

## Group urges Asia Cement to negotiate with locals

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An environmental group yesterday called on Asia Cement Corp to negotiate with Truku people living near its quarry in Hualien County's Sinchengshan (新成山) as required by a recent court ruling, rather than posting advertisements to spread rumors.

The Taipei High Administrative Court on Thursday last week asked the Ministry of Economic Affairs to revoke its approval of the firm's permit renewal for the mine, after four Truku people filed a lawsuit against the ministry in 2017.

The firm failed to obtain the consent of the Truku before having its mining permit extended for another 20 years, as required by Article 21 of the Indigenous Peoples Basic Act (原住民族基本法), the court said.

Civic groups hailed the ruling as a landmark victory for upholding transitional justice of Aborigines, while Asia Cement said it would appeal.

The firm's corporate union based in Hualien yesterday took out large advertisements in several Chinese-language newspapers protesting the ruling and posted them on the company Web site.

The firm applied for the permit extension in line with the Mining Act (礦業法) and the conclusion reached in an Executive Yuan meeting on Nov. 7, 2016, the union said.

The court's decision might "seriously affect" industrial operations, labor rights as well as the government's credibility for boosting the economy, it said.

Always attending to the safety and rights of Aborigines, the firm would continue communicating with Aboriginal communities and offer them more jobs, feedback and development, it added.

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Accusing the union of spreading rumors, Citizen of the Earth, Taiwan urged the company to stop menacing the government and the public, and sowing division among Truku with varied opinions.

If the firm really cares for local people, it should negotiate with them as required by the ruling, the group said, adding that no one has the right to choose which law to follow.

A legally operated business would never instigate its union to break the law under the pretext that they need jobs, it said.

The group also cited a Control Yuan report published on Oct. 13, 2017, which corrected the ministry's failure to note the mine's precarious environmental and cultural conditions, and the Executive Yuan's dereliction of duties to act according to law.

The government should not squander more public funds and judiciary resources defending a single company, it said, while asking authorities to amend the outdated Mining Act to close potential loopholes.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2019/07/18](#)