

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002987/24
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Leire Pajín (S&D)
(17 December 2024)

Subject: Murder of environmental activist and human rights defender Juan López, and the reopening of Guapinol activists' trials

Juan López was the coordinator of the Municipal Committee in Defence of Common and Public Goods of Tocoa and was part of the Guapinol activist movement that protects the San Pedro and Guapinol rivers. The movement has been fighting for Guapinol inhabitants' right to a sustainable, clean and healthy environment since 2013. A group of Guapinol activists was nominated for the Sakharov Prize in 2020.

Mr López was murdered on 14 September, part of a tragic increase in the violent repression faced by environmental activists in Honduras. Between 2023 and 2024, at least four activists have been murdered — those crimes have remained unpunished despite repeated reports from activists on cases of corruption among authorities.

Meanwhile, the La Ceiba Court of Appeal has reopened the case against five Guapinol environmental activists.

Is the Commission following the case of Guapinol activists and their families? What actions are being taken to increase their protection in the face of threats and violence?

Submitted: 17.12.2024

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(24 March 2025)

The EU is a key partner of Honduras for the promotion of human rights. The Municipal Committee in Defense of Common and Public Goods of Tocoa (CMDBCPT), of which Juan López was a member, received the Europa award for human rights in December 2024.

The award granted by the EU and some of its Member States, namely Spain, Germany and France, through a Team Europe approach, in Honduras, is a clear recognition of the important work of the CMDBCPT and signal of support in the face of the increasing attacks the community is confronted with.

The EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Olof Skoog ⁽¹⁾, has publicly addressed Juan López's murder and called for a thorough and impartial investigation of his case ⁽²⁾. The EU will continue to monitor this case as well as the precarious situation of the Guapinol activists.

Despite challenging conditions, the EU actively supports human rights in Honduras, as part of its broader human rights agenda in Latin America.

Efforts have primarily focused on advocacy and financial support for civil society organisations as well as dedicated programmes such as 'ProDerechos' ⁽³⁾.

In parallel, the European External Action Service regularly receives human rights defenders in Brussels, including environmental defenders, to support them and make their voices heard.

The EU remains committed to support human rights defenders, including in Honduras, in order to ensure their safety and amplify their voices for the causes they are defending.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-special-representatives_en

⁽²⁾ Olof Skoog on X, 19 December 2024, <https://x.com/OlofBSkoog/status/1869700581994176710>

⁽³⁾ ProDerechos website, <https://www.proderechos.hn/>