

Accountability works both ways: Veolia fights back against Global Witness with first defamation case

For months, NGO Global Witness has **relentlessly conducted a campaign of baseless and defamatory attacks against Veolia's** innovative household waste management operation at San Silvestre, Barrancabermeja (Colombia). Their March 2025 report falsely accused Veolia's operation of causing environmental pollution in the Ciénaga San Silvestre wetlands, located 15 kilometers from our site – a calculated move within their wider campaign against proposed reforms of EU duty of care regulations.

Veolia has **rigorously disproved these allegations with comprehensive scientific evidence** that conclusively demonstrates no connection between our operations and the alleged pollution. Despite this evidence being publicly available at www.laverdadensansilvestre.com, Global Witness has consistently ignored our data and never accepted multiple invitations to visit the site for first-hand verification.

In response to this **deliberate campaign of misinformation spanning Colombia and beyond**, Veolia has now taken **decisive legal action by filing, as a first step, a criminal defamation complaint** in the French courts. Veolia is committed to ending this deliberate campaign of misinformation.

Contrary to Global Witness's allegations, **discharging untreated leachate into the San Silvestre wetland waterways is strictly prohibited by Veolia's operational protocols**. The videos provided by Global Witness appear to show an act of sabotage, and Veolia promptly filed a criminal complaint with the local prosecutor, to identify those responsible and prevent further incidents. Despite repeated requests, Global Witness has refused to provide specific information about these videos : neither the date, nor the author, nor the context of these videos have been disclosed to Veolia. The person in the footage cannot be identified.

Rigorous, independent and regular testing campaigns have confirmed the absence of heavy metals in water and sediment samples from many locations (both within the site's perimeter and outside). This is no surprise as the leachate - a byproduct of domestic waste in landfills - is treated within the park and **does not contain detectable amounts of mercury**. This testing included samples taken in March 2025, from the exact same **locations used by the NGOs Global Witness and San Silvestre Green for their testing**, in the presence of the Colombian Environmental Authority.

Global Witness's allegations are not just unsubstantiated, **they are mathematically impossible**. To reach the mercury levels they allege, 115 years' worth of the site's annual leachate production — 4.6 million cubic meters — would need to be deliberately

discharged. Moreover, their own samples, taken in September 2024, show no signs of leachate contamination (e.g. high salinity).

Veolia will continue fighting Global Witness' defamatory campaign, which appears designed to damage the Group's reputation in pursuit of a specific EU regulatory agenda. Veolia is actively engaging with all stakeholders—NGOs, local communities, public authorities, and the media—to ensure a fair and fact-based understanding of the situation.

ABOUT VEOLIA

Veolia group aims to become the benchmark company for ecological transformation. Present on five continents with 215,000 employees, the Group designs and deploys useful, practical solutions for the management of water, waste and energy that are contributing to a radical turnaround of the current situation. Through its three complementary activities, Veolia helps to develop access to resources, to preserve available resources and to renew them. In 2024, the Veolia group provided 111 million inhabitants with drinking water and 98 million with sanitation, produced 42 million megawatt hours of energy and treated 65 million tonnes of waste. Veolia Environnement (Paris Euronext: VIE) achieved consolidated revenue of 44.7 billion euros in 2024. www.veolia.com

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