

Blanca Saraí Izaguirre Lozano  
National Commissioner for Human Rights (CONADEH)  
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

July 12, 2024

Dear Commissioner Izaguirre Lozano:

We are writing to express deep concern regarding the recent **illegal and illegitimate approval of a thermoelectric plant in Tocoa, Colón Department**, by Mayor Adán Fúnez, in collaboration with the company Inversiones Ecotek. This approval, which took place on June 13, was conducted in La Ceibita without quorum or proper discussion, undermining the democratic process and the will of local communities who have already demonstrated strong opposition to the project. On December 9, 2023, the Committee for the Defense of Common and Public Goods of Tocoa (CMDBCPT) called a popular assembly (cf our letter 27 JAN 2024) at which more than 2,000 local residents flatly rejected projects that are threatening the environment by three companies that have interlocking ownership: Emco Holdings (thermal electric generation), Inversiones Los Pinares (iron oxide mine), and Ecotek (pelletizing plant).

The thermoelectric plant was approved during a town hall meeting (*cabildo abierto*) that excluded environmental defenders and community organizations who have consistently rejected this project due to its detrimental impact on the environment and public health. CMDBCPT contends that it was not a genuinely open and public meeting; it was a display of abuse of power and intimidation, reinforced by the presence of police and military forces in the community the night before. CMDBCPT filed a *Recurso de Amparo* asking the Supreme Court of Justice to suspend the town hall meeting due to its illegality, but the court did not take action on time. When it finally did rule, the CMDBCPT organized a march to the office of Mayor Fúnez on June 17 (with members of the Coordinator of Popular Organizations of Aguán [COPA], the Agrarian Platform, and local residents) to deliver a copy of the Resolution of the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice that prohibits the “open” town hall meeting. On June 27, however, Mayor Adán Fúnez and three councilpersons disobeyed the court resolution (and the will of the people) when they voted to ratify the June 13 “open” town hall meeting.

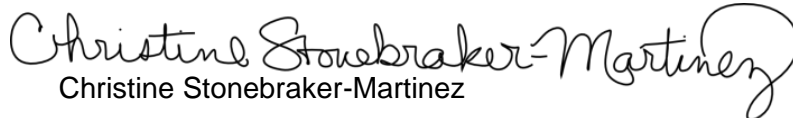
**We strongly urge your government respect and implement the demands of the popular assembly:**

- do not issue permits for the Ecotek thermoelectric plant
- cancel mining concessions held by Inversiones Los Pinares
- investigate the criminal and administrative complaints filed by the CMDBCPT related to projects operated by Emco, Inversiones Los Pinares, and Ecotek
- call for an end to the threats and stigmatization campaigns against CMDBCPT members
- insist on the prosecution of those responsible for the assassinations of CMDBCPT members, namely defenders Jairo Bonilla, Aly Domínguez and Oqueli Domínguez in 2023

Sincerely,



Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinator



Christine Stonebraker-Martinez

copies: Javier Efraín Bú Soto, Ambassador of Honduras in Washington, DC ~ via email and US mail  
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR): Rapporteur Andrea Pochak (for Honduras) ~ via email and US mail  
Isabel Albaladejo Escibano, Representative to Honduras of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OACNUDH) ~ via email  
Alice Shackelford, UN Resident Coordinator in Honduras, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ~ via email  
US Embassy in Tegucigalpa: Laura F. Dogu (ambassador) and Joe Duran, Human Rights Officer ~ via email  
US State Department: Bryan Schell, Honduras Desk Officer (Washington, DC)  
US Senators Brown & Vance and US Representatives Beatty, Brown, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Miller, Sykes ~ via email

**The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter:**