

URGENT ACTION

TWO WATER DEFENDERS KILLED

Aly Magdalena Domínguez Ramos and Jairo Bonilla Ayala, members of the popular resistance of Guapinol (department of Colón, northern Honduras) against an iron ore mine, were found dead in the community of Guapinol on 7 January 2023. They were intercepted by armed assailants, shot and killed on the spot, according to their relatives. Aly is the brother of Reynaldo Domínguez, and both are among the 32 people criminalized by the mining company Inversiones Los Pinares and the State of Honduras for defending the Carlos Escaleras National Park. We demand the Honduran authorities to ensure a prompt, thorough and impartial investigations, and take immediate steps to fully provide appropriate protection.

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

Mr. Oscar Fernando Chinchilla
Attorney General

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Dear Attorney General,

I am writing to express my concern about the death of human rights defenders Aly Magdalena Domínguez Ramos and Jairo Bonilla Ayala, in the community of Guapinol, municipality of Tocoa, department of Colón, in Honduras, on 7 January 2023, as well as the security situation of their relatives, the community of Guapinol and the Municipal Committee for the Defence of Common and Public Assets (CMDBCP).

The CMDBCP reported that Aly Domínguez and Jairo Bonilla were shot at on January 7, 2023, as they were returning home on a moped, after coming home from work. The people of Guapinol and other communities of Tocoa have faced continued attacks because they peacefully challenge the legality of a mining project in the Carlos Escaleras National Park, including the unjust detention of eight defenders of the Guapinol river, known as the "Guapinol eight", that gained global notoriety and attention.

The authorities responsible for the investigation must respect the right of the human rights defender's families to justice, truth and reparation. According to international human rights standards, authorities must consider the victim's human rights work as a hypothesis for these crimes.

Therefore, I urge you to urgently to conduct a prompt, independent, impartial and exhaustive investigation to identify all responsible for the murders of Aly Domínguez and Jairo Bonilla.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Several communities, campesino groups, parishes and local organizations in the municipality of Tocoa (department of Colón), North of Honduras, led by the Municipal Committee for the Defence of Common and Public Assets (Comité Municipal por la Defensa de los Bienes Comunes y Públicos, CMDBCP) oppose the operating license issued to the mining company Inversiones Los Pinares in the Carlos Escalera National Park, formerly known as Montaña de Botaderos, since 2015.

On 1 August 2018, local residents set up the “Guapinol camp” to peacefully protest against the license and mining exploitation in the core zone of a protected area of the water sources on which they depend for their survival. They have filled several criminal complaints before local Courts, still pending. Members of the CMDBCP have faced at least two criminal proceedings since 2018 for defending the Guapinol and San Pedro Rivers of the impacts mining project. Aly and his brother Reynaldo Dominguez spent some time in prison in 2019 along with other Guapinol River defenders for these proceedings.

The same proceedings led to the [unjust detention of eight defenders of the Guapinol river](#) for more than two years solely for peacefully defending the right to clean water that provoked international outcry. After rigorous analysis, Amnesty International determined that the case file shows multiple flaws in the investigation and declared them prisoners of conscience. Since their release in February 2021, the CMDBCP has denounced attacks against their members, including stigmatization and surveillance. The Committee continues demanding the termination of the mining project.

Over the last five years Amnesty International has alerted on numerous death and other types of attacks against activists in Honduras, which is one of the deadliest countries in the world to be a human rights defender. Despite the seriousness of the attacks on these defenders, Honduras has not yet signed the Escazú Agreement, the first environmental human rights treaty in Latin America and the Caribbean, which obliges signatory states to protect environmental defenders and entered into force on 22 April 2021.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 10 March 2023

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Aly Magdaleno Domínguez Ramos and Jairo Bonilla Ayala
(They/them/their).

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: N/A