

URGENT ACTION

ENVIRONMENTAL BILL THREATENS HUMAN RIGHTS

The Honduran Congress is about to pass a law that would ease the granting of environmental licenses with no consideration to human rights in the text. One additional plenary discussion is required for approval, which could happen in the next few days. Call on Congress to refrain from passing a law that could jeopardize the rights to a healthy environment, to receive information and to participate in public affairs.

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

Luis Rolando Redondo Guifarro
President of the National Congress of Honduras
Legislative Palace
Calle Bolívar, Tegucigalpa, M.D.C.
Honduras
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Dear Luis Rolando Redondo Guifarro,

I am writing to you to share my concern about the Special Bill for the Promotion of Investments through the Efficiency of Environmental Licensing Processes, presented to Congress in early May.

This bill, which seeks to ease the granting of environmental licenses for a large number of investment projects, makes no reference to the Honduran government's duty to guarantee human rights in line with its international human rights law obligations and relevant standards; it does not address the implications of this simplified mechanism for the right of individuals and groups to participate in decision-making processes that may affect their rights, nor the safeguards envisaged to guarantee the right to a healthy environment. Similarly, the current text does not reflect the requirement to conduct robust human rights due diligence that assess the risks and impacts that the project may have, as well as an adequate plan to prevent these risks from creating adverse impacts.

Although it was announced that amendments to exclude mining projects from this mechanism, and to guarantee the right to free, prior and informed consent are being discussed, these have not yet been made public and therefore remain unclear. Furthermore, no references to other human rights such as public participation had been announced.

I urge you to ensure that any changes of legislation with regards to the environment do not pose a risk to human rights and to abstain from passing the bill until clear safeguards for human rights are included, public participation, free, prior and informed consent, and the right to a healthy environment.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Special Bill for the Promotion of Investments through the Efficiency of Environmental Licensing Processes is very general and vague, and all types of so-called investment or development projects seem to fit into the proposed simplified process, which could result in a bypassing of the ordinary environmental licensing process.

The lack of an adequate mechanism for the right of individuals, communities and groups to participate in decision-making processes that may affect their rights is especially concerning.

Honduran authorities have been unable to define a clear course for the protection of the right to a healthy environment and those who defend it over the last years. In February 2024, Congress passed Decree 18-2024 that ensures the effective protection of all protected areas in Honduras and reestablished the original layout of the Carlos Escaleras National Park in Tocoa, department of Colón. However, it has not been implemented yet.

Defenders and organizations have regularly been to courts to denounce crimes and human rights abuses and violations linked to investment projects, and pay a high price, even with their lives, for these complaints. According to the NGO Global Witness, [Honduras tops the world list of countries](#) with the most murders of environmental defenders per capita. Attacks mainly occurred in the broader context of disputes and human rights violations related to mining projects, land-tenure insecurity, and abuses and violations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants.

This was the case of the murder of Lenca defender Berta Cáceres in 2016, after denouncing irregularities in the granting of licenses for the Aguas Zarca hydroelectric project and violations against Indigenous Peoples. In May 2024, two persons were convicted of fraud and another one of usurpation of functions and falsification of documents in this case.

Similarly, on 14 September 2024, [the defender Juan López was killed](#) after he and other members of the Municipal Committee in Defense of the Public, Common Goods had been denouncing for years violations to their rights to clean water and other human rights related to a mining project operating in the Carlos Escaleras National Park. In May 2025, the Attorney General Office pressed charges against three people for the alleged crimes of illegal exploitation of natural resource and aggravated damages with regards to a megaproject in the National Park and surroundings. In a parallel criminal proceeding, the general secretary of the municipality of Tocoa faces accusations of having allegedly altered a consultation act that allowed the granting of the environmental licenses.

Honduras is not part of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters, also known as the “Escazu Agreement”.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 31 October 2025

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

NAME AND PRONOUN: N/A

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr37/9452/2025/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

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