

URGENT ACTION

ECUADORIAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER PABLO FAJARDO STIGMATIZED

On April 26, 2023, in the Ecuadorian National Assembly, the Minister of Energy and Mines of Ecuador accused the lawyer of the Union of People Affected by Texaco (UDAPT), Pablo Fajardo Mendoza, of being an "international criminal" for his defense of human rights, mainly of indigenous peoples and communities, against the impacts of oil company operations in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Contrary to its obligations to provide a safe environment for the defense of human rights, the Ecuadorian State continues to defame and stigmatize human rights defenders, especially those who oppose the impacts of oil industry operations and support climate justice.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Mr Guillermo Lasso
President of Ecuador

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Mr President Lasso,

I am writing you to express my deep concern for the stigmatization to which the lawyer of the Union of People Affected by Texaco (UDAPT), Pablo Fajardo Mendoza, has been subjected by an official of your government due to his work in defense of human rights and climate justice. On January 23, 2023, the Minister of Energy and Mines stated in an interview with the media outlet "La Barra Espaciadora", that Pablo Fajardo's work in defense of the rights of Amazonian communities against the oil industry "has made Ecuador look very bad". On April 26, 2023, the minister also stigmatized Fajardo and his work in front of the Commission of Collective, Community and Intercultural Rights of the Ecuadorian National Assembly, stating that he is an "international criminal".

Stigmatizing statements against human rights defenders can exacerbate hostility and intolerance by various sectors of the population, which can put their lives and integrity at risk. In the case of Pablo Fajardo and members of UDAPT, this has already been an issue in the past.

Therefore, we urge your government to refrain from using expressions that stigmatize, insult or discredit Pablo Fajardo and the members of UDAPT, and to guarantee their safety. We also urge you to guarantee that human rights defenders can carry out their work in a safe environment, and to publicly recognize the extreme importance of those who defend human rights and the environment in Ecuador, and thereby help to combat the current global climate crisis.

Sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Pablo Fajardo Mendoza is an Ecuadorian lawyer and activist. Since 1993 he has been active in legal proceedings against the socio-environmental impacts of oil extraction in Lago Agrio (Sucumbíos, Amazonas). In this context, he has represented indigenous and peasant leaders and more than 33,000 people organized in the Union of People Affected by Texaco (UDAPT). Because of this work, Fajardo has been the target of repeated threats and intimidation. For this reason, in 2005, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued [precautionary measures](#) for Fajardo and his litigation team. He has also been listed as an "individual at risk" by Amazon Watch.

On April 26, 2023, Ecuador's Minister of Energy and Mines [accused defender Pablo Fajardo Mendoza of being an "international criminal"](#) due to his leadership in several judicial processes against international oil corporations operating in the Ecuadorian Amazon. The minister made the accusations during his appearance at the 184th session of the Collective, Community and Intercultural Rights Commission of the Ecuadorian National Assembly. Previously, in an [interview](#) in the media "La Barra Espaciadora" the minister made comments meant to discredit the work of the legal enforceability of human rights carried out by Pablo Fajardo Mendoza.

Pablo Fajardo Mendoza is being stigmatized for his work in defense of Amazonian communities, as well as for all of his legal advocacy work against human rights violations caused by the oil industry in Ecuador, a fundamental aspect of climate justice.

The State must guarantee the protection of Pablo Fajardo and other members of the strategic litigation collective Unión de Afectados por Texaco (UDAPT) and put an end to the stigmatization of their actions in defense of the rights of communities affected by oil extraction.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [14 May 2023]

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Pablo Fajardo (He/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: NA