

## URGENT ACTION

### VIOLENT EVICTION OF THE ENCAMPMENT FOR LIFE IN GUAPINOL

The Committee of the Families of the Detained and Disappeared in Honduras (COFADEH) informs with urgency that on October 27, 2018, eviction order No.148-2018 was issued for the Encampment for Life in El Guapinol, in the community Ceibita, Tocoa, Colón, which has remained in continual resistance for 88 days to protect their natural resources in the face of the threat of exploitation by the Los Pinares Investments Mining Company<sup>1</sup>.

The eviction was carried out by approximately 1500 members of the Army, Cobras, the National Preventative Police and others who arrived in a violent manner, heavily armed with rifles, shields, clubs and tear gas bombs to confront a defenseless and peaceful population. As a result of this extremely violent action, people fainted, were beaten and wounded; 3 people were detained (then later released) and three people were killed, two of them were members of the Armed Forces of Honduras. A pregnant woman was seriously impacted by the disproportionate use of tear gas.

Social communicators covering the violent action were attacked, their cameras were taken, the information was erased and their personal possessions and documents were retained for a period of time.

On Sunday October 28, 2018 the people of the communities of El Guapinol, tried to peacefully take back the Encampment. They were attacked by a group of paramilitaries; approximately 20 men in civilian clothes, heavily armed, who initiated a fierce persecution of the community leaders of the peaceful protest in the presence of the army and the national police. Several people were injured in the action. Alex Bonilla was seriously wounded and was taken to the Hospital San Isidro in Tocoa, Colón.

This armed group has committed acts of vandalism including burning of the home of Irma Serrano, a well-known leader in area. Currently the whereabouts of Irma and her two daughters is unknown. They also burnt an Inter-Urban transport vehicle that runs between Bonito Oriental and San Pedro Sula, belonging to the Mirna Company which Adán Fúnez, the current Mayor Tocoa, Colón, is part owner.

On the night of October 29, 2018 the community of La Ceibita, experienced hours of fear due to the presence of military operatives and searches carried out in the homes of the

community. Women and children were taken from their homes. Men were taken and detained, with no arrest warrants, as the terrorized community watched with no ability to help them.

As a result of the crisis and instability in the zone, human rights defenders, social leaders, environmental defenders, those who protect the land and territories and community defenders are subjected to campaigns of de-legitimization, hate and persecution; they are followed and criminalized. They include **Esly Banegas**, President of the Coordinator of Popular Organizations of the Aguán (COPA), beneficiary of Protective Measure MC-5014, issued by the IACHR; **Juana Esquivel**, Coordinator of the San Alonso Rodríguez Foundation (FSAR), **Isela Juárez**, President of the Union of Municipal Employees Tocoa and member of COPA; **Irma Serrano and her daughters**, community leader in Ceibita; **Miriam Yaneth Mejía Cruz and Lourdes Elizabeth Gómez Rosas**, community leaders in Guapinol; **Juan López**, Sub coordinator of the San Alonso Rodríguez Foundation (FSAR); **Leonel George**, human rights defender, social communicator, member of human rights networks and member of the Directive Board of the Coordinator of Popular Organizations of the Aguán (COPA), beneficiary of Protective Measure MC-5014, issued by the IACHR and **Eugenio Esquivel**, community leader of Ceibita.

#### PETITION:

In light of the serious crisis facing the Encampment for Life, El Guapinol, we request the following:

- 1.- Urgent Communication with the Government of Honduras to express concern for the militarization of the 14 communities that are part of the Encampment for Life in El Guapinol and the zone in general.
- 2.- Request the state of Honduras to guarantee the freedom, life and right of all peoples and communities to defend and protect their territories and common goods.
- 3.- Order the immediate demilitarization of the zone to protect the physical and psychological integrity of the families and communities affected by the death of their loved ones.
- 4.- Demand the Attorney General of the Republic to cease the use of charges as means of persecution to obtain arrest warrants in the national courts, justifying and legalizing the persecution and death of social leaders.
- 5.- Demand that authorities guarantee the right to defend human rights.

#### COFADEH

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6.- Request the Public Ministry, the Legislative and Judicial powers to review the laws passed in the context the 2009 military coup d'état restricting the rights of people and assigning rights to private companies to carry out extractive projects based on an inexistent legality that dispossess communities and peoples of their territories.

Please direct your communications to:

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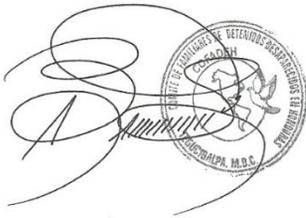
Thank you for also sending copies of your action to:

**COFADEH**

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Tegucigalpa, MDC., October 30, 2018



The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink over a circular official stamp. The stamp contains the text 'COMITÉ DE FAMILIARES DE DETENIDOS DESAPARECIDOS EN HONDURAS' and 'TEGUCIGALPA, M.D.C.' around a central emblem.

**BERTHA OLIVA DE NATIVI**

General Coordinator

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<sup>i</sup> Company located in the nucleus zone of the Carlos Escaleras National Park where the Mame, Monga, Caca, San Pedro Guapinol, Tocoa, Taujica and Río Chiquito originate, supplying 14 communities of the sector.

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