

Hooded, armed men kill indigenous leader in La Paz, Félix Vásquez

December 26, 2020 [defensores](#) -



La Paz, Honduras.- Tonight, four hooded men wearing camouflage and black shirts entered the home of indigenous leader, Félix Vásquez, and killed him.

Félix Vásquez was the General Secretary of the Union of Rural Workers (*Unión de Trabajadores del Campo-UTC*) in the department of La Paz and worked for the Honduraction program, according to his family that lives in the community of Ocotol, municipality of Santiago de Puringla.

The last meeting he participated in was this evening, with Fondo Cafetero. He was committed to social struggle and the defense of nature, land and territory.

Other people, mostly youth and children that depended on Félix Vásquez since his wife died last year, were present when his home of the indigenous leader was raided illegally at 8:30pm on Saturday, December 26th.

Several months ago Félix Vásquez denounced to authorities that he and his family were victims of death threats and that he was concerned about his children.

According to family members, the armed men carried 9 millimeter pistols and machetes. They kicked down the door and fired on 70-year-old Félix Vásquez, and threatened and beat his relatives.

“They put a gun to my head. I asked them to give me time to say my last words to God. They told me to shut up” one survivor told the *Committee of the Families of the Disappeared in Honduras*, COFADEH. Félix Vásquez had decided to run for office as a pre-candidate as an alternate for representative for the LIBRE party because, according to a member of the Network of Defenders of the Human Rights of the Indigenous of La Paz (Redhil-Paz), it is the only way we can defend our rights and common goods of nature which the landowners want to take.

On December 16, Félix Vásquez, supported the protest demanding the release of an indigenous leader from Simpinula, municipality of Santa María, Víctor Vásquez, who is imprisoned for accompanying other indigenous leaders for defending their territory.

[In 2016, Félix Vásquez and Víctor Vásquez](#), coordinator of the Lenca Indigenous Council of Simpinula and leader of the Independent Lenca Indigenous Movement of La Paz- Honduras (MILPAH), registered a series of violations of their rights with COFADEH.



Don Félix Vásquez was an environmental defender, concerned about the takeover of land in natural reserve areas like the “El Jilguero” watershed where the damage impacts over 300 indigenous in the communities of Cerro de Hule, Brisas del Cerro, El Pacayal, Carrizal, Lindedos and La Piedrona.

In 2016 indigenous leaders from La Paz denounced a series of attacks in the region.
Félix Vásquez -right

Ninety percent of the population La Paz, in the center of the country, is Lenca, and therefore protected by the WTO Convention 169 on the rights of indigenous and tribal people; however, in 2015 alone, at least 20 indigenous defenders were killed according to denunciations made by MILPAH at that time and at least 40 megaprojects have been concessioned without prior consultation and consent.

Human Rights Defenders with COFADEH remained with the family and friends of Félix Vásquez, until his body was given to them at 3pm on Sunday, December 27th.