

WITNESS STATEMENT OF JUAN ANTONIO ROMO

I. General Dates

1. My name is Juan Antonio Romo Hernández. I was born on February 6th, in 1959. I am a seasonal worker and I also work as a mechanic. I have lived for 34 years at El Entronque of Matehuala (El Entronque), where my family manages a restaurant called CHICANOS and also a tire repair shop. This has been my permanent residence during the last years. Only once I went to work in the USA, this was last year, and I spent three and a half months there.

II. The Landfill from 1990 – 1991

2. When I found out about the hazardous waste deposited at La Pedrera, I was opposed to the landfill. The site is about 7 km away (directly) from El Entronque. What I have never understood is why they need to deposit the waste from other places here. When later on, I realised that they left the barrels out in the open and that a heavy rainfall had taken away some hazardous waste that had been inadequately buried directly to El Huizache, contaminating the water reservoir, my opposition strengthened even more.
3. Here in El Entronque we have organised ourselves from that time on, co-ordinating ourselves with some surrounding rancherías.
4. I was one of the persons who blockaded the road to the landfill on September 24, 1991. This was at the time, that the landfill belonged to the Aldretts from SLP. We stopped 14 trucks inside the landfill and demanded that they take the waste back to the places where it had been produced. We had no success with our demand.

III. The Reopening of the landfill

5. In 1993, the American Company of Metalclad bought the landfill. I was only demanding remediation of the place from the waste that the former owners had deposited there. Some years had passed by without anything happening. I was not very trustful that things would change with the new owners.
6. Because of this I continued in my opposition. Once they tried to convince me, that a landfill for hazardous waste is nothing dangerous. I asked them, if the waste was not dangerous, why was it being brought to this place? After this occasion, I had no direct contact with the representatives of the company.
7. On March 10, 1995, a neighbour at El Entronque warned me, and told me, that he had seen some luxurious buses going in the direction of the landfill, along with some other cars. We notified the other neighbours at El Entronque and surrounding rancherías and we decided to go to the Los Amoles entronque immediately (where the road to the landfill begins) in order to see what was going on. Once there, we realised that they were taking some people from Europe and the USA to visit the place. It seemed to us as if they were showing the visitors

where they would send their waste in the future. We were afraid that now waste from other countries would also be treated and buried at La Pedrera.

IV. The baby

8. The same year, my family and me were affected personally. On October 4th of 1995 my daughter was born with malformations. According to the doctor of the Matehuala hospital she was suffering from "anencefalia" and bifid spine.
9. The thing that scared me the most was that at the same time, three other children were born with the same malformations. I asked the doctor in the hospital if the disease could be a result of the landfill. The doctor did not answer "yes" to my question; rather, he refused to properly document the case.
10. Thus my family and I continued to have doubts. This was the reason for us to take advantage of the visit of the Governor to the town of Guadalcázar on November 27 of 1995 and present our case to him. If they say that the Governor held the baby up in the air and said something against the foreigners, I can declare that this is not true. I showed him my sick daughter and he promised to me help in the hospitals of SLP. That was all.

I provide this statement to assist the Tribunal to have a better understanding of the facts of this claim. I declare that to the best of my recollection and understanding this statement is true. I acknowledge that I can be required to appear before the Tribunal to be cross-examined on my statement. I provide this statement with the promise to tell the truth and in those areas where I have testified on matters that I did not witness directly, I state that the information contained in my witness statement is true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

El Entronque de Matehuala, February 17, 1999

(signed in the original)

The witness identified himself with his election card No. RMHRJN 590 20 81 5 H 100, Folio: 423 15 873 (Registration year: 1991)