

Source : <https://www.sortirdunucleaire.org/Areva-Nunavut-petition-EN>

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Since 2008, Areva has been trying to build a uranium mining complex near Baker Lake, a small town in Nunavut, the Canadian Arctic territory inhabited primarily by Inuit. Today, the French network "Sortir du nucléaire", which gathers 930 collectives and 59,000 individuals, delivers a petition signed by 30,000 and a letter to the French Ministries of Environment, Development, Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade to ask them to forbid Areva's mining project.

Areva's mining project : a threat to Inuit land !

The French antinuclear network "Sortir du nucléaire" launched a petition in June 2013 which now has 30,000 signatures opposing this project.

Areva's mine threatens an ecosystem which has already been weakened by climate change, as well as the Inuit way of life, which relies strongly on caribou hunting. If Areva's mine is built, it will provide the infrastructure and incentive for further uranium mining and exploration in the area. The town of Baker Lake is literally surrounded by uranium deposits, some of which are in important caribou habitat. Right now, there is no legislation in Nunavut protecting important caribou habitat, such as calving grounds and migration routes. However, Areva's project is being assessed by a regulatory board that does not consider induced development in its decisions. Without political intervention, this project will likely be approved, opening the door for massive uranium development in important caribou habitat.

Many residents of Baker Lake, including the Mayor, the President of the Hunters and Trappers Organization, and members of Nunavummiut Makitagunarningit ('Makita', a Nunavut-based environmental organization) have called for a public vote on Areva's proposed mine. However, the Government of Nunavut and the Inuit Organizations have not held a public vote, and have given no

indication that they intend to do so.

In April 2013, Makita made a submission to the study on extractive and energy industries in and near indigenous territories being conducted by the United Nation's Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, arguing that because no vote has been held, the Inuit people as a whole had not yet given their free prior and informed consent on the issue of uranium mining in the area.

Areva's doubtful practices and false promises

Areva also organises community meetings to promote the mining project, giving away T-shirts and laptops to participants and luring them in with false promises of development. No information is given about the environmental impacts of uranium mining and the waste it will produce, Areva falsely denies that the uranium can be used to make bombs and keeps falsely claiming that uranium mining will help fighting climate change [1]

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Areva and uranium mining : a long record of deadly legacies

There is no such thing as "clean" uranium mining and Areva has already left behind a well-documented deadly legacy in many countries. In Gabon, in spite of "rehabilitation", the former Mounana mine is still polluting the region [2]. In the North of Niger, Areva is responsible for the pollution of soils and rivers, the depletion of non-renewable fossil groundwater aquifers and has abandoned tons of radioactive scraps [3]. In spite of its huge uranium resources, Niger is still one of the poorest countries in the world. Even in France, tailings and radioactive sludge were often abandoned in open countryside and still pollute water resources [4]. Nunavut should be kept free of this deadly pollution.

The French antinuclear network "Sortir du nucléaire" supports Nunavummiut Makitagunarningit and asks the French ministers of Environment, Development, Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade to force Areva to give up its mining project in Nunavut. Moreover, "Sortir du nucléaire" urges France to respects its international commitments on human rights and in particular the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The association requested a meeting with the ministries.

See the petition online :

<https://www.sortirdunucleaire.org/Petition-Nunavut-en>

See the letter sent today to the Ministers of Environment, Development, Foreign Trade and Foreign Affairs :

<https://groupes.sortirdunucleaire.org/IMG/pdf/Lettre-Nunavut-en.pdf>

More information about Makita :

<https://makitanunavut.wordpress.com/>

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Notes

[1] For more information about why nuclear power is no solution to climate change :

<https://www.nukefreefuture.com/nuclear-power-no-solution-to-climate-change/>
<https://www.nirs.org/climate/background/hansenletter1614.pdf>

[2] <https://www.wise-uranium.org/udmoun.html>

[3] <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/publications/reports/Left-in-the-dust/>

[4] <https://www.criirad.org/actualites/uraniumfrance/somuraniumfrance1.html>