

To: Mr. Porfirio Lobo Sosa, President of Honduras
Abogado Jorge Rivera Avilés, President of the Supreme Court, Honduras
Abogado Luis Alberto Rubí, The Public Ministry of Honduras
Abogada Ana Pineda, Minister of Justice and Human Rights, Honduras
Mrs. Wendy Drukier, Canadian Ambassador to Honduras

We the undersigned are very concerned by the possible criminalization of the defence of the environment and human rights in Honduras. We strongly support the 17 people from the Siria Valley who are facing sentencing regarding the charge of obstructing a forestry project in their community.

As their sentencing hearing approaches on February 11th and 12th 2013, the 17 people charged could face up to several years in jail in Honduras if found guilty.

We believe that they are facing charges for actions that have been described by many as "the defence of life." One community member rightly asks: "how is it possible that the judges could condemn environmental defenders whose only objective is the defence of life and the protection of water?"

Furthermore, we ask that the court consider that even the land on which the forest and river are found have been used and owned by the community for more than a century. The forestry plan is illegal because the true and legitimate owners of the land are the members of the community of El Terrero. Therefore, even though defending the forest and the water should not be considered a crime regardless, in this case, they were doing so on their rightful property.

We respectfully call on you to lift the charges against the 17 charged as their actions in defending the forest and water is also a stated objective of the government of Honduras and other public organizations of Honduras.

Thank you for your attention in this important matter.

Sincerely,