

18 Hurt In Wildcat Mining Clash

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Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Doctors in Peru say at least 15 wildcat gold miners and three police officers suffered gunshot wounds when police moved to reopen the highway that connects Brazil with the Pacific coast.

Dr. Marcia Calderon at the health clinic in the Madre de Dios state town of Mazuko says it's not clear how many of the wounds suffered Thursday were caused by bullets and how many by shotgun pellets.

The miners have been blocking the interoceanic highway intermittently over the past two weeks to protest an April 19 government deadline for all informal gold mining to halt. The alluvial mining is ravaging Peru's rainforest and poisoning animals and humans with mercury.

The estimated 40,000 wildcat miners are also angry because the government sharply reduced gasoline deliveries, idling their mining machinery.

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