

PRESS CONFERENCE of INTERNATIONAL ACTIVISTS AGAINST LITHIUM MINING

Belgrade - June 8 - 12pm - Prostor Miljenko Dereta, Dobračina 55, Beograd 11000

SIGNING OF THE JADAR DECLARATION OF SOLIDARITY

Gornje Nedeljice and Dobrinje - July 9 and 10

Activists from Chile, Bolivia, Portugal, Spain and Germany are gathering this week in Belgrade, Serbia to sign a declaration of solidarity against lithium mining. They will travel to the Jadar Valley for the signing, the location under threat from Rio Tinto's planned lithium mining project.

In 2021 Serbia, a [wave of national protests](#) against Rio Tinto's proposed lithium mining project swept across the country and exposed not just the dangers of lithium and borate extraction, but also the limits of the so-called "Green Transition." What's more, the blockades came close to toppling the Serbian government, and the only thing which prevented an overthrow was the government's own [cancellation](#) of Rio Tinto's project.

This presents one of the first successful examples of mass mobilizations against lithium extraction in Europe, by which the stepping stone was laid for future developments. Mining companies have every intent to return to the region. Rio Tinto [just announced](#) that they will try to resurrect their proposed project "now that elections are out of the way," which puts into question their ethical boundaries around the democratic rights of the Serbian people. Other anglo and commonwealth companies [have arrived as well](#). Excavation machines and land-grabbing have become increasingly prevalent. Very little international cooperation has taken place on the issues of lithium extraction. Public awareness of its dangers has been greenwashed by the marketing of its role in the energy transition. We feel that it is a great moment for establishing links between similar struggles in other areas of Europe and the world.

To that end, Serbian NGO [ECO Societal action](#) and the campaign against Rio Tinto, [Marš sa Drine](#) - a network of over 20 organizations united for the protection of Serbia's fertile lands - have invited organizations with similar struggles to meet. Our aim is to establish a network that will share information and act simultaneously when the environment of any single one of us is threatened. Given that the problem of extraction is local in one respect but international in another, so too must be its solutions. If globalization is going to interfere with our health, food, water and air, then we too will globalize our plight for preservation of the same. This is a way of strengthening solidarity between peripheral nations and exploited areas in core capitalist countries. We don't only have a common adversary in multinational mining corporations. We share a commitment to preserve the environments which we are part of and to protect the most precious resources of the future; our food, water, air and soil. We insist on a truly just transition away from extractivism, overproduction, over consumption and the exploitation that the profit system is built on.

In order to do this, we will make an official commitment by signing a declaration in the Jadar valley - right in the heart of where Rio Tinto is planning its dirty mining project. Together with organizations from Portugal, Chile, UK, Germany, Spain, and other countries hit by lithium mining in the name of the "green transition" we will be making our commitment of solidarity official by becoming signatories of the "Jadar declaration."

We are organizing a set of international meetings that aim at knowledge exchange. We will share experiences from those meetings and next steps on July 8th in an open press conference in Belgrade, Serbia with activists from Spain, Portugal, Chile, Croatia and Bosnia. On the 9th and 10th of July, organizations will travel to the Village of Gornje Nedeljice and then Dobrinje to sign the "Jadar declaration" of international solidarity against lithium mining¹.

¹ Contact Aleksandar Matkovic - salematkovic@gmail.com +381 62 1037677

Bojana Novakovic - bojana@marssadrine.org +3102271805