

Blanca Sarahí Izaguirre Lozano
National Commissioner for Human Rights of Honduras (CONADEH)
via email

January 26, 2023

Dear Commissioner:

We write to you today out of grave concern for **Marlon Calles**, an environmental activist from La Paz, who recently was the victim of physical violence and intimidation as a result of his work to protect and defend the forest and natural resources of the area around the El Jilguero mountain.

On January 5, as Marlon Calles went out to buy more minutes for his cell phone on the street near the office where he works, a tractor trailer ran over him. Without serious injuries, Marlon Calles picked himself up off the street and confronted the driver. He recognized the driver as one of the men whom he had prevented from ascending the mountain during several roadblocks that Marlon had set up to protect the mountain from illegal logging. When he asked the trucker what he was doing, the trucker responded that "an accident can happen at any time, and you are in my territory." Wanting to get away, Marlon tried to suggest that the trucker had the wrong man, but the trucker insisted he remembered Marlon Calles' face because he had made him lose money by blocking the road.

This appears to be a deliberate attack on Marlon Calles in retaliation for his blocking the road to protect the forest from being destroyed, and getting the logging company to leave the area about a month ago. Marlon Calles has not been able to determine whether the man driving the truck is the owner of the logging operation or an employee.

We know that this attack on Marlon Calles is just the latest chapter in a string of aggressions. In November of 2019, someone ransacked his car and stole important, sensitive documents relating to an illegal water project. Also, when he was a councilman in Marcala, he was subpoenaed to court; when he presented himself, the judge told him not to criticize the government or speak out about logging concessions. Marlon Calles retorted that he would continue speaking out about what is wrong.

We strongly urge you to:

- investigate the identity (and connection to the local logging company) of the truck driver who hit Marlon Calles, and hold him accountable
- take the necessary measures to guarantee the safety of Marlon Calles and all environmental activists so they can carry out their important work in defense of natural resources
- investigate and hold accountable illegal logging operations not only in La Paz but in all Honduran forests and stop them from clearcutting.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Co-Coordinator



Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Javier Efraín Bú Soto, Ambassador of Honduras in Washington, DC c/o Alejandra Sandoval Taixes ~ via email and US mail
Carlos Pulido, Rapporteur for Honduras, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) ~ via email and US mail
Isabel Albaladejo Escribano, Representative to Honduras of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OACNUDH) ~ via email
Alice Shackelford, UN Resident Coordinator in Honduras, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email
US Embassy in Honduras: Ambassador Laura F. Dogu and Human Rights Officer ~ via email
US State Department: Bryan Schell, Honduras Desk Officer ~ via email
US Senators Brown & Vance and US Representatives Balderson, Beatty, Brown, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Sykes ~ via email

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The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: