



National Lawyers Guild International Committee www.nlginternational.org
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February 2, 2022

Ariel Jahner
Human Rights Attaché
United States Embassy
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Via Email

The National Lawyers Guild International Committee, working in collaboration with various US based human rights organizations, including the Due Process of Law Foundation, RF Kennedy Human Rights, the University of Virginia International Human Rights Legal Clinic, within the framework of The Observatory for Justice for the Guapinol River Defenders requests your support. We have been observing the trial both from within the court room, as well as remotely, to help ensure a public and transparent judicial proceeding of the eight recognized human rights defenders in Tocoa, Atlantida. These men have been imprisoned for over two years pretrial and last week parties rested after concluding the evidentiary stage of proceedings by both the public and private prosecutors representing the mining company, *Inversiones Los Pinares* affiliated with the US Nucor Corporation.

After having observed the entirety of the trial, including filmed footage of the events leading to the arrests, we are very concerned about numerous irregularities and limitations to a fair trial based on the clearly partial behavior of the judicial panel in favor of the prosecution and mining company. We are also very concerned about threats and intimidation of the defense attorneys and community members who have been legitimately defending their vital water sources and opposing the environmental impacts of open pit mining within the Carlos Escaleras National Park.

We invite you to read our daily bulletins of the proceedings (<https://www.guapinolresiste.org/observatorio>) and request a short virtual meeting to discuss our impressions of the judicial proceedings. Most importantly, we strongly encourage that you be physically present in Tocoa to observe the parties deliver their conclusions this Friday February 4th. Other diplomatic corps members and UN agencies plan to attend the hearing, however, given the important relationship between the US and Honduras and the resources being directed towards ending corruption and human rights abuses as well as the political climate, at minimum we urge the Embassy observe and monitor the hearing via the live broadcast on Judicial TV and Facebook Live.

Please publicize the concern for a fair trial with legally sustained findings emphasizing the importance of an independent judiciary in a democratic society.

Thank you for your attention to this emblematic trial and respect for human rights and defenders in Honduras.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Emily J. Yozell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "Y".

Emily J. Yozell, Attorney
Guapinol Defenders Observation and Judicial Monitoring Committee
National Lawyers Guild