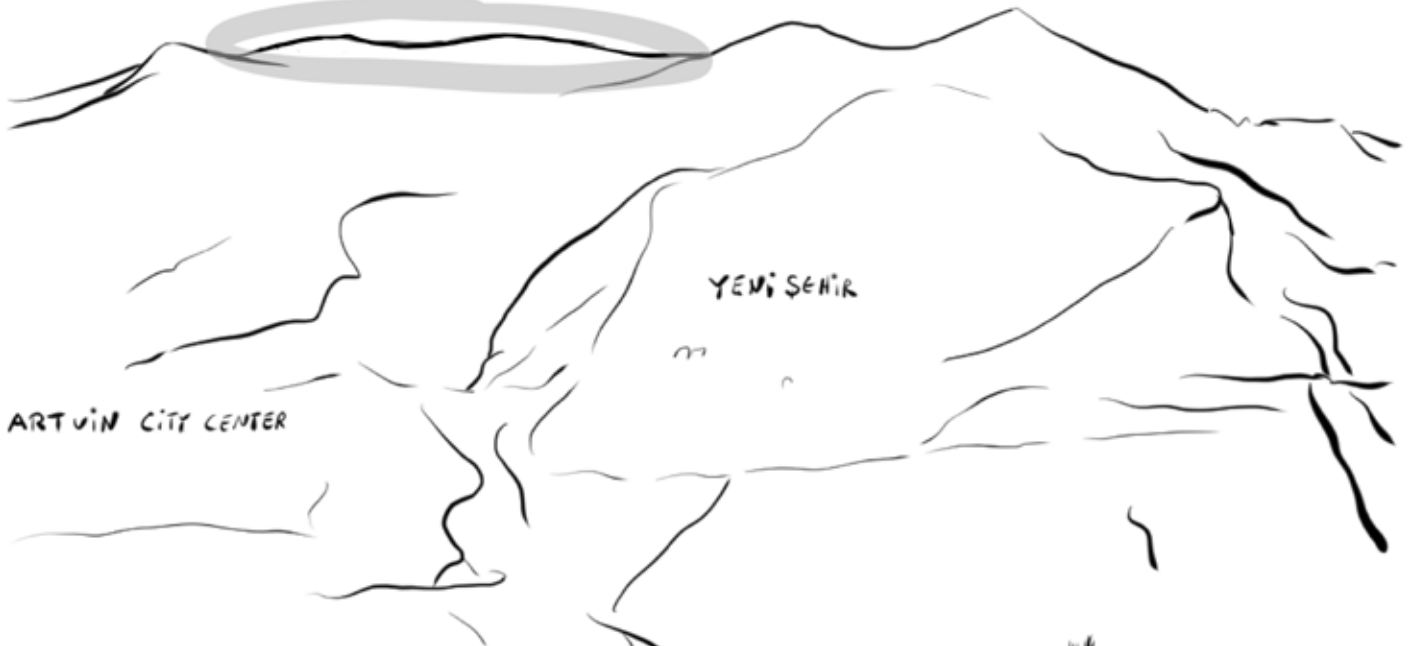
BING!





CERATTEPE

Cerattepe is a hill that is very close to the town of Artvin, in northeastern Turkey.



It is noted for its unique biodiversity and natural beauty, as well as being the source of water supply for the town.

Artvin's picturesque forests are cited among the world's top 100 in terms of natural riches, lying on a bird migration route and boasting a diverse ecosystem and endemic flora. They are also recognized as one of the world's most endangered biodiversity 'hotspots'.

In 1985, MTA (Mineral Research and Exploration) started field exploration works at the site. As a result of these works, four borings, whose total length was close to 1 km, were suggested.

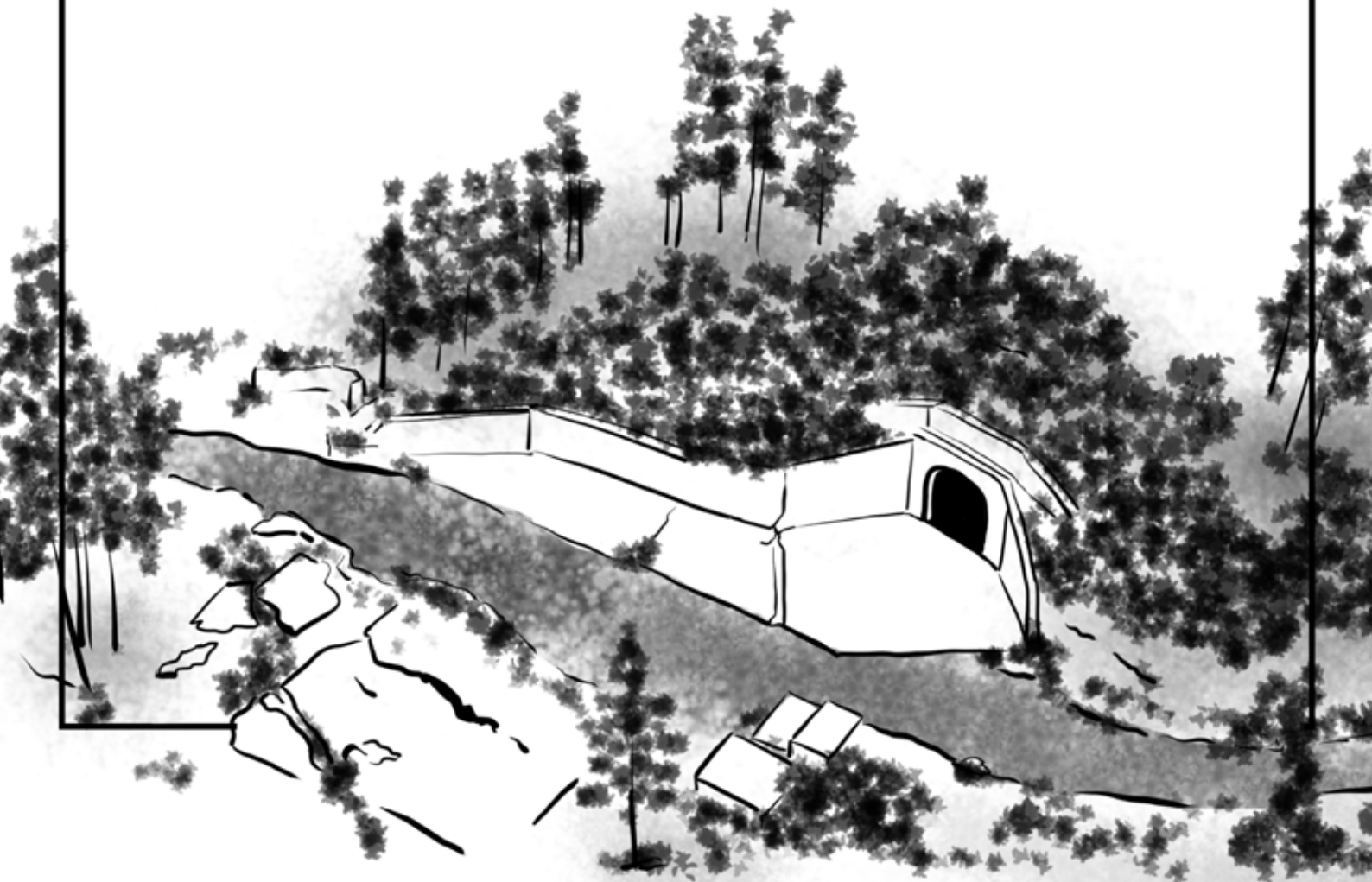
In 1986, these explorations were carried out.

An economically significant source could not be found

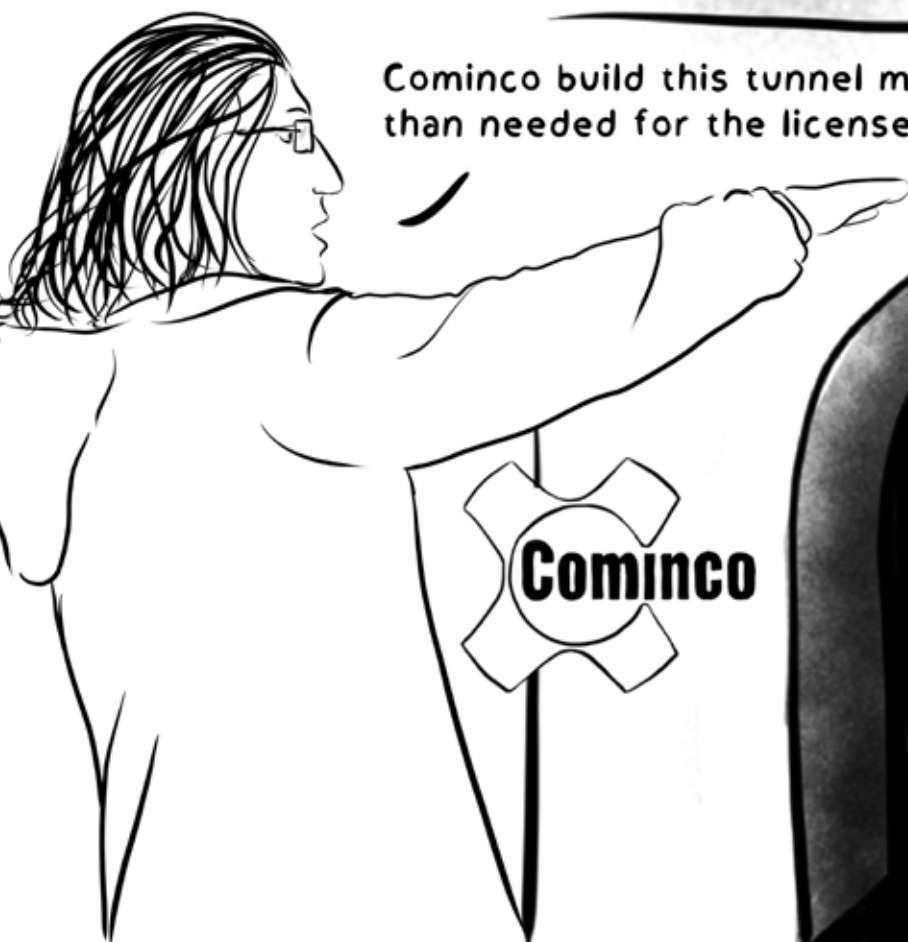


This is Nese Karahan. She head of the Green Artvin Association, of which she has been a member since its founding. She owns a bakery in Artvin.

Yet in 1988 and 1989 the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources issued mining exploration licenses for gold and copper mining to the Canadian company Cominco for the site.



Cominco build this tunnel much wider than needed for the licensed probing.



Clearly it was meant for future mining operations.



After the exploration works in 1994, we experienced the first adverse effects.



Cows died.



We thought maybe this was because of the water being contaminated by chemicals used during the probing.



The water



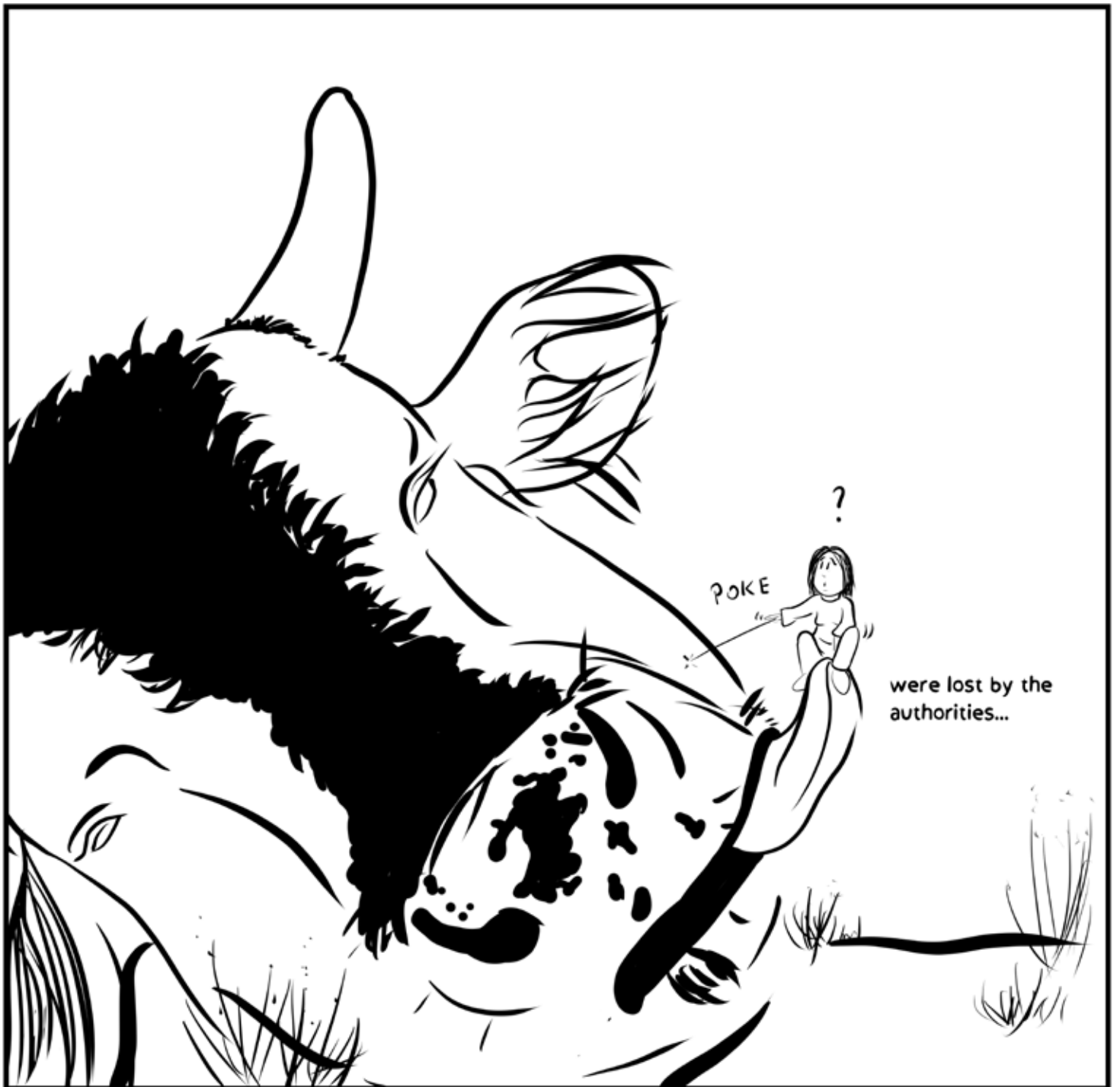
in some of the creeks




looked greenish...


The samples, which were taken from these dead cows and sent for analysis in order to



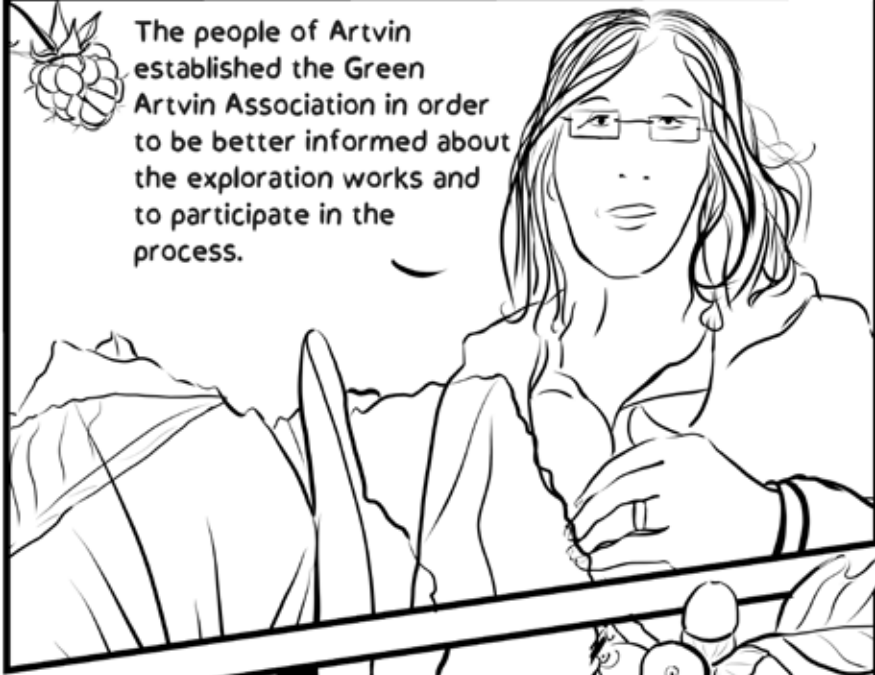




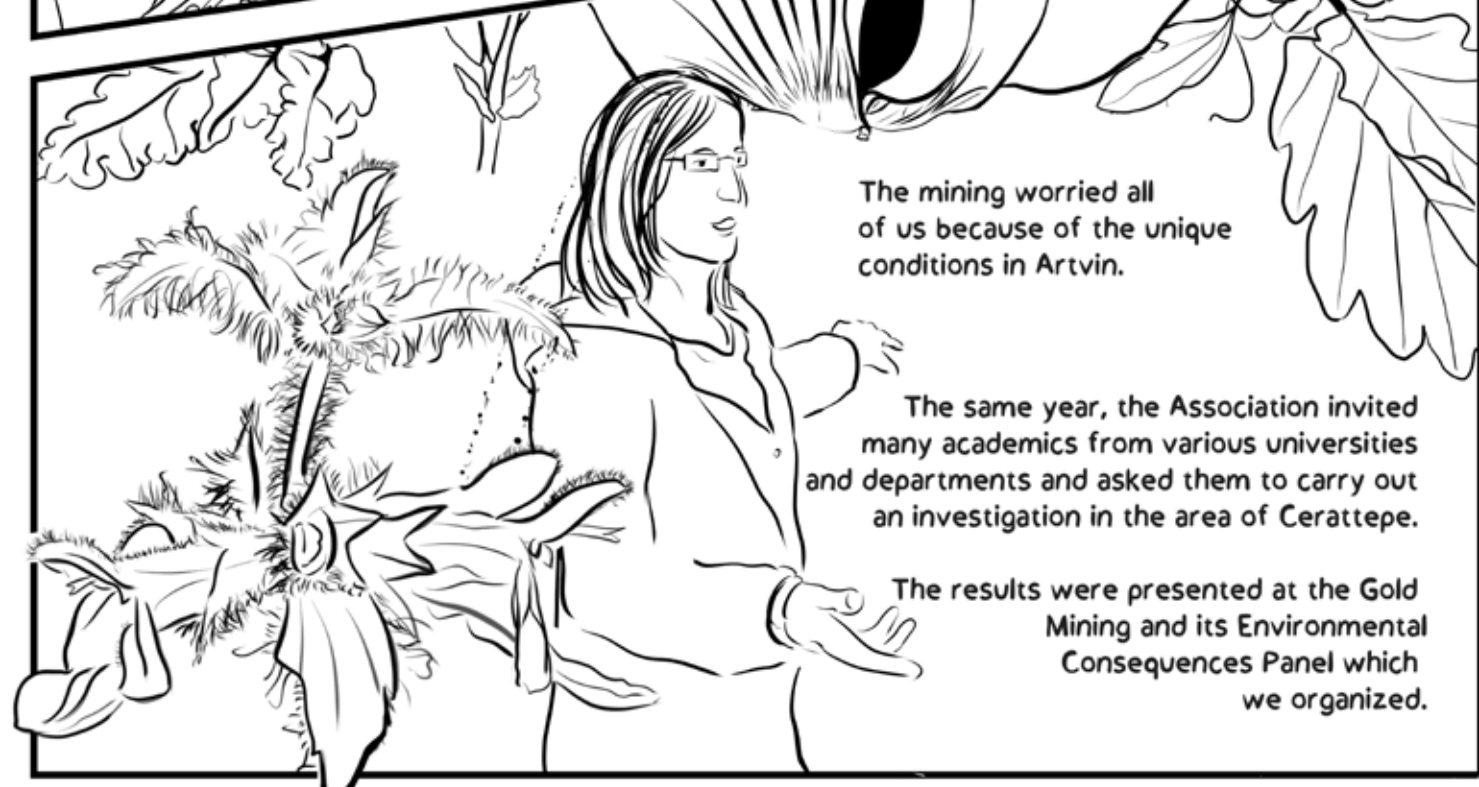
We started to investigate the impact of those exploration works.



What are the environmental consequences of gold and copper mining?



The people of Artvin established the Green Artvin Association in order to be better informed about the exploration works and to participate in the process.



The mining worried all of us because of the unique conditions in Artvin.

The same year, the Association invited many academics from various universities and departments and asked them to carry out an investigation in the area of Cerattepe.

The results were presented at the Gold Mining and its Environmental Consequences Panel which we organized.

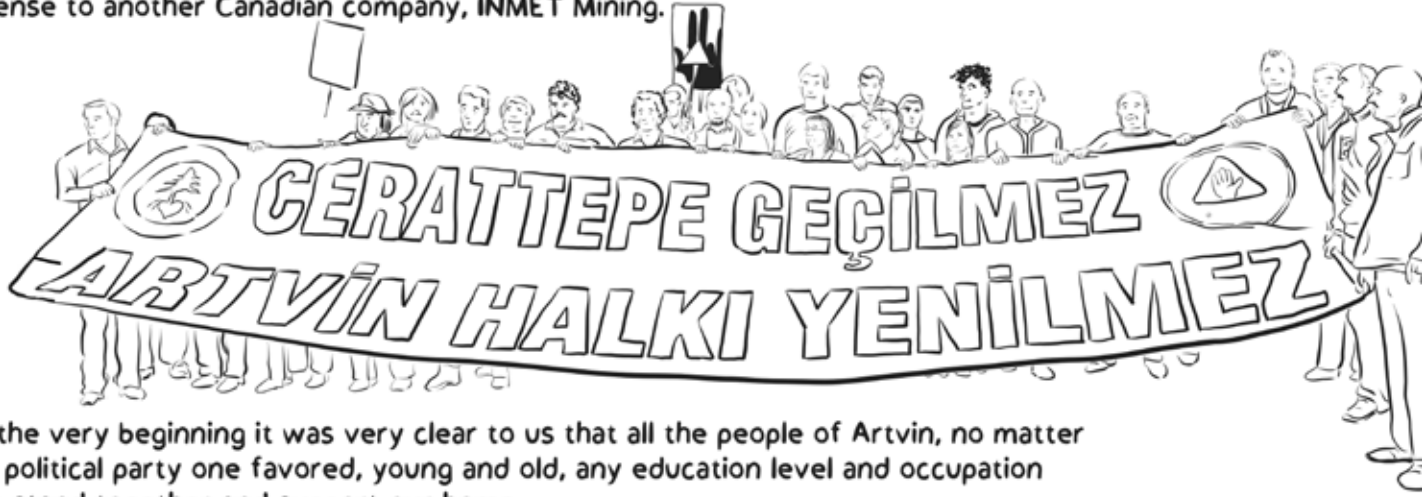
Our fears and concerns were supported by the research.



Not only did we learn that any mining operation would severely harm the region and its ecosystem and that there is a high risk of landslides, we also realized we would be far better off economically through responsible tourism.

Also our rich flora and bees could be used for organic beekeeping and botanical medicine.

We held our first demonstration in 1997 and our second in 2002. In both cases we collected more than 10.000 signatures in a petition against the exploration. Cominco withdrew from the project and handed over its license to another Canadian company, INMET Mining.



From the very beginning it was very clear to us that all the people of Artvin, no matter which political party one favored, young and old, any education level and occupation had to stand together and support our home.

Both companies tried very hard and used many dirty tricks to get the mining off the ground. Finally in 2005 the Green Artvin Association and Artvin Bar Association filed a lawsuit against the project.

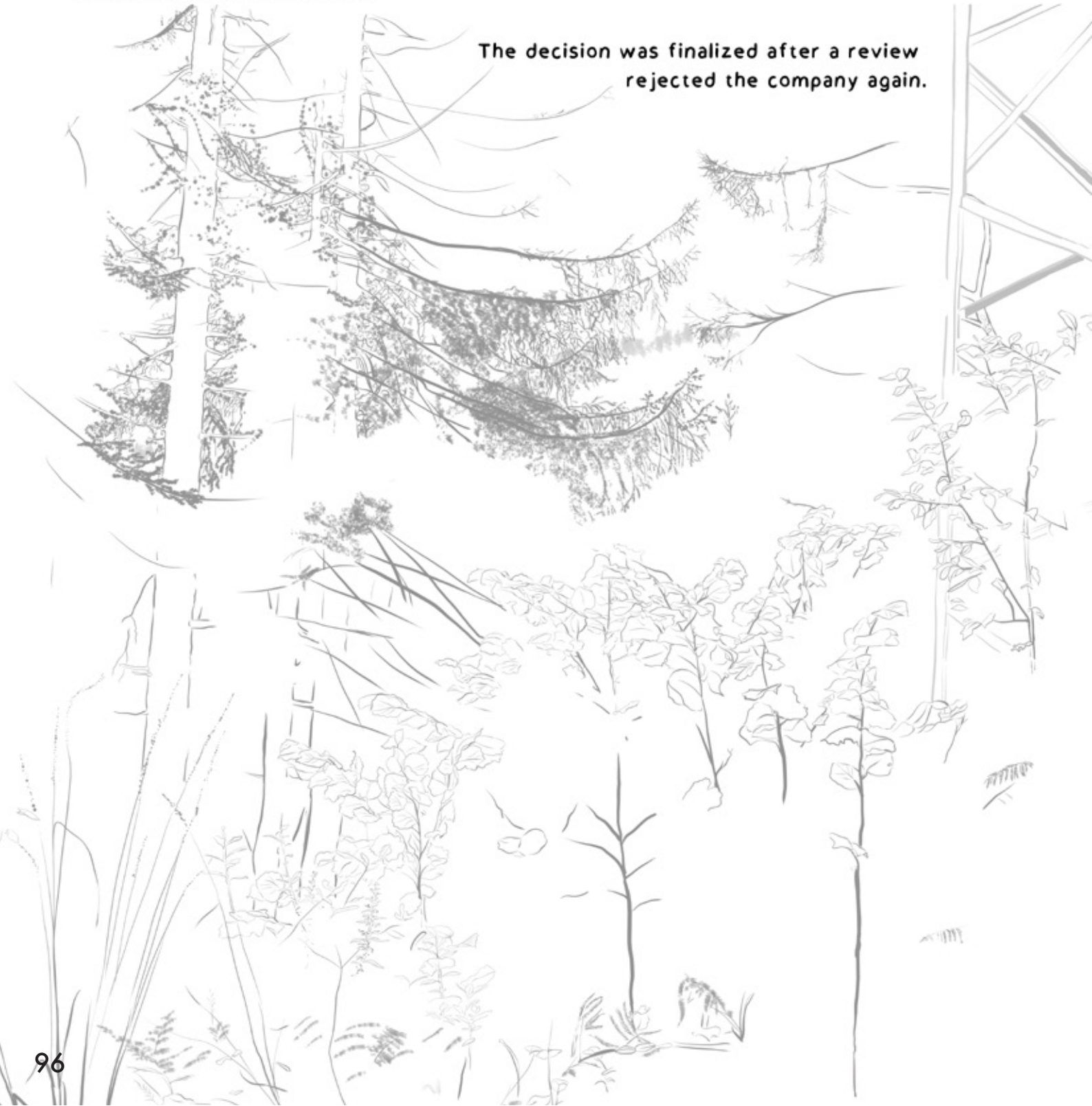
It was the first time we went to court... but not the last.



Towards the end of 2008, Inmet Mining stated: "Occasionally we believed that we could be successful but we have understood that we could not succeed without the support of the people and the politicians".

In the beginning of 2009, the Relevant Department of the Council of State **nullified** the license on the grounds that “the areas with the mining license are within the national park and touristic areas, the mining operation would **not provide** any substantial benefit to the country’s economy, the **unique natural beauties** and the creatures would be harmed, Artvin is essentially on an area where the **risk of landslide is high**, there are active landslide areas, many scientific reports can be found asserting this risk, the mining activities in the area would also have **adverse effects on the flora and fauna**, the activity is within the scope of EIA directive as of the date the license was granted, the licensing was carried out in an **illegal way**, the EIA favorable report was not requested and therefore the operating license and all the licenses should be annulled”.

The decision was finalized after a review rejected the company again.



In 2012 the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources announced that within the scope of the new mining law, it was going to contract out 1344 mining sites in Turkey.

Artvin and Cerateppe were included.



After my husband's death I retired and taught myself to run his pastry shop. It allowed me to continue our environmental struggle and stay independent.

I raised my kids and owe nobody anything!

Actually, the shop functioned more as a social meeting place. I've an ear for everyone.

Do we really need more gold in this world? Even if it'll cost the lives of future generations?

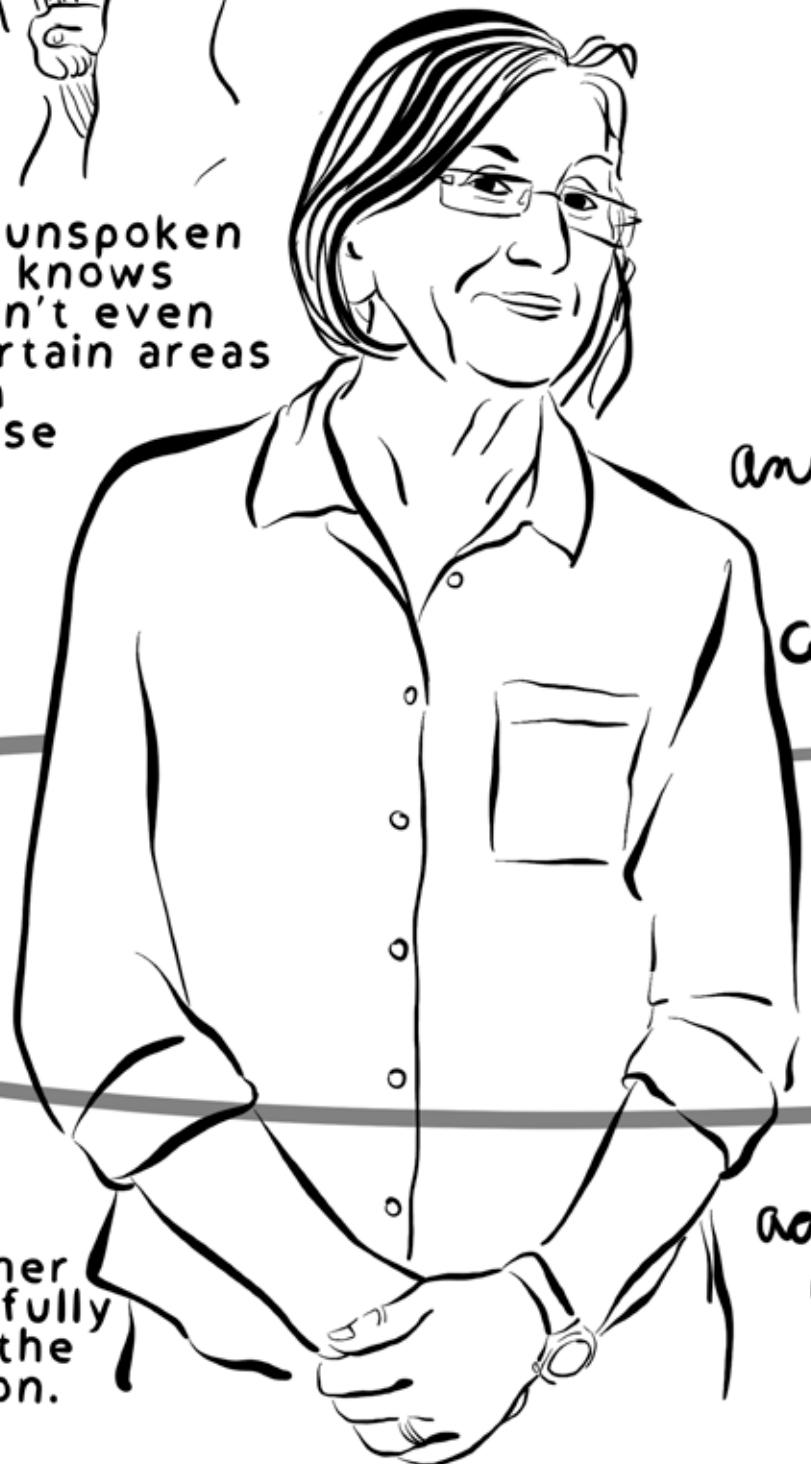


Here in Artvin we have unspoken laws that every villager knows and respects. We wouldn't even let a hen run free in certain areas knowing it'll cause harm to Cerattepe and increase the risks of a landslide.

Everything should be done in regards to the laws to protect nature and life, not in regards to someone's creed.

licensed area

Neşe Karahan gave up her pastry shop in 2016 to fully focus on her work for the Green Artvin Association.



*Arnu
b
Co*

*adv
a*

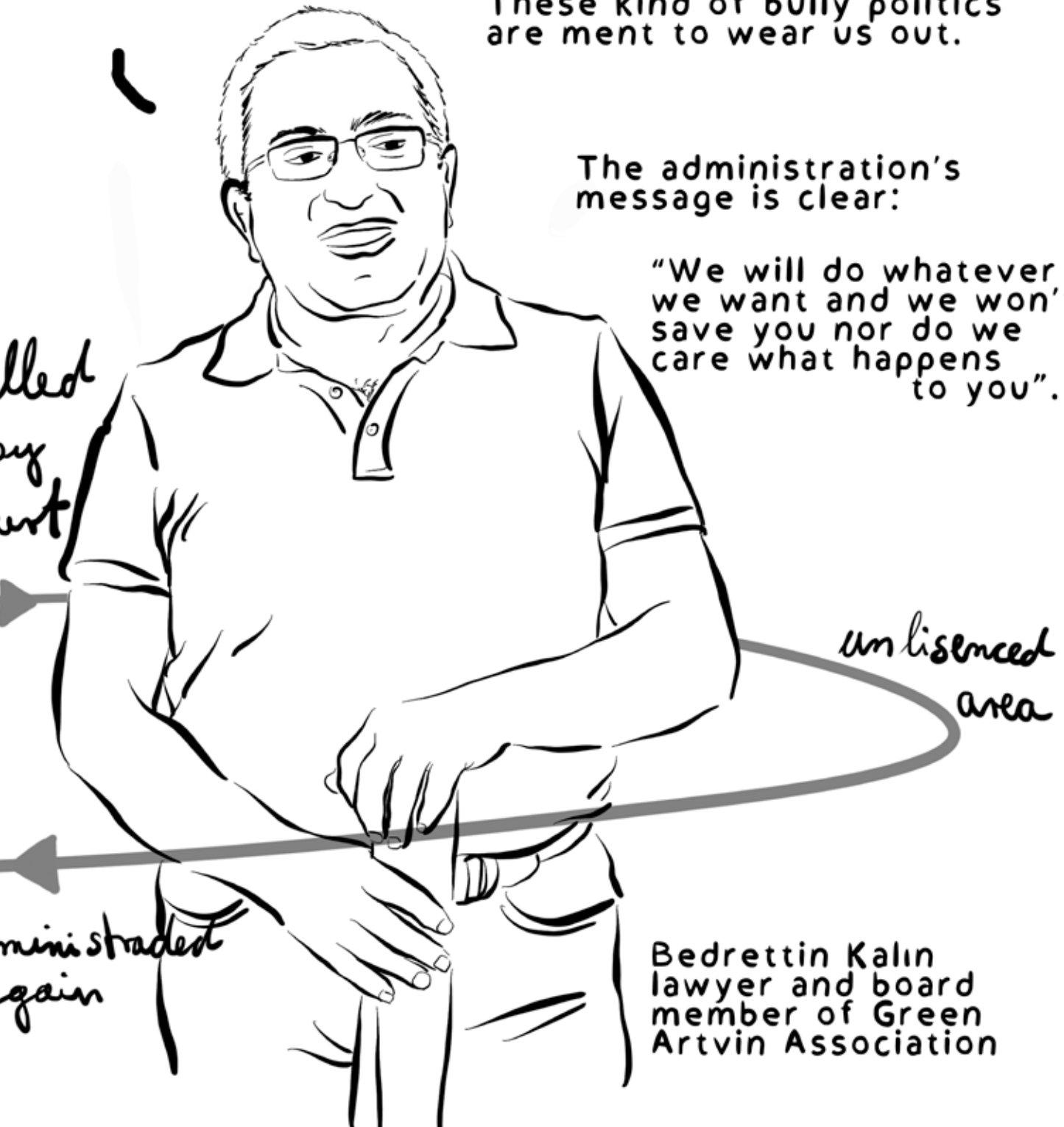
We file a lawsuit and they use the time until the court decision to start the work, pushing through in a hurry. Once the trees are cut for example, the damage we oppose to in that very same lawsuit, is done and the trees are cut in vain.

Squeezed between the threat of landslides or toxic water, they offer us no alternatives to our concerns. Instead we have been ignored, patronized and criminalized.

These kind of bully politics are meant to wear us out.

The administration's message is clear:

"We will do whatever we want and we won't save you nor do we care what happens to you".



Bedrettin Kalin
lawyer and board
member of Green
Artvin Association



In February 2012, all the representatives of the NGOs, including the mayor of Artvin and other regional deputies, went to Ankara to meet with the parliamentary groups and energy ministry to discuss this decision of the Ministry of Energy.

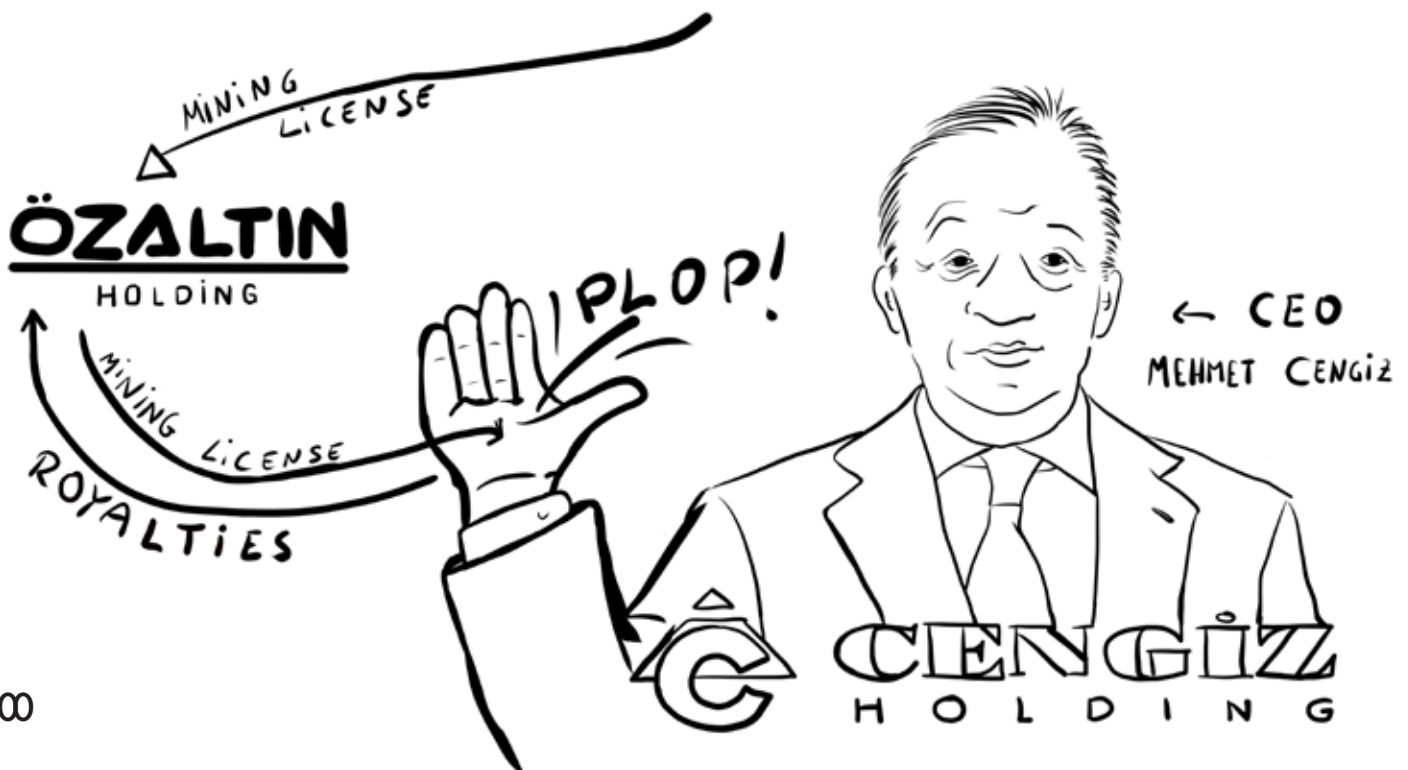
We'll re-examine and check whether the above- or

underground is more valuable!

MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

In the meantime:

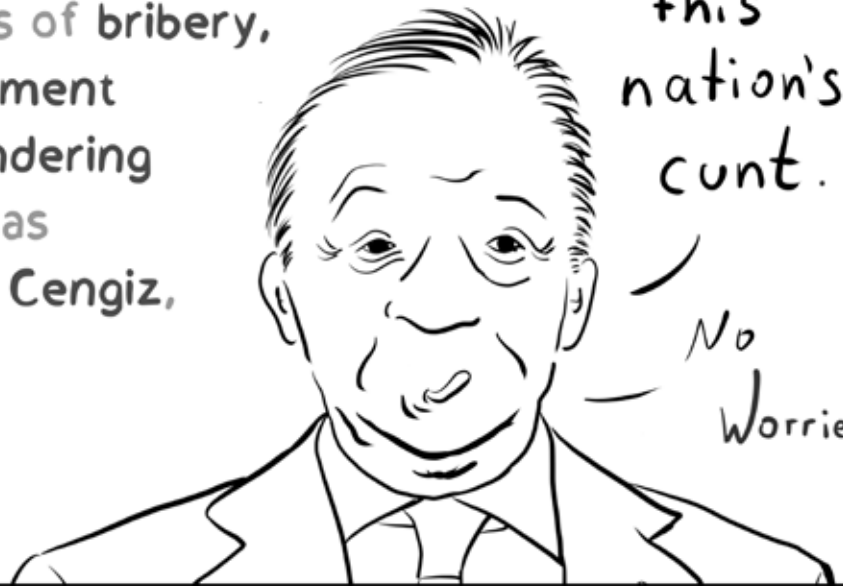
(Here you go)



Among the main suspects of the Dec. 25, 2013 corruption investigation, which implicated a number of high-ranking government officials and their families in alleged acts of bribery, bid-rigging for government contracts, money-laundering and gold smuggling, was businessmen Mehmet Cengiz, who illegally took the Cerettepe contract.

We'll put it into this nation's cunt.

No Worries!



Due to the nationwide publicity and the reactions of the people of Artvin, the company changed the project for the time being. Benefiting from gaps in the regulations of the EIA, the company nonetheless tried to enter Cerattepe many times.



CERATTEPE GEÇİLMEZ
ARTVİN HALKI YENİLMEZ

2014 - Since the court did not grant a motion for stay of execution, we started a 24-hour watch for 15 days at Cerattepe in order to prevent the company carrying out any operations in the field.

This was the first watch.



OY

CANIM

OYY

BİZ ARTVINLİYİZ

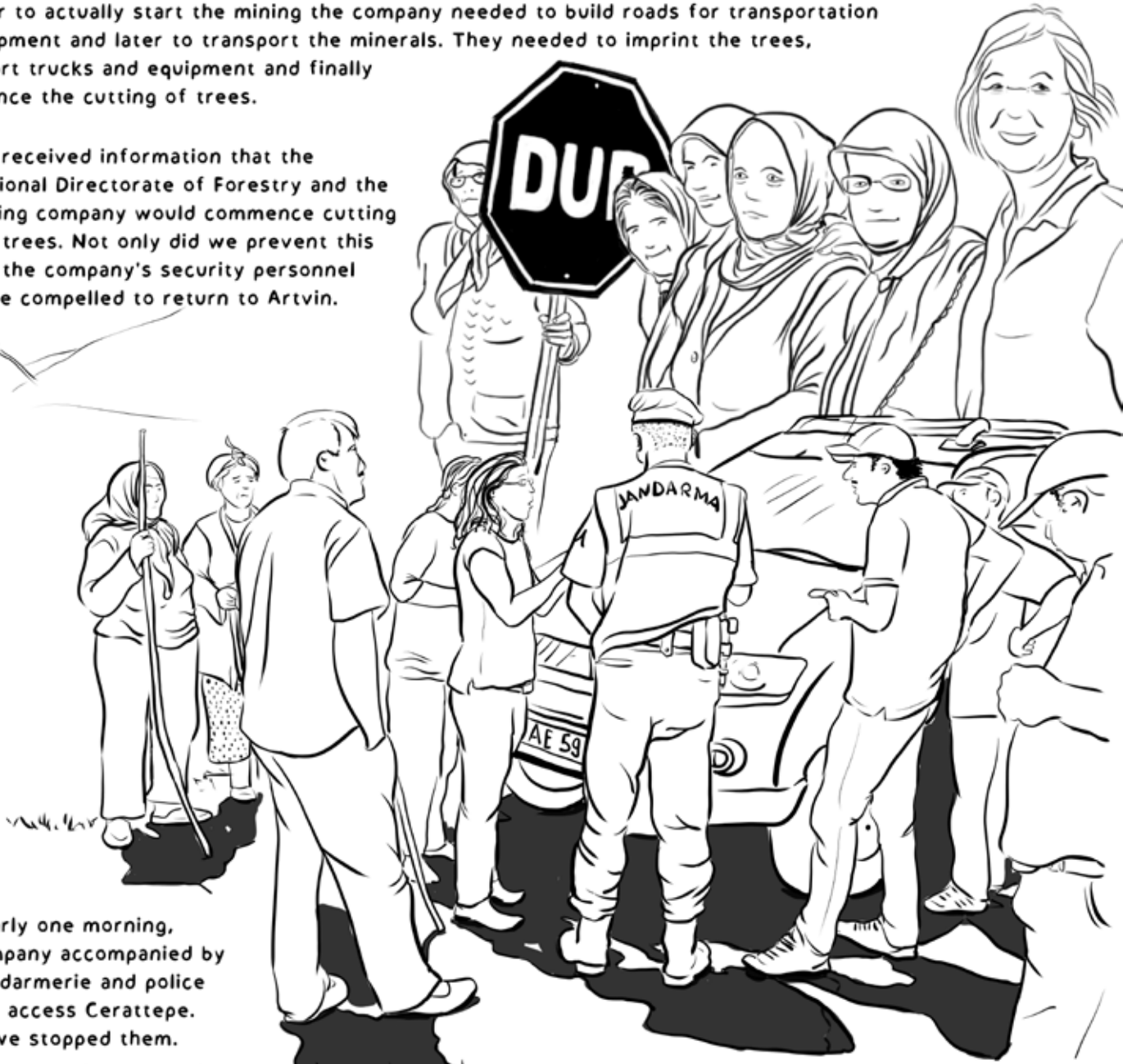
ÖZÜMÜZ
SEVGİ CANIM

SÖZÜMÜZ
SEVGİİİ



In order to actually start the mining the company needed to build roads for transportation of equipment and later to transport the minerals. They needed to imprint the trees, transport trucks and equipment and finally commence the cutting of trees.

We received information that the Regional Directorate of Forestry and the mining company would commence cutting the trees. Not only did we prevent this but the company's security personnel were compelled to return to Artvin.



Very early one morning, the company accompanied by the gendarmerie and police tried to access Cerattepe. Again, we stopped them.

The mining company tried to transport trucks and construction equipment to Cerattepe via another road through the Oruclu village.

They were stopped and had to return.



The Turkey Union of Chambers of Architects and Engineers published its in-depth report stating in the conclusion that all these developments and efforts by the company showed that there was no serious planning by the company, that things change daily and that it is not reliable.

Meanwhile the Rize Administrative Court decided that we were right on the case to annule the EIA favorable report. The EIA positive report was cancelled. This was celebrated with the local folk dances. However, the mining company was able to take the EIA Positive decision for the second time based on a made up circular. The second case was resumed with 751 people for the cancellation of this decision in July 2015. Since the mining company attempted to go up to Cerattepe, without any court decision, we started the watch on 21 June 2015 which was to last 245 days.

In the week the case was opened, a new committee was formed instead of the one which canceled the earlier decision. This committee dragged out the case for 9 months by neither granting a motion for a stay of execution nor taking a decision on detection. Until the events of February 2016.



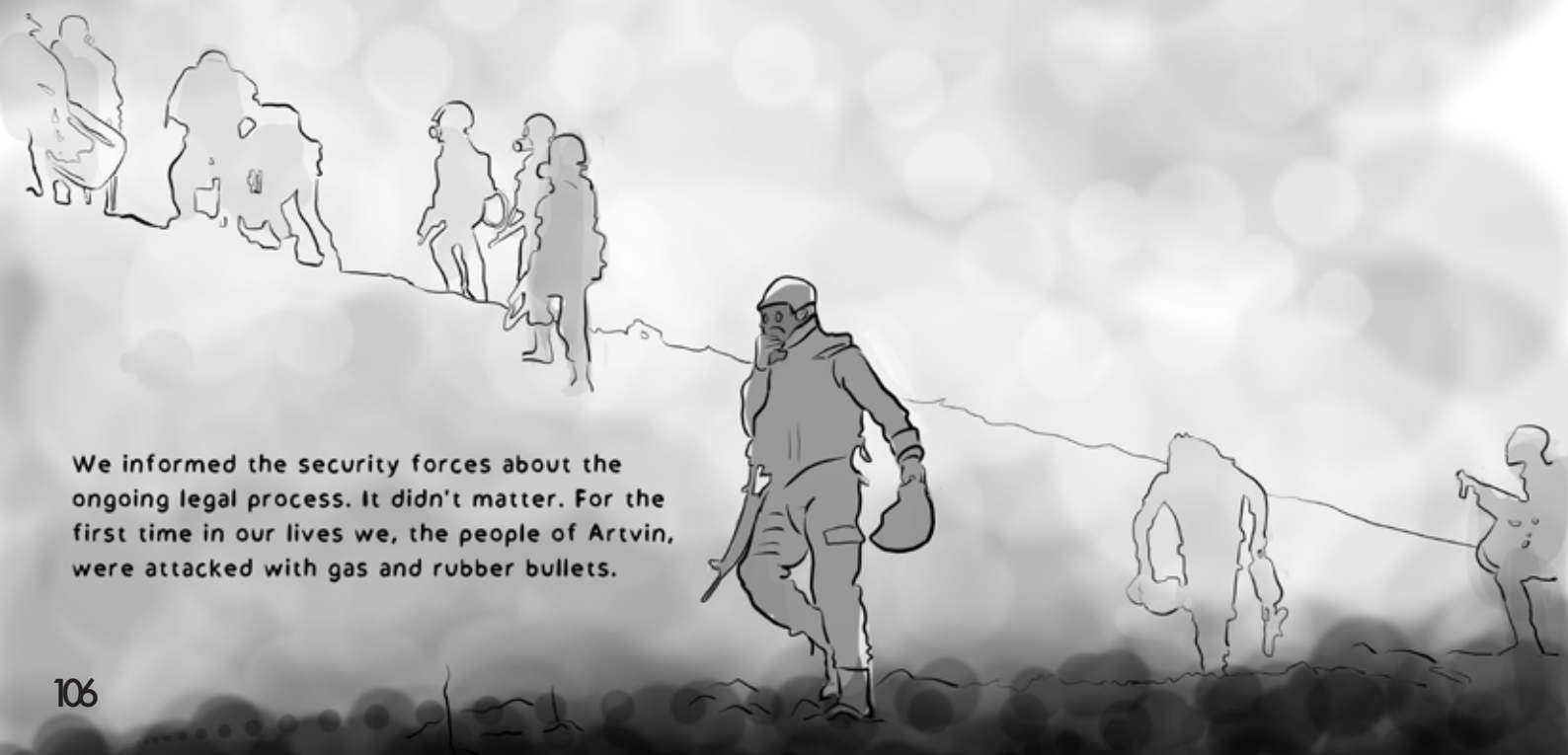
The second watch we started would last for 245 days.

On 15 February 2016, we received news that a large number of security forces were heading to Artvin.

The same night, the people of Artvin gathered at the Atmaca district to prevent the company from reaching Cerattepe illegally.



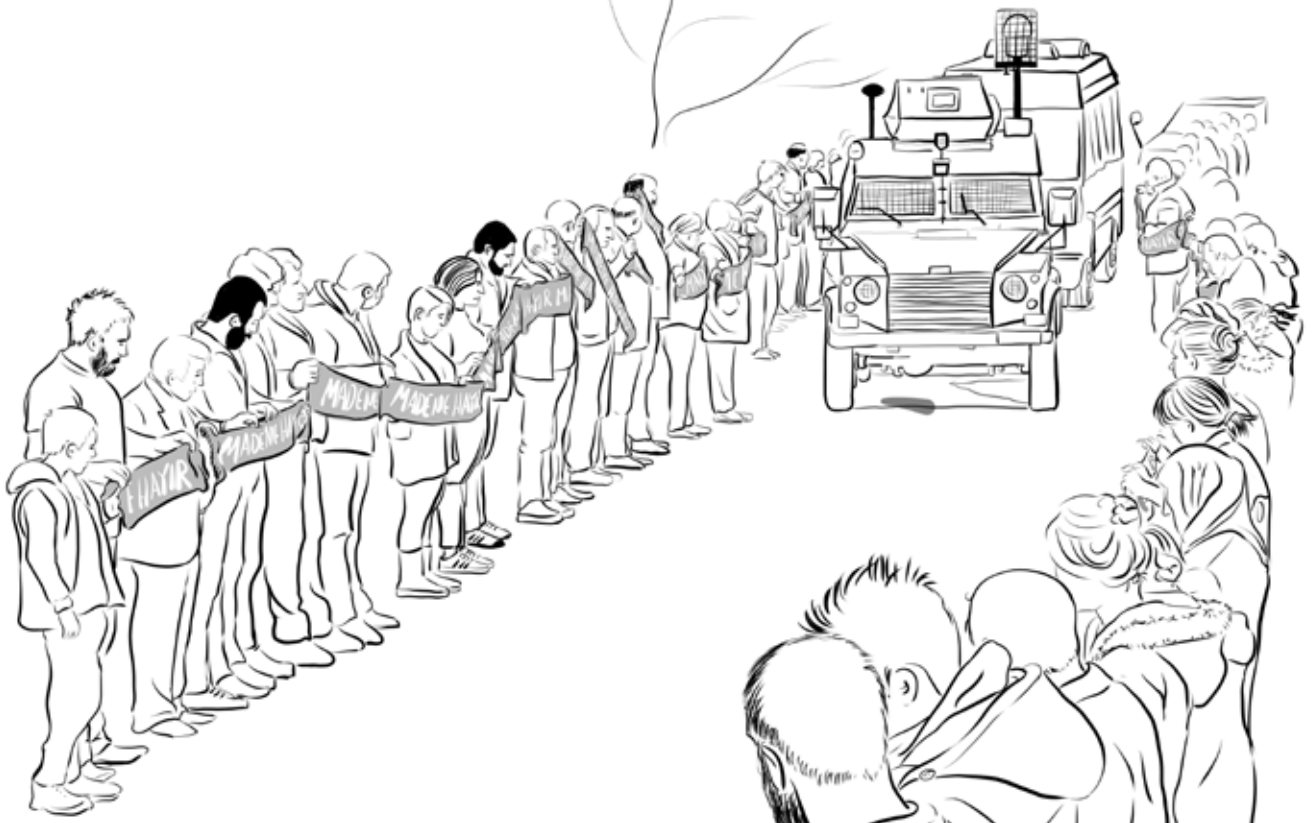
We informed the security forces about the ongoing legal process. It didn't matter. For the first time in our lives we, the people of Artvin, were attacked with gas and rubber bullets.





We resisted the assault and as usual the tradesmen in Artvin closed down their shops and put signs in their windows stating: "This workplace shall be closed as soon as there is an assault on Cerattepe" on their windows. After the clashes lasted two days, the company reached Cerattepe accompanied by the security forces.



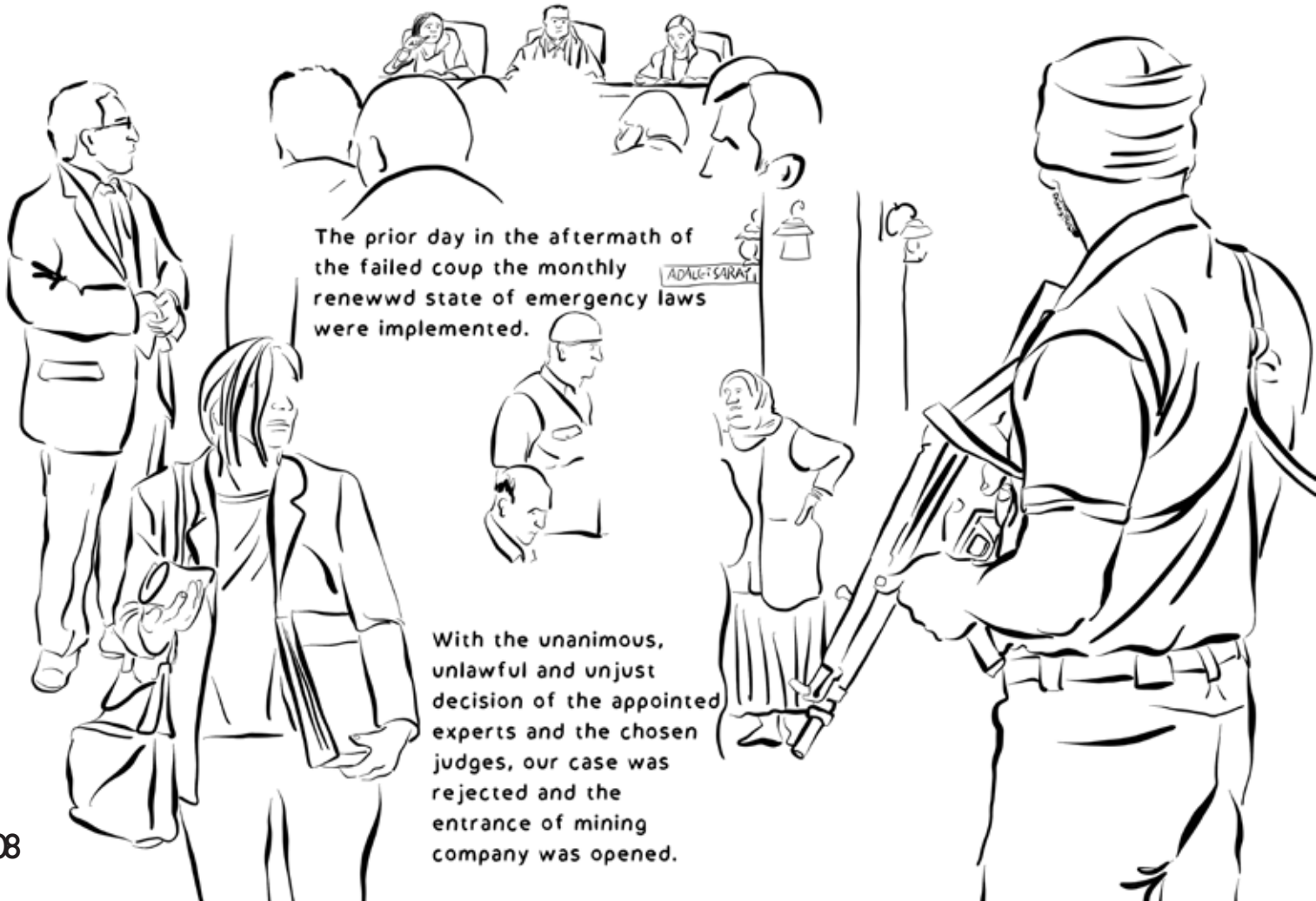


After these events, on March 14th, the court took a decision to gather more information at Cerattepe. The people of Artvin met the discovery committee with great respect and maturity.

ADALET MÜLKÜN TEMELİDİR

Justice is the foundation of property.

This case was held on extraordinary terms on September 19, 2016.



The prior day in the aftermath of the failed coup the monthly renewed state of emergency laws were implemented.

With the unanimous, unlawful and unjust decision of the appointed experts and the chosen judges, our case was rejected and the entrance of mining company was opened.

Feb 2016 - Upon request by Green Artvin Association a meeting was organized with Prime Minister Davutoğlu and the ministers. The association informed the Prime Minister about the legal process and the ecological structure of Cerattepe. The Prime Minister stated that the mining activities would be ceased until the legal process is concluded and he would continue to hold meetings with us until this process is concluded.

CLOSED MINING FORMULA FOR CERATTEPE



UNTRUE

(THERE'S A 2ND ENTRANCE BY NOW) ONE ENTRANCE ONLY

EMPLOYMENT FOR 377 PEOPLE

only about 3500 trees will be cut
(This is the amount for the road expansion work which already has been cut. Ultimately 50,300 trees will be cut)

Municipal Drinking Water Facility

Potential Mining Area 4156 hectare

We don't live in the dark ages anymore!

There is no such thing as "closed mining".



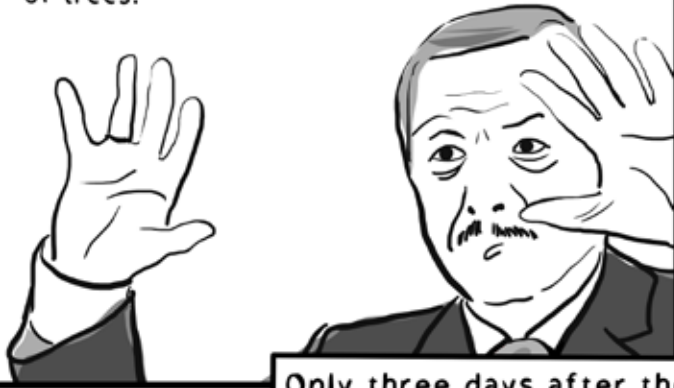
PM Davutoğlu in 2016



Başot

With a wave of protests spilling across Turkey, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu was compelled to take action, but he did not follow Erdoğan's example during the Gezi Park protests. After a two-hour meeting with both sides on Feb. 24, he announced that work at Cerattepe was suspended until an ongoing judicial process on the issue was completed. The move injected some hope to the protest movement and the tensions subsided, pending the court's next exploratory study in the area, set for March 24.

Since 2013 we're witnessing a very well planned provocation in the name of trees.



But it's not about the trees!!



Only three days after the Feb. 24 meeting, however, Erdoğan took the stage, blasting the protest and calling it a junior Gezi.

Don't for once believe this has been planned in Turkey. No, this is an inside and outside operation.

These are the off-springs of Gezi Park!



Just because 4 or 5 trees will be cut.



Given Erdoğan's great clout over both the company and the judiciary, his outburst overshadowed Davutoğlu's conciliatory approach, heralding fresh tensions.

Why doesn't the government want to understand? A whole city is resisting with their elderly, their youth, their women and men. Why are their concerns refused to be heard? We all know about Mehmet Cengiz, a party tied businessman who in the past insulted the people of this nation! Which still angers me a lot! You claim to be a social state, so why won't you listen!



But now we know what their true intentions are!

We have no knives nor weapons - yet, they branded us 'terrorists'!

Have they no decency?!



All we want is to protect our nature!

You say our actions are illegal, but protecting THEM is legal!??



The nation's police has become Cengiz henchmen!



SHAME ON YOU!

We want to protect OUR Artvin!



We the people of Artvin want to go to Cerattepe!

We want to see if any of the trees have been cut.

You have NO right to deny us this!



From this day on the police who refuse to protect the people are responsible for their actions!



We prayed for your safety because you are OUR police and soldiers and you thanked us by pepper spraying us!



Whoever you are up there come down and talk to US! You forced me to swallow SO2-gas and I STILL say: NO TO MINING! I dare you, if you're a man you come down and talk to us!



WHY DO YOU LAUGH



People came from Artvin and other areas came in support. At the emergency entrance to the state hospital, police used tear gas and plastic bullets, injuring many.

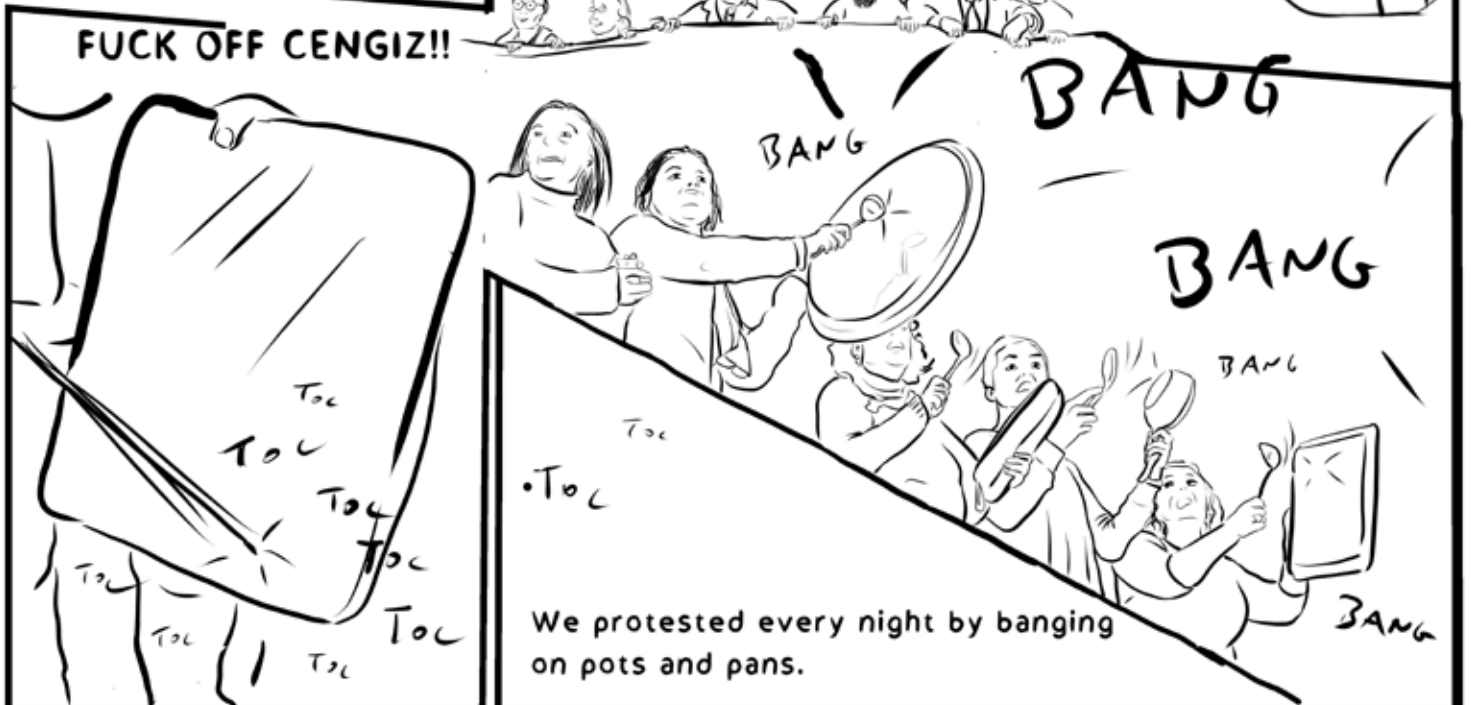


The people dispersed and organized a sit-in in front of the governor's office.

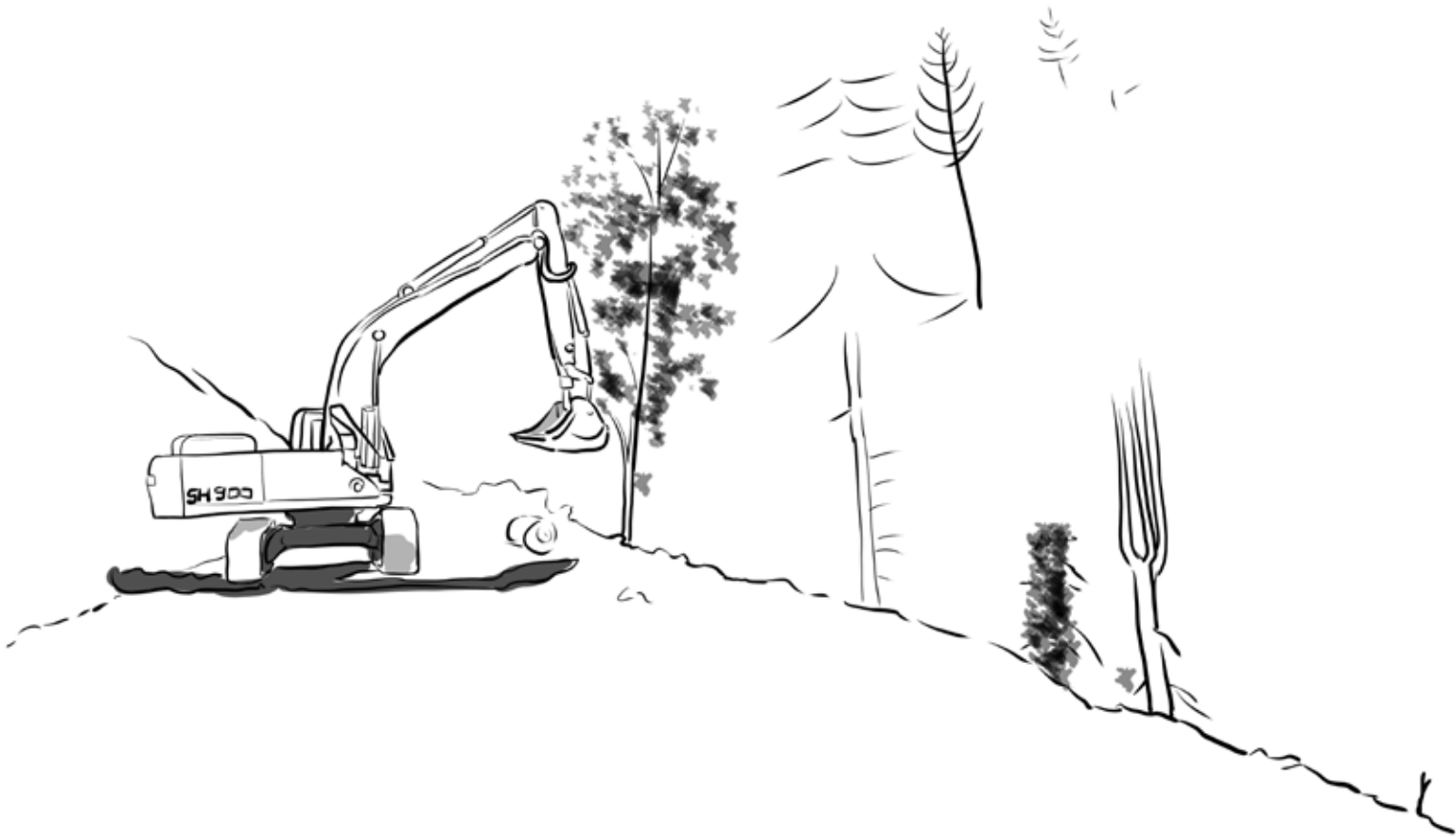


and filed a criminal complaint against the Artvin Governor, Police Commissioner and Gendarmerie Regional Commander for use of excessive force and allowing the company to access the area in an illegal way.

FUCK OFF CENGİZ!!



We protested every night by banging on pots and pans.

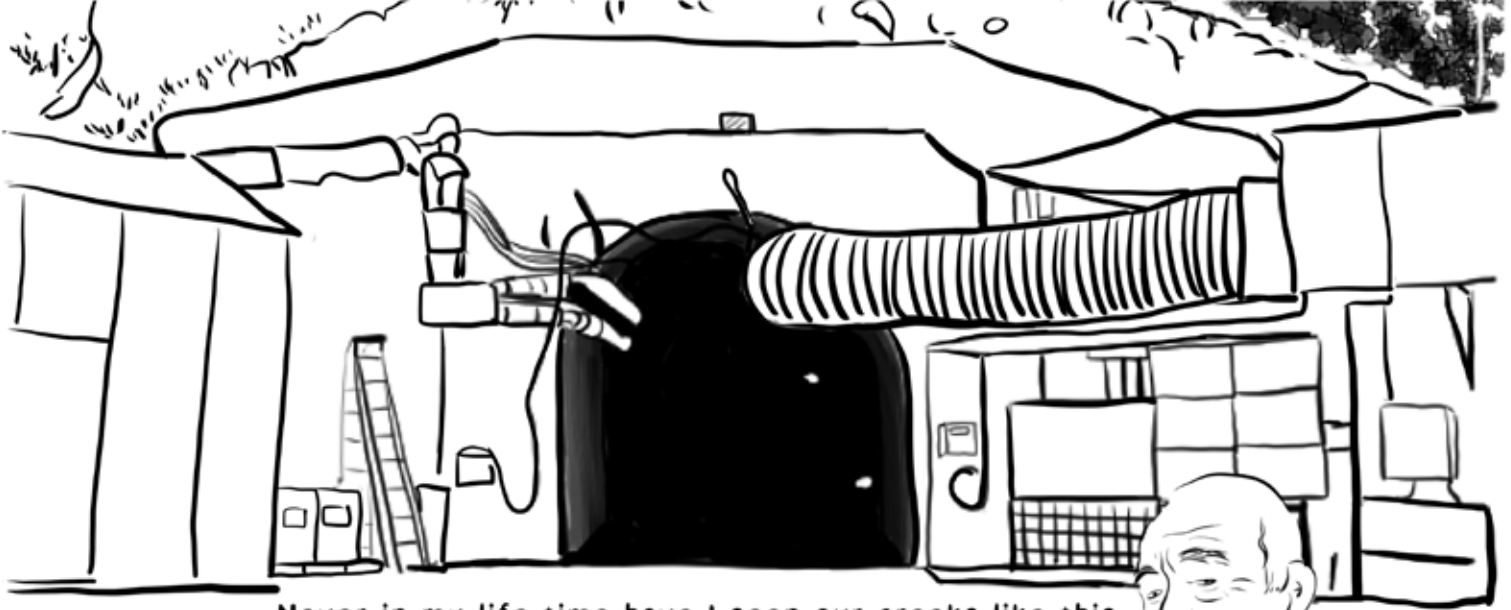


Not only did the Council of State, Turkey's highest administrative court, rule in favor of the mining company, contradicting its decision in 2013, but it also extended the mining area from its 250 hectare to 4156 hectare and allowed the mining company to pursue any kind of future mining activities.

Meanwhile, hundreds of human rights defenders have been prosecuted for harming the forest during the 245 days and nights when they, in the rain, snow and cold, were guarding the forests against harm.

One of the many lawsuits filed against us was for damaging the forrest during our watch.

Currently we live under emergency laws in Turkey. Every walk, press release, declaration, poster, banner, sit-in are prohibited. Employees in public institutions are threatened not to participate in these actions. Due to this heavy pressure it's hard to execute our democratic rights and duties. Yet we're the keeper of these mountains. To protect our nature is our life.



Never in my life time have I seen our creeks like this.
The water smells .. no bee will survive this.
Nor will we.



↻ Oğuz Kurdoğlu Retweeted



özer akdemir @ozar_akdemir · Jun 26
The mine began to contaminate Cerratepe !
Green Artvin Association took a water sample
of mud and oil flowing streams
<content://media/external/file/154560>

All the excavations and chemical waste generated during the construction of the road for the second tunnel turned our clean water sources into a polluted sludge and oil.



"In the long term, if the region's eco-tourism potential is realized, both the likelihood of mining operations will decrease and more people will benefit from the beauty of the region. Of course, it will also provide better income to the local people."

The right to live!
1995



Find us online



frontlinedefenders.org/cypher

