

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

August 2, 2024

Dear Commissioner Izaguirre Lozano:

We are writing to you today to urgently draw your attention to the alarming situation of illegal mining activities in the ancestral lands of the **Tolupán tribe in San Francisco de Locomapa**, Yoro Department.

Despite previous interventions and the apparent withdrawal of the mining company Lachansa, illegal extraction of antimony has resumed. The current illegal mining operations, spearheaded by individuals such as Allan Rivas (who has been linked to previous unlawful mining activities), have resumed in the community of Lagunitas. These activities are being conducted without the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of the Tolupán community, violating their fundamental rights and sovereignty over their ancestral lands. The devastating environmental impacts of open-pit mining are of great concern to the Tolupán communities.


The owners of Lachansa have had a reputation of creating fear in the local community. According to local residents Álvaro Londoño, the owner of Lachansa, was instrumental in creating armed groups to generate violence and intimidate residents opposed to his company's mining operations. Last year we learned that his son Santiago Emmanuel Londoño, Vice-President of the Administrative Council of Lachansa, was accused of sexual harassment of an Indigenous Tolupán girl (a minor). It is deeply concerning that despite legal actions filed against Álvaro Hernández Londoño and Santiago Londoño and the supposed exit of Lachansa from the community, illegal mining operations are recurring.

Because of the violent history associated with previous mining operations, residents are anxious and fearful. In recent years, many Tolupán defenders in Yoro have been harassed, threatened, criminalized and even killed. In January 2024, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) expanded protective measures to include a total of 97 members of the Tolupán community in San Francisco de Locomapa. This underscores the severe risks they face.

We strongly urge that authorities in Honduras:

- investigate any connections between Lachansa and the current illegal mining of antimony in Lagunitas
- enforce the cessation of all illegal mining activities in San Francisco de Locomapa
- implement protective measures for the Tolupán people, including physical protection and legal support
- expedite legal proceedings and hold accountable all individuals involved in illegal mining and committing violence against the Tolupán tribes in Yoro
- provide adequate compensation and restoration for the environmental and social damages caused by illegal mining
- reinforce the commitment to uphold the rights of Indigenous communities, ensuring their autonomy and right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) in all matters affecting their lands and resources.

Sincerely,

  
Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Co-Coordinators

  
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) and Arif Bulkan (for Indigenous Peoples) ~ via email and US mail  
Isabel Albaladejo Escribano, 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 (OACNUDH) ~ via email  
MADJ: Movimiento Amplio por la Dignidad y la Justicia / Broad Movement for Dignity and Justice ~ 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:**