



Her Excellency Beatriz Valle
Ambassador of Honduras

Madam Ambassador,

We in Canada are deeply concerned about **how some of your compatriots who are defending their water sources, forests and territories are being treated**. We are particularly afraid for those seeking to protect the Montaña de Botaderos – Carlos Escaleras National Park and the Guapinol and San Pedro rivers on which they depend for their livelihoods in Tocoa in the Colón Department.

Since 2018, water and environmental defenders from this region have been the victims of smear campaigns, criminalized and arbitrarily detained. Three of them have even been murdered since January 2023. **These people are only peacefully contesting the legality** of the Inversiones Los Pinares iron mine, whose concession to operate in the national park appears to have been granted in an irregular manner.

In solidarity with the defenders in the Guapinol community, the San Pedro sector and their families, we therefore call on the Government of Honduras to:

1. **Strengthen existing protection mechanisms** and ensure their effective implementation so as to guarantee the safety, physical integrity and psychological well-being of all human rights and environmental defenders.
2. **Investigate, arrest and prosecute** everyone involved in the assassination of the three defenders who died in 2023.
3. **Provide full and fair reparations** to the families of three slain human rights defenders and the Guapinol Eight, who were unjustly detained, some for 914 days.
4. **Restore the protected areas** of Carlos Escaleras National Park; compel the mining company to leave; and repair the environmental damage it has caused.
5. **Cancel all mining projects that hold irregularly issued licenses** to address the source of much of the violence suffered by environmental defenders in Guapinol and San Pedro sector, and across Honduras.

The thousands of Canadians who have endorsed this letter are looking forward to the Government of Honduras acting to protect the constitutional rights to life and dignity of Honduran land and environmental defenders.

Yours sincerely,

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Please send all signed letters by **February 25, 2024**.
By mail to:
Development and Peace – Caritas Canada
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Or by email to: action@devp.org