Abstract

Given the favorable economic conditions nowadays in the international market of minerals such as coal and gold, their legal and illegal exploitation in Colombia has been increasing significantly. This mining exploitation has started to cause a serious impact on the environment, especially on water resources; for this reason, directions set forth in the legal system in the search for preserving and protecting the natural environment of high environmental impact activities such as mining should be strictly applied by competent mining and environmental authorities. However, a weak structure of both administrative and financial authorities is observed and this has been reflected on a high index in mining exploitation which is not in compliance with minimum environmental or safety standards and this goes against the human rights associated to a reasonable handling and use of natural resources, human right to water, right to enjoy from a healthy environment, right to an ecologic balance, right to a sustainable development, right to food security, and right to conservation of areas of special ecologic importance, among some other rights.

Keywords

Mining; environmental impact, paramo, human rights, illegal mining, environmental pollution, water contamination, natural forests, natural parks.