

## **Joint letter: Mexico – Detention of environmental and human rights defender Mr. Marco Antonio Suástegui Muñoz**

The 57 organizations and persons signatory to this letter, which work for the protection of human rights and the environment, address you in order to express our deep concern at the detention of **Mr. Marco Antonio Suástegui**, leader of the **Consejo de Ejidos y Comunidades Opositores a la Presa La Parota** – CECOP (Council of Communal Lands and Communities Opposing the La Parota Dam), on 17 June by members of the Ministerial Police of the Attorney General of Justice of Guerrero State.

According to the information received, Mr. Suástegui was detained by members of the Ministerial Police by means of violence and threats, and transferred twice, apparently in violation of due process. Additionally, our organizations have been made aware of strong indications of violations of the rights of Mr. Suástegui, such as his having been severely beaten. For these reasons, we request that urgent measures be taken to secure his integrity, his right to a defence, and that the State refrain from harassing those who dedicate themselves to legitimate activities in the defence of human rights and the environment.

The detention directly affects the work undertaken by Mr. Marco Antonio Suástegui in the defence of human rights and environmental issues. In that regard, the Mexican State has the obligation to respect and guarantee human rights and to protect human rights defenders<sup>1</sup>, especially those who are at particular risk<sup>2</sup>, such as environmental rights defenders. International human rights bodies, including the Special Rapporteurs on freedom of expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations, have recognized the context of threats and harassments that exists for those who defend human rights in Mexico, including environmental rights, calling on the State to guarantee the rights of these persons and their free exercise<sup>3</sup>.

Accordingly, the signatories below call upon the Mexican State to take effective and urgent measures to guarantee the human rights of Mr. Suástegui and the important work that the human rights defender performs in defence of the Papagayo River. In particular, we consider it fundamental that the State:

- Take measures to ensure that the competent authorities guarantee the right to a defence and due process of Mr. Marco Antonio Suástegui, and reverse any action taken in the detention procedure and past transfers that tainted by illegalities,
- Take measures to guarantee his physical and psychological integrity, and
- Take all necessary measures to secure the work for the defence of human rights and the environment undertaken by Marco Antonio Suástegui, and take an active role in avoiding any act that hinders the actions taken to defend the Papagayo River.

Yours sincerely,

### **INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS:**

Front Line Defenders

**REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS:**

Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA)  
Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional (CEJIL)  
Equipo Regional de Monitoreo y Análisis de Derechos Humanos en Centroamérica  
JASS, Asociadas por lo Justo  
Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo (PIDHDD)

**ARGENTINA:**

Fundación para el Desarrollo de Políticas Sustentables (FUNDEPS)

**BOLIVIA:**

Oficina Jurídica para la Mujer de Cochabamba

**BRAZIL:**

Associação Juízes para a Democracia (AJD/Brasil)

**CANADA:**

Ecojustice

**CHILE:**

Corporacion Humanas  
Fiscalía del Medio Ambiente (FIMA)

**COLOMBIA:**

Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad  
Red Jurídica Amazónica (RAMA)

**COSTA RICA:**

Defensa de Niñas y Niños – Internacional (DNI)  
Iglesia Luterana Costarricense (ILCO)  
Justicia para la Naturaleza

**ECUADOR:**

Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos “Segundo Montes Mozo S.J.” (CSMM)  
Comisión Ecuémica de Derechos Humanos (CEDHU)  
Corporación de Gestión y Derecho Ambiental ECOLEX

**EL SALVADOR:**

Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho (FESPAD)

**UNITED STATES:**

Accountability Counsel  
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)  
Global Rights  
International Rivers  
Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights

**GUATEMALA:**

Fundacion Myrna Mack  
Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo de Guatemala (GAM)  
Instituto de Estudios Comparados en Ciencias Penales de Guatemala (ICCPG)  
Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos (UDEFEFUGUA)

**HOLANDA:**

Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO)

**HONDURAS:**

Centro de Desarrollo Humano (CDH)  
Centro de Investigación y Promoción de Derechos Humanos (CIPRODEH)  
Equipo de Reflexión, Investigación y Comunicación/Radio Progreso

**MEXICO:**

Abogadas y Abogados para la Justicia y los Derechos Humanos  
Asistencia Legal por los Derechos Humanos (ASILEGAL)  
Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, A.C.  
IDEA A.C.

**NICARAGUA:**

Centro Nicaragüense de Derechos Humanos (CENIDH)

**PANAMA:**

Centro de Incidencia Ambiental (CIAM)  
Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos de Panamá (CONADEHUPA)

**PARAGUAY:**

Ágora Espacio Civil

**PERU:**

Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos (APRODEH)  
Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos, red de 81 organizaciones en Perú  
Centro de Derechos y Desarrollo (CEDAL)  
Instituto Internacional de Derecho y Sociedad (IIDS)  
Paz y Esperanza

**URUGUAY:**

GAIA Derecho Ambiental

**VENEZUELA:**

Acción Solidaria en VIH/Sida  
Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Católica Andrés Bello  
CIVILIS Derechos Humanos  
Comité de Familiares de las Víctimas de los sucesos ocurridos entre el 27 de febrero y los primeros días de marzo de 1989 (COFAVIC)

Programa Venezolano de Educación Acción en Derechos Humanos (Provea)  
Sinergia, Asociación Nacional de Organizaciones de Sociedad Civil

**INDIVIDUALS:**

Luz Marina Monzón, Colombia

Gerardo Tallavas, Mexico

Delphine Djiraibe, Chad

C.C. Dr. Raúl Plascencia Villanueva, Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. General Assembly, Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, A/RES/53/144, 8 March 1999, and IACtHR Case *Kawas Fernández Vs. Honduras*. Merits, Reparations, and Costs. Judgment of 3 April 2009 Series C No. 196, para. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. IACHR, Segundo Informe sobre Defensoras y Defensores de derechos humanos en las Américas, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.Doc.66, 31 December 2011, p. 136. The Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on the situation of human rights defenders has found that this group of defenders are those that run greater risk of losing their lives as a result of their human rights activities. Cf. Human Rights Council, Report of Margaret Sekaggya, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, A/HRC/19/55, 21 December 2011, para.71.

<sup>3</sup> OACNUDH México/Freedom House. La libertad de expresión en México, Informes de la Misión de las Relatorías de la ONU y de la CIDH, 2nd ed., Mexico, OACNUDH México/Freedom House, 2012, p. 5, available at <http://bit.ly/1kqJMLM>