

# Newly elected Honduras government to ban open-pit mining

It is not yet clear if the cancellation will apply only to new projects or also to those already operating. For decades, indigenous groups have complained of legal and illegal mining in their ancestral lands. Honduras mines gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc but on Monday the Ministry of Mining described "extractive exploitation" as "harmful to the state of Honduras".

It argued that mining threatened natural resources and public health as well as limiting access to water. The ministry statement also declared "the entire Honduran territory an area free of open-pit mining" and said that it would proceed with "the revision, suspension and cancellation of environmental, licences and concessions".

It also announced that areas of high ecological value would be preserved.

Honduras is not the first country in Central America to place limits on mining. In 2002, Costa Rica banned all new open-pit mining projects and El Salvador banned mining for metals in 2017. Environmental and indigenous activists in Honduras have for decades been warning of the damage caused to nature and communities by large-scale mining. President Xiomara Castro included a promise to limit mining in her election manifesto.