



ASOCIACIÓN
AMBIENTE Y SOCIEDAD



Environmental Defenders

Call on the States of the region and especially the Colombian State to sign, ratify and implement the Escazú Agreement in a prompt manner.

Press release. May 15-2018

The undersigned persons and organizations, who participated in the negotiation of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters for Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement), categorically condemn the recent murders in Colombia of two members of the Ríos Vivos Movement. Therefore, we call on the States of the region and especially the Colombian State to sign, ratify and implement the Escazú Agreement in a prompt manner.

The Ríos Vivos Movement is a social movement that works for the protection of rivers and community groups affected by the social and environmental impacts of dams in Colombia. The members of the Movement have denounced being subjected to multiple threats, intimidations and human rights violations for their work as defenders of the rivers.

On May 2nd and 8th, 2018 the Ríos Vivos Movement denounced the murders of Mr. Hugo Albeiro George Pérez and Mr. Luis Alberto Torres Montoya, Ríos Vivos' members, in the municipality of Puerto Valdivia, Antioquia. The organization also reported that these two men were killed together with members of their family. Faced with this tragedy, we call on the Colombian government to promptly investigate, punish these attacks and provide the necessary guarantees for the protection of life and the safe environment of the other members of Ríos Vivos.

What happened during these few days in Colombia is a sample of the panorama of our region, which in recent years has become the most dangerous for environmental defenders.

The signatories recall that on March 4, 2018, twenty-four States of Latin America and the Caribbean, including Colombia, adopted the Escazú Agreement, the first treaty on environment and human rights in the region. This process, which began in 2012, gave life to the first treaty in the world that recognizes the importance of the role of environmental defenders and includes obligations for their protection.

Article 9 of the Regional Agreement creates a protection regime for environmental defenders. In it the parties to the Agreement undertake to: (i) ensure a safe environment for the defenders to act, (ii) take appropriate and effective measures to recognize and protect their rights, and (iii) take measures to prevent, investigate and punish attacks against environmental defenders.

The Escazú Agreement will be opened for signature on September 27, 2018 during the United Nations General Assembly in New York. We call on all States in the region, and especially the



Colombian State,

to sign, ratify and promptly implement the Escazú Agreement as a tool to strengthen environmental democracy and guarantee a safe environment for environmental defenders.

to

Sign:

Organizations:

- Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad (AAS), Colombia
- Artículo 19, Brasil
- Centro Interdisciplinario de Estudios sobre el Desarrollo (CIEDUR), Uruguay
- Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental (CEMDA), México
- Centro Internacional de Investigaciones sobre Ambiente y Territorio (CIAT), Ecuador
- Clínica Jurídica de Interés Público Universidad de Medellín, Colombia
- Colectivo José Alvear Restrepo (CAJAR), Colombia
- Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (DAR), Perú
- FIMA, Chile
- Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN), Argentina
- IDHAMO, Honduras
- Instituto de Abogados para la Protección del Medio Ambiente (INSAPROMA), República Dominicana
- Saint Lucia National Trust (SLNT), St. Lucia
- Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental (SPDA), Perú

Persons:

- Andrea Sanhueza, Elected Representative of the Public (LAC Principle 10 Process), Chile