

CAUSE OF DEATH: FARMER

The double threat of covid-19	5
Increasing threats against farmers	6
Recommendations	7
Testimonies from four deadly countries	9
Shrinking space for defenders of our planet	13
Women land defenders increasingly vulnerable	14
Crisis for farmers in Latin America	17
Big business or biological diversity	18
Murder didn't silence Berta Cáceres' voice	19
No land means no future	21
"We are being persecuted, vilified, imprisoned"	23
Forced to occupy their land	25
Chinese dam threatens rainforest	27
Bibliography	30

For security reasons this report makes an exception to the photo policy of We Effect: That every person appearing in photos must be named. In some cases fictitious names have been given to persons portrayed or quoted in the report.



Cause of death: Farmer

Editor: Niclas Ericsso

Authors: Liinu Diaz Rāmō, Erik Halkjaer, Niclas Ericsson, Bengt Sigvardsson
Production and illustrations: Kölare Design. Printing: Botkyrka Offset.

We Effect, Box 111 48, SE-100 61 Stockholm, Sweden. Tel: +46 (0)8-120 371 00. Website: www.weeffect.se
ISBN: 978-91-983506-9-2
Published in Stockholm July 2020

Photo, cover: Claudio Vasquez Bianchi.



WHO's map of the spread of the coronavirus pandemic as of 30 March 2020. At the same time reports were streaming in about curtailment of democratic rights throughout the world. 'Coronavirus kills its first democracy' read a headline in The Washington Post regarding the extraordinary dictatorship arrangement pushed through by Hungary's prime minister Viktor Orban by reason of the coronavirus crisis. Curfews, bans on public gatherings, digital monitoring and closed borders are examples of measures implemented in many countries, including functioning democracies in the vicinity of Sweden. However, in a number of countries where human rights are already hugely vulnerable, such measures have created new means of power for regimes that want to restrict civic space.

THE DOUBLE THREAT **OF COVID-19**

As this report goes to print, the coronavirus pandemic has reached all corners of the world. The number of cases of infection continues to rise, as does the death toll. Borders have been closed and all of society is shutting down in an attempt to reduce the spread. Everyone is feeling the effects.

Like many other countries, Colombia has introduced emergency laws to combat the virus. We are seeing restrictions on people's freedom of movement, which exacerbates an already severe threat level against persecuted leaders within civil society. One week after Colombia introduced a travel ban, a further three local leaders were murdered.1

Marco Rivadeneira was in a meeting with other farming community leaders in Puerto Asis when armed men stormed in and dragged him away. According to a local human rights organisation, he was executed half an hour later. Marco was a member of the board of directors of one of Colombia's biggest farmers' organisations, Coordinador Nacional Agrario, and president of the local farmers' association, Asociación Campesina del Puerto Asís.

He represented local coca growers in negotiations with the government. These are smallholder farmers who live in poverty. They need protection from the drug cartels and support measures to be able to convert to growing other crops. The farmers find themselves literally at the heart of the conflict between a variety of economic interests fighting over the land where the farmers live. Defending the farmers' rights cost Marco Rivadeneira his life.

His murder has been condemned by farmers' movements and human rights organisations, demanding that the government take immediate action to protect local leaders. But neither international demands nor national calls for assistance get any response in the shadow of the coronavirus crisis. The crisis is making it easier for governments to turn a blind eye to their responsibility to protect human rights defenders and investigate murders.

In this report you can read about how economic interests combined with climate change are increasing global pressure on land and natural resources. At the same time civic space is shrinking and defenders of human rights and the environment are being threatened and murdered. Among the hardest hit are women, smallholder farmers and indigenous peoples.

We Effect works in four of the world's deadliest countries for those defending land rights and the environment: Colombia, the Philippines, Guatemala and Honduras. We work directly with farmers' own organisations. We see how farmers are being oppressed, threatened and murdered when they try to defend their rights to land, water and other natural resources. These rights are crucial to combat poverty and inequality.

Farmers are essential to our planet. Not only do they feed us, but they are custodians of our biodiversity and ecosystems. No one should have to risk their lives for the right to be a farmer.

- 5 -



Anna Tibblin Secretary General of We Effect



Hm Chart Folhen Ann Charlott Folkesson, board member of Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund and Vice Chairman of We Effect

Ivo Humberto Bracamonte, who was killed on the eastern border with Venezuela. Both were local politicians

¹The other two victims who were murdered in the last week of March 2020 were Ángel Ovidio Quintero, who was shot and killed in Antioquia, and

INCREASING THREATS AGAINST FARMERS

- 6 -

Climate change in combination with large-scale economic interests is increasing global pressure on land and natural resources. At the same time civic space is shrinking, and defenders of human rights and the environment are being threatened and murdered. Among the hardest hit are women, smallholder farmers and indigenous peoples. New global threats, like the coronavirus pandemic, will hit already vulnerable groups the hardest.

We Effect works in four of the world's deadliest countries for land and environmental defenders: Colombia, the Philippines, Guatemala and Honduras. We are working with member organisations for women, smallholder farmers and indigenous peoples. In all these countries farmers are forced to become human rights defenders in order to keep farming the piece of land that is their only means of subsistence. The report 'Cause of death: Farmer' aims to bring their voices to the fore and has charted the threats and violence linked to their work. 304 human rights defenders were murdered in 2019 and land and environmental defenders are the most vulnerable. In Honduras and the Philippines, links between big business, national government, the legal system and the military have been identified when investigating murder cases. A majority of the sixteen organisations contributing to this report stated that they live under constant threat. Indigenous peoples and female farmers are especially vulnerable, according to testimonies from the organisations.

The right to land is crucial to combat poverty and inequality. Land rights are frequently the cause of conflicts that lead to threats and violence in the four countries

being examined in this report. The situation in Latin America is particularly alarming: more than two thirds of murders of human rights defenders in 2019 took place there, and land is more unevenly distributed than anywhere else in the world. Land is also a central issue in conflicts leading to threats and violence against women, smallholder farmers and indigenous peoples in the Philippines. In fact, the Philippines is the most dangerous country in the world for land and environmental defenders.

The right of women to own and control land is a necessary requirement in order to achieve gender equality. In many developing countries, women make up the majority of the workforce in agriculture. Despite that fact, women only make up 13 % of the farmers who own or have secure access to the land they farm. Women's lack of ownership and control over land puts them in a poorer position to adapt to climate change.

Women fighting for land rights are double losers as pressure on land increases and democratic scope shrinks. Women encounter the same oppression and obstacles as men and are also subject to sexualised violence and threats directed at them specifically because they are women. New threats come from conservative activists, particularly aimed at vulnerable groups such as women and indigenous peoples.

Biodiversity is threatened when mining industries, energy companies and agribusiness want to access land being used by indigenous peoples or smallholder farmers. These have an essential role to play in preserving species, ecosystems and genetic diversity, but are threatened by monocultures and exploitation of natural resources by big business.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We Effect calls for the following actions to improve the situation for smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples and women who have involuntarily become human rights defenders owing to conflicts relating to land and natural resources and to empower their organisations and cooperatives.

The government of Sweden should:

- ➤ Safeguard Sweden's and the EU's development cooperation funding in the global crisis caused by Covid-19. Already vulnerable groups in poor countries are among those who will be hardest hit by the coronavirus crisis. They need our support now more than ever.
- ▶ Increase development cooperation support for civil society organisations in the countries where human rights defenders are most vulnerable and support targeted efforts to improve their situation, with specific focus on women and girls who are environmental and human rights defenders.
- ▶ Introduce mandatory human rights due to dilligence, HRDD, legislation for companies and throughout their production and supply chain.² In 2020, we want the government of Sweden to set up a study regarding Swedish legislation, and to actively support mandatory HRDD legislation in the EU.
- ▶ Push to strengthen the international legal framework supporting and protecting women and girls who are environmental and human rights defenders, including taking action to ensure binding commitments to increase their legal protection, based on existing frameworks such as the UN Human Rights Council resolution 40/11 and the Escazú Agreement for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Introduce strong statements regarding the importance of counteracting states' and other players' violations against human rights defenders and the importance of strengthening organisations involved in agricultural development, gender equality and fairer distribution of and secure access to natural resources such as land in the formulation of future strategies for Latin America.

Swedish companies and investors should:

► Follow the UN's guiding principles for companies and human rights and, in line with these, conduct risk and impact analyses with respect to human rights (Human Rights Due Diligence, HRDD) and ensure that this is also done throughout the supply chain

National agricultural organisations should:

- Make demands of their national governments, regional and global cooperation agencies, the EU and the UN to support and protect farmers who are working to defend their rights and their environment
- ► Ensure that human rights are respected within members' operations and in their production and supply chain.

Swedish development cooperation work should:

Prioritise rural development that strengthens economic, social and political empowerment of women and initiatives for fairer use of and access to natural resources such as land.

Swedish consumers should:

- 7 -

Choose certified products and demand that food companies audit their suppliers with regard to human rights.

conduct risk and impact analyses in line with these with regard to human rights (Human Rights Due Diligence, HRDD).

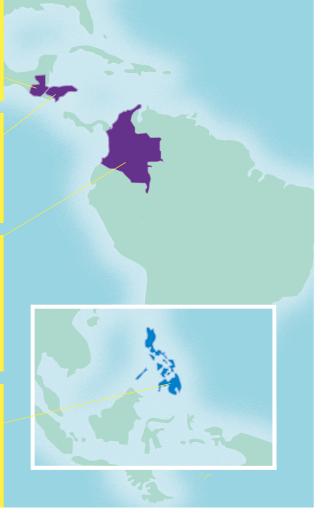
²The legislation should set demands equivalent to the UN's guiding principles for companies and human rights and demands for companies to

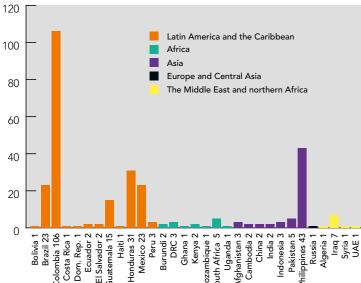
In Guatemala, 462 attacks on human rights defenders were recorded in 2019. Five of these were attempted murder and 15 were murders.³ In the previous year, 26 people were murdered, which was the fourth highest figure in the world for that year.4 Particularly notable were seven murders during the same week of members from two farmers' organisations, CODECA and CCDA, which were also publicly defamed by the then president, Jimmy Morales.⁵

In Honduras, persecutions, threats and murders of human rights defenders have increased drastically since the coup d'état in 2009. When the leader of the organisation Copinh, Berta Cáceres was brutally murdered in 2016, a criminal network with clear links between the business community, the military, politicians and government officials was exposed.⁶ In 2019, four times as many human rights defenders were murdered in Honduras as the year before.⁷

In Colombia, more than 600 social leaders and human rights defenders have been killed since the peace treaty was signed between the Colombian government and the FARC guerrillas in December 2016.8 The peace treaty, which includes fairer distribution of land, has led to difficult challenges and has not yet been implemented in full. Colombia is the most dangerous country in Latin America for persons defending land rights and the environment,9 For the third successive year, Colombia showed the highest total number of human rights defenders murdered in the world.¹⁰

In the Philippines, the government and the army have been systematically collaborating with big business to silence human rights defenders by violent means since president Rodrigo Duterte took power in June 2016. At least 52 human rights defenders have been executed by the army without trial since 2016 and impunity for those committing assaults is prevalent. The Philippines is the most dangerous country in the world for land and environmental defenders, and many of those killed are farmers and indigenous peoples.¹





Out of 304 murders of human rights defenders, 208 took place in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 43 in the Philippines, Front Line Defenders estimate that 40 % of the known cases in 2019 were defenders of land rights and the environment. In 2018, these accounted for 77 %. Exact data regarding how many of the murder victims were farmers or indigenous peoples is not available.

Source, graphics: Front Line Defenders 2020

¹² Global Witness. Enemies of the State? 2019

TESTIMONIES FROM FOUR DEADLY COUNTRIES

We Effect works in four of the world's deadliest countries for those defending their land and environment: Colombia, the Philippines, Guatemala and Honduras.¹² 195 of the 304 murders of human rights defenders in the world documented in 2019 took place in these four countries.13

Farmers, indigenous peoples and women are hugely vulnerable when conflicts arise over land or other natural resources that economically big business wants to exploit.14 The local population are forced to become human rights defenders so that their land will not be taken from them. The offenders are often international companies acting with the knowledge of the national government or with their direct support. Clear links between a corrupt state and big companies violating human rights have been identified in Honduras¹⁵ and the Philippines, among other locations. ¹⁶ Mining and agricultural industries are the sectors most often involved in threats against human rights defenders in connection with large-scale exploitation.¹⁷ For example, global fruit companies Dole and Del Monte have been singled out for having acted in violation of human rights both in the Philippines¹⁸ and in several Latin American countries.¹⁹

The risk of being murdered was 3.5 times greater for

land and environmental defenders than for other human rights defenders in 2018 and they accounted for 77 % of those murdered.²⁰ Even though the percentage is lower for 2019 (40 %), land and environmental defenders are still an especially vulnerable group. This is due in part to the fact that conflicts over land and natural resources often take place in inaccessible areas where big companies and their front men can act without interference. In

addition to the unreported figures in terms of the number of murder victims, there are thousands of cases of threats, harassment, unlawful arrest and prosecution as well as smear campaigns against human rights defenders every year. Many of these attacks go unreported and unrecorded.21

New global crises, such as the coronavirus pandemic,

affect farmers, indigenous peoples and women in various ways. Their livelihoods are threatened due to poorer access to seeds, difficulties accessing markets and a weakened social economy. At the same time we are seeing violence increase and states using the crisis as an excuse for increased monitoring and for silencing voices of opposition.^{22 23 24}

THREATS, VIOLENCE AND SMEAR CAMPAIGNS

In order to provide a more in-depth picture of the situation in these four countries, We Effect conducted a survey among 16 organisations we collaborate with. These are member-based farmers', indigenous peoples' and women's organisations and the issues involve threats and violence linked to their work. The survey was conducted during the period May 2019 to January 2020 and was anonymous for the sake of the safety of participants. The anonymous quotes in this section come from members of some of the 16 organisations who participated in the survey.

"Our local leaders are being murdered, so that the indigenous population will no longer demand their land rights." GUATEMALA

³ UDEFEGUA's annual report 2019

⁴ FLD 2019

⁵ GHRC 2018

⁶ GAIPE 2017

⁷ FLD 2020

⁸ Indepaz 2019

⁹ Global Witness, "Enemies of the state?" 2019

¹⁰ FLD 2019, FLD 2020

¹¹ Global Witness, "Defending the Philippines" 2019

¹³ Front Line Defenders 2020

¹⁴ SSNC 2019

¹⁵ GAIPE 2017

¹⁶ Global Witness. Defending the Philippines 2019

¹⁷ BHRRC. January 2020 Snapshot

¹⁸ Global Witness. Defending the Philippines 2019

²⁰ Front Line Defenders 2019

²¹ Ihid

²² ICNL 2020

²³ https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/23/colomban-groupsexploiting-coronavirus-lockdown-to-kill-activists

²⁴ https://weeffect.se/nyheter/coronakrisen-slar-hart-mot-de-mest-utsatta/

CAUSE OF DEATH: FARMER — CAUSE OF DEATH: FARMER

Civic space is shrinking in all four countries. Eleven of the sixteen organisations questioned view this trend with great concern. Their members and staff are threatened due to their efforts to protect natural resources and land to grow crops.

Above all, the organisations single out representatives of government and local authorities, police and military, as well as private companies, as those who threaten and prevent them from carrying out their work. The organisations bear witness to how their leaders and members are subjected to threats, violence, harassment, attacks, smear campaigns and surveillance. Ten organisations mention arbitrary arrest warrants and imprisonment as a common problem. Repeated interrogations have also become part of their everyday life. Members' freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of movement are restricted.

"Our leaders are persecuted and threatened because companies want our land for building hydroelectric plants, dams or mines." HONDURAS

Respondents in the Philippines and Colombia did not express the same level of concern about the situation as the organisations in the Central American countries. However, they felt that government and local authorities are increasingly putting obstacles in the way of their work. The authorities carry out unannounced inspections and set up bureaucratic obstacles to slow down their operations. In Colombia, the registration process required by law is being made more difficult. If an organisation is not registered, there are difficulties in opening bank accounts and receiving financial support.

In recent years, legal changes affecting the ability of civil society organisations to operate have been discussed and voted through in a number of Latin American countries. These laws give authorities greater powers to disband organisations for 'administrative offences', for example. In their responses, several organisations make reference to newly established public order and anti-terrorist laws that are impeding their work.

"The women are imprisoned, humiliated and, in one instance, they cut the hair of a woman in front of her family and neighbours." GUATEMALA

In the Philippines, Honduras and Guatemala, authorities have declared a state of emergency on various occasions in order to 'regain control' of regions affected by conflict with the local population. In such instances the organisations have experienced increased scrutiny and arrests. Women have been subjected to sexual harassment, with searches by male police officers and military personnel.

All twelve organisations surveyed in Latin America report that they live under constant threat due to their work to defend land rights. Indigenous peoples and female farmers are especially vulnerable. They are harassed, humiliated, threatened and subjected to sexual abuse.

"One friend was brutally beaten by the military. She was pregnant at the time and they hit her in the stomach." HONDURAS

The perpetrators are police, military, security guards and even representatives of private companies. Many such attacks take place openly at organised demonstrations against the authorities' actions or to defend the right to land

In all countries, leaders and spokespeople of organisations working with We Effect have been murdered when demanding their rights. Since the murder of Copinh's leader Berta Cáceres in March 2019 in Honduras, the organisation has lost four people in senior positions. Several of them had been subjected to threats over a prolonged period. Over the space of two months, May to June 2018, four local leaders of a partner organisation in Guatemala were murdered.

"The women are oppressed and murdered because they demand land from the Honduran government. Tear gas is fired at them during demonstrations protesting against parliament's misuse of our laws." HONDURAS

The murders, threats and attacks seldom lead to prosecution, but seem to be carried out with impunity. The murders and threats are not just about silencing strong role models, but also about scaring others into silence and submission. Scare tactics include death threats against relatives and family members of leaders.

Five organisations write that their members have been forced to flee their homes due to violence and attacks. In several cases, members' plantations and/or homes have been burned to the ground.

"The women are beaten, and if they make their voices heard, they are threatened with death." GUATEMALA

The attacks are not just directed at individuals. On the night before 8 March 2019 (International Women's Day), a partner organisation in Guatemala working to promote women's rights suffered a break-in. Their office was destroyed and sensitive documents were stolen. During 2018, the organisation had noted 24 different security incidents, including phone tapping and unauthorised surveillance of the office.

"Our chairperson was visited at home by masked thugs, for the purpose of scaring the family." COLOMBIA

In addition to threats and violence, the survey responses indicate the occurrence of targeted propaganda campaigns. In the media and on social media the organisations are represented as agitators preventing growth and development or, in the worst case, as terrorists.

The sources come from the political establishment, the business community or the civilian population. In some cases, conservative interest organisations have been set up, whose only purpose is to discredit farmers' and indigenous organisations. In the Philippines, organisations bear witness to how the intelligence service contributes to political smear campaigns.

"The leaders of a campaign for land rights were visited by the intelligence service and accused of collaborating with communist organisations." THE PHILIPPINES

All organisations demand greater international presence. They want the international community to call upon their governments to live up to the laws, agreements and conventions on human rights that they have signed up to. In Colombia, specific support is being called for to ensure the peace treaty from 2016 is implemented. We Effect should support the work on the peace process, maintain communication with the organisations involved and support them with resources and awareness-raising initiatives, writes one organisation in Colombia.



-10 -



SHRINKING SPACE FOR DEFENDERS OF OUR PLANET

An increasingly violent confrontation is going on between big business in pursuit of natural resources and farmers, women and indigenous peoples who want to protect their land and their environment. At the same time human rights are increasingly being restricted in large parts of the world, and this may be exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic.

Civic space is shrinking in large parts of the world. In 2020 twice as many people (40 % of the world's population) are living in countries where their rights are violated compared to last year (19 %).²⁵ This is shown by Civicus' annual research covering areas such as freedom of assembly, free media and exercise of power by governments. This trend affects many more than just land and environmental defenders. New global threats, such as the coronavirus pandemic, bring the risk of states expanding their control over citizens and exploiting the situation to monitor citizens and silence inconvenient voices.^{26 27}

INCREASING ATTACKS ON LAND AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS

Over the past years there has been an increase in the number of countries where land and environmental defenders are threatened and murdered.²⁸ The number of attacks against human rights defenders in conflict with big business has also increased. The attacks against human rights defenders who have ended up in conflict with large-scale economic players. The attacks have gone from 492 cases in 2018 to 572 last year, and the conflicts almost always relate to land or natural resources. The sectors that are most frequently mentioned in reports are the mining industry and large-scale agriculture, but wind and hydroelectric power, as well as operations to extract oil, gas, coal and timber are also involved in a large number of cases.²⁹ The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst,

pointed out back in 2017 that environmental defenders were particularly vulnerable to murder and violence.³⁰

TOUGH LEGISLATION AFFECTS CSO:S

Over the past decade a growing number of countries have introduced legislation that directly or indirectly restricts the capacity of civil society to operate.³¹ This could be laws regulating media or advocacy, restricting freedom of assembly or setting tougher formal and economic requirements for CSOs.³² One current example is Guatemala, which in February 2020 passed a controversial law giving the state increased control over civil society organisations.³³ These laws may have legitimate purposes, such as to counteract terrorism and money laundering, but the effect is that state control over civil society increases.34 Several of the organisations who contributed to this report are seeing their activities being impeded by increased control, bureaucracy and government restrictions. This may seem harmless compared with murder, threats and violence targeting individual human rights defenders, but in many cases it is effective leverage against resource-strapped organisations defending human rights.

LACK OF RESOURCES

Civil society in many of the countries where human rights are threatened does not receive sufficient support. Less than 1 % of the resources from official development cooperation aid from the OECD countries goes to CSOs in developing countries, according to research by the organisation Civicus. Only a fraction of this goes towards defending human rights and even less towards helping farmers, women and indigenous peoples who are land and environmental defenders. Of the international development cooperation funds announced in 2019 that CSOs could apply for, only 6 % was intended for strengthening human rights and advocacy. Second

²⁵ CIVICUS 2019

²⁶ ICNL 2020

²⁷ https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx? NewsID=25722

²⁸ SSNC 2019

²⁹ BHRRC. January 2020 Snapshot

^{30 29} UN Special Rapporteur 2017

³¹ Global Witness 2019

³² Freedom House 2019

³³ Reuters, 27 February 2020

Front Line Defenders 2020CIVICUS 2019

³⁶ CIVICUS 2019

WOMEN LAND DEFENDERS **INCREASINGLY VULNERABLE**

When human rights are restricted and the pressure on land and natural resources increases, driven by economic interests, the vulnerability of women land defenders is further intensified.

As a result of structural discrimination, women's access to land is significantly poorer than that of men. Despite the fact that almost half of those working in agriculture in developing countries are women, 87 % of the farmers who own or have secure access to farming land are male, while only 13 % are female.37 Women's farming land is generally both less fertile and smaller in size than that of men.³⁸

Yet the right of women to own and control land is an essential prerequisite in order to achieve gender equality in rural areas in poor countries.³⁹ Owning a piece of land represents a means of income and capacity to obtain a loan and invest. It provides independence and also status in local communities where agriculture is central to livelihoods.40

TARGET FOR CONSERVATIVE GROUPS

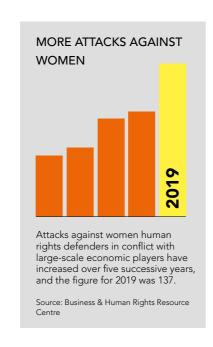
Women who are environmental and human rights defenders are a vulnerable group. They are subjected to the same oppression and obstacles as men, in the form of unjustified arrests, threats, violence, surveillance, breakins and, at worst, murder. In addition, they are subjected to male violence in and outside the home and are at risk of being subjected to sexual harassment as a way of intimidating and silencing them.41

At the same time, in addition to structural discrimination, new threats are being aimed at them by conservative groups, who are often in league with the political powers and specifically target women and minorities.⁴² Women who are human rights defenders are attacked because of what they are fighting for, but also because they

are challenging both those in power and the prevailing

Colombia, Guatemala and Honduras all stand out as countries where women land and environmental defenders were particularly vulnerable to threats and harassment in 2019. 43 This is also the case for indigenous peoples. The number of murdered women who were human rights defenders increased by 50 % in Colombia in 2019.44

Women were the group subjected to the most civil rights violations in 2019 from a global perspective. 45 The number of attacks against female human rights defenders in conflict with large-scale economic players has increased over five successive years. Half of these women belonged to indigenous groups and were leaders or members of local communities.46





CUSTOMS HINDER ACCESS TO LAND FOR WOMEN IN COUNTRIES.

Source: Landesa, "The Law of the Land: Women's Rights to Land", 2016



Source: World Bank Group, "Women, Business and the Law 2018," 2018.

IN TANZANIA, WOMEN WHO **OWN LAND EARN ALMOST FOUR TIMES MORE** THAN WOMEN WHO DO NOT.

Source: Amber Peterman, "Women's Property Rights and Gendered Policies", 2011.



Source: Bina Agarwal and Pradeep Panda lence: the Neglected Obvious", 2007.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND THE RIGHT TO LAND

Access to or control over land in many developing countries is governed by formal and informal norms and rules that discriminate against women. Women are seldom permitted to make decisions about how land should be managed and what will be grown, and they don't receive a share of the financial return from harvests.

Laws and reforms have been formulated based on the notion that the man is responsible for the productive work, farming the land, while the woman takes care of the reproductive work in the home. Consequently, many land reforms solely benefit men, as women in agriculture are not seen as farmers but as support for the man.

Globally, women only make up 13 % of the farmers who make decisions about the land they are farming. Women who have ownership rights or the right to use land have better capacity to adapt their farming activities to cope with climate change. According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, strengthening women's right to land would increase gender equality and promote the efforts to achieve the global sustainable development goals.

Sources: FAO, UN Women, Landesa, OHCHR.



- 14 -- 15 -

³⁷ UN Women 2018

³⁸ FAO 2018 The gender gap in land rights

³⁹ UN Women 2018

⁴⁰ We Fffect 2018 41 AWID 2014

⁴² CIVICUS 2020

⁴³ CIVICUS 2019

⁴⁴ UN Human Rights Council 2020

⁴⁵ CIVICUS 2019

⁴⁶ BHRRC. January 2020 Snapshot

CAUSE OF DEATH: FARMER — CAUSE OF DEATH: FARMER































Ensuring and defending the right of indigenous peoples and smallholder farmers to land is central to the work of Agenda 2030, which unites the UN's member states in striving to achieve the 17 shared sustainable development goals in order to eradicate extreme poverty, reduce inequalities and tackle the climate crisis.

LAND RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

- Many smallholder farmers worldwide lack formal evidence that they own or have rights to the land that they make their living from, despite the fact that equal opportunities for owning and controlling land are a right under several international conventions. Who has access to or secure control over land is determined in many countries by means of informal agreements, or by political or economic interests.
- ➤ The right to land is crucial to several human rights, e.g. the right to a reasonable standard of living, the right to food and the right to economic development. Being able to prove ownership or secure control over your land is often a prerequisite when pledging security for a loan, and is a requirement for gaining access to advisory services.
- Indigenous peoples often have a special relationship to nature and the land they have traditionally farmed, which means that the land is of fundamental significance for the preservation and development of their culture. The respect among indigenous peoples for animals, nature and land is essential to their identity and spiritual values.

Source: International Land Coalition (ILC), UNDP

WE EFFECT AND THE RIGHT TO LAND

- ▶ We Effect works to promote sustainable rural development and to combat poverty by increasing equality. Together with local farmers' and indigenous organisations, We Effect focuses on sustainable production methods, food security and adapting to the effects of climate change. These efforts combine cooperative methods for revenue-raising projects with social, economic and environmental sustainability.
- ➤ Through its activities We Effect supports the rights of land rights and environmental defenders to employ peaceful means to demand accountability. These efforts focus on women and indigenous peoples.
- ▶ In several countries in which We Effect operates, we support our partner organisations in negotiations with local decision-makers, the national government and foreign investors, since secure and just land ownership, as well as protection of informal land rights, is vital to We Effect's target groups. This has proven difficult in Latin America and parts of Asia, but in several African countries, e.g. Tanzania, it has been a successful model.

CRISIS FOR FARMERS IN LATIN AMERICA

The situation in Latin America is unique and alarming. No other region in the world has such huge economic disparities between people – and so many murders of human rights defenders. Conflicts over land distribution are behind many of the murders.

The economic disparities are largely down to the uneven distribution of land. One per cent of the richest individuals in Latin America own as much land as the remaining 99 % combined.⁴⁷These disparities have deep historic roots going back to the time when the region's present countries were just colonies.⁴⁸ A wealthy upper class exploited their economic power to usurp political power and blocked any attempts to subdivide and share the land more fairly between the citizens of the countries.⁴⁹

VIOLENCE CONTINUES IN COLOMBIA

Conflicts over land have led to events such as the military coup in Honduras in 2009 and the long civil wars in Colombia and Guatemala. In Colombia, four years have passed since the peace treaty between the government and the FARC guerrillas, but the violence continues against the organisations that bring together indigenous peoples, smallholder farmers, Afro-Colombians and, of course, women who are fighting for their rights, land and natural resources. The political and financial elite who were against the peace treaty are now trying to block its implementation.

LARGE-SCALE FARMING TAKING OVER

Through favourable contacts with the political authorities, landowners in several Latin American countries have been able to open the door to foreign investment.⁵¹ The result is that the land area taken up by mines, oil extraction and grazing land for cattle, as well as large-scale plantations of soya, palm oil and sugar cane, is increasing throughout the region.⁵² This expansion is at the expense of the land area that smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples and individuals of African descent

historically have the right to, but for which they have never obtained papers to prove their ownership.

POOR AREAS BEING EXPLOITED

The locations where these investments are taking place mostly coincide with areas where poverty is greatest. For example, there are regions in Guatemala where several hydroelectric plants are being constructed, but the local population are still living with no access to electricity. In other words, the local population is not benefitting at all from the investments. The exploitation of land for production of export goods is driven by increasing global demand for minerals, oil, soya, palm oil, sugar, beef and timber. The result is not only that the economic and social disparities persist, but democracy is weakened, people's rights are violated and, in recent years, poverty in Latin America has increased. The sugar is greatest.

MURDERED LAND AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS IN LATIN AMERICA

- ► Half of the land and environmental defenders murdered in 2018 were Latin Americans from Colombia, Brazil, Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, Venezuela and Chile.
- ▶ 40 % of the perpetrators were government representatives such as police and military. 40 % were representatives of private companies, hired killers and security companies.
- ▶ 0.79 is the average Gini coefficient for land distribution in Latin America, with 1 representing maximum inequality. The coefficient in Europe is 0.57, in Africa 0.56 and in Asia 0.55. Only 13 % of the land in Latin America is owned by smallholder farmers.

Sources: Global Witness, FAO, Front Line Defenders. Oxfam.

- 16 -

⁴⁷ Oxfam 2016

⁴⁸ FAO regional office for Latin America 2018

⁴⁹ Oxfam 2016

⁵⁰ Global Witness 2018

⁵¹ Oxfam 2016

lbid.

⁵³ Global Witness 2018

⁵⁴ FAO 2019

BIG BUSINESS OR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Demand from big companies for land to cultivate monocultures of oil palm, sugar cane and soya is increasing significantly. The climate crisis brings the risk of increased competition for land and natural resources. Those who end up caught in the middle are smallholder farmers, women and indigenous peoples – but also biodiversity.

Major economic interests within the agricultural, mining and energy industries are behind a dramatic rise in demand for land for commercial exploitation over the past fifteen years. Companies want to use the land for large-scale plants, mines, dams and large-scale plantations, generally monocultures⁵⁵ of oil palm, sugar cane, soya and other crops for a global market.⁵⁶ Global warming will exacerbate this situation when the total area of arable land decreases and the global population increases.⁵⁷

On the other side of the conflicts that arise over land in Colombia, the Philippines, Guatemala and Honduras are smallholder farmers and indigenous peoples, who often have both historical claims and legal right to the land. More often than not it's a matter of industrial monocultures that threaten local communities.

MONOCULTURES DISPLACING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

One example is Guatemala, where large-scale plantations of sugar cane and oil palm increased by 150 % between 1990 and 2010. The country is the largest exporter of sugar and the third largest exporter of palm oil in the region. At the same time the indigenous peoples only have access to 27 % of the agricultural land, despite the fact that they make up 65 % of those who make a living from farming in the country. They are being forced out by big business. A report from IPBES in 2019 showed how severe and urgent threats against global biodiversity

are. Indigenous peoples, local communities and small-holder farmers are crucial for preserving the diversity of ecosystems, species and genetic diversity.⁵⁹ 80 % of global biodiversity is contained in areas inhabited by indigenous peoples⁶⁰ and they frequently make use of the land area in accordance with traditional knowledge, preserving and protecting ecosystems.⁶¹ Small-scale and diversified agriculture has an important role to play in preserving species diversity among animals⁶² and genetic diversity of seeds, for example.⁶³

Indigenous peoples and smallholder farmers are entitled to a healthy and sustainable environment, which requires preservation of the ecosystems they live in harmony with. 64 Similarly, preserving biodiversity is a necessity in order to achieve all the goals of Agenda 2030. 65



Since 2005, the number of international land agreements within agriculture has increased explosively throughout the world. To use the land to produce palm oil is the single most common purpose.

Source: Land Matrix 2016

MURDER DIDN'T SILENCE BERTA CÁCERES' VOICE



Berta Cáceres was murdered in March 2016. Photo: Catrin Söderberg

The Gualcarque river is sacred to the Lenca people. Consequently they said no when private players with links to the government wanted to build a hydroelectric plant there. The price they had to pay was the life of Berta Cáceres.

Berta Cáceres was the leader of Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (Copinh), which organised the resistance efforts and is one of We Effect's partner organisations. Years of resistance yielded results, as construction of the Agua Zarca dam was halted, but Cáceres was murdered in her home in March 2016.

"My mother was aware of what could happen to her. She wasn't the only one who was being threatened or attacked. Over the years we have lost several members of the movement," says Berta Cáceres' daughter, Bertha Zúñiga.

Neither the Honduran government nor the private company Desarrollos Energéticos SA (Desa) asked the local population for permission before making the decision to widen the river using investment from China. In May

2013, when the first excavators arrived at the Gualcarque river, Berta Cáceres and Copinh's members stood face to face with armed military. Only one week after the organisation began its blockade of the construction site she and her colleague Tomás Gómez were stopped by the military and the vehicle they were travelling in was searched. The military claimed to have found an unregistered weapon in the vehicle, but they were released on trial. Berta Cáceres was soon accused of sedition and was forced to go underground, but the blockade continued. Berta revealed how Desa's chairman of the board David Castillo had previously worked for the military intelligence service and had been an advisor to the government. The secretary of the board also had links to the military, as did the company's head of security. A court cleared Berta Cáceres of the accusations of sedition as well, but the threats and harassment continued. As did Copinh's blockade and protests. Finally, the Chinese backers pulled out of the project.

In 2015 Berta Cáceres was awarded the prestigious Goldmann Environmental Prize. When Desa was promised new funding by Dutch and Finnish development banks, Berta Cáceres planned to visit the banks to stop their investments. Before she was able to do so, she was murdered, on the night of 3 March 2016. Today, Berta Cáceres is a symbol of the hazardous work of protesting against exploitation and privatisation of natural resources and land. Not only in Honduras and Central America, but throughout the world. Today the Agua Zarca dam construction project remains without funding.

An independent expert report in autumn 2017 revealed how the murder of Berta Cáceres was part of a larger strategy to "control, neutralise and eliminate" obstacles to the development of the Agua Zarca energy project. The report singled out several managers and security staff at Desa, as well as high-ranking government officials and security personnel, who were complicit in the planning and implementation of the murder. 66

In November 2018, seven men were convicted of the murder of Berta Cáceres. Earlier the same year David Castillo was arrested on suspicion of being the brains behind the attack.

 $^{^{55}}$ Cultivation systems that focus on a single plant species to the exclusion of all others, which represents the antithesis of diversified agriculture.

⁵⁶ Land Matrix 2016 ⁵⁷ IPCC 2019

⁵⁸ ILC

⁵⁹ IPBES 2019

o WRI 2005

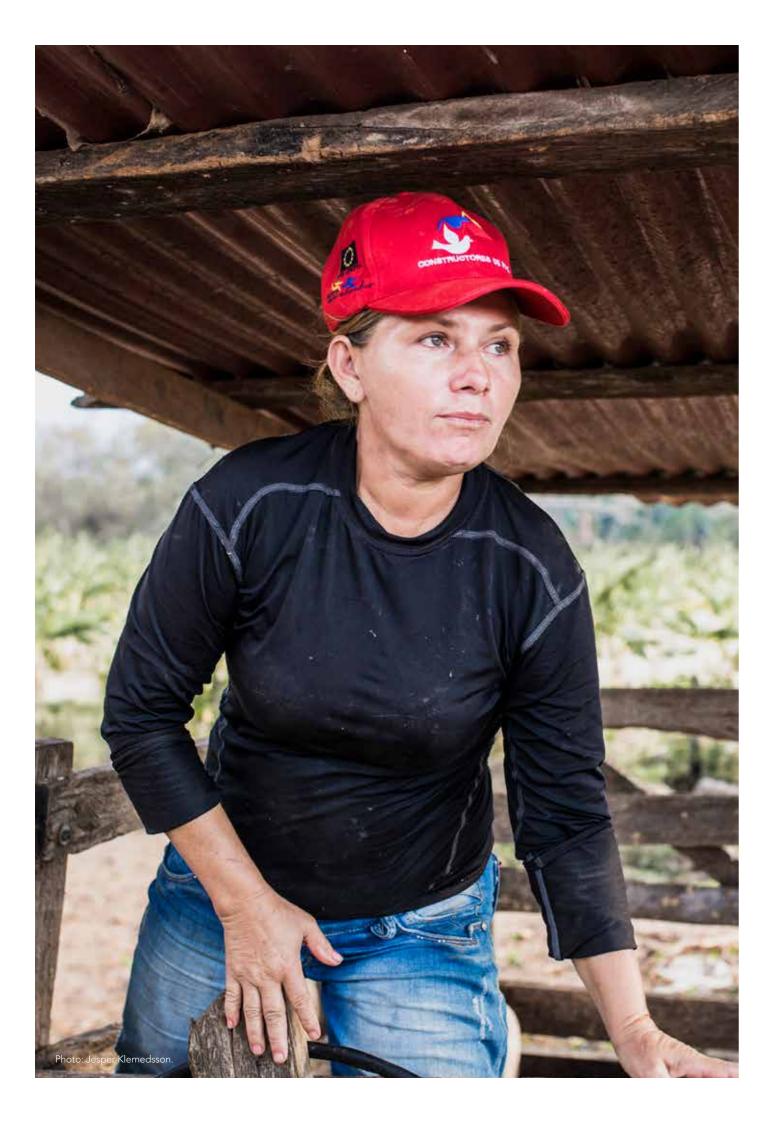
⁶¹ IPRES 2019

⁶² FAO. Biodiversity for Sustainable Agriculture 2018

⁶³ Africa Groups of Sweden 2018

⁶⁴ OHCHR 2018

⁶⁵ SRC 2016



NO LAND MEANS NO FUTURE

Eight million hectares. That's how much land armed groups seized from smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians during the war in Colombia. And they have still not got it back.

"Over there they're in the process of digging out.

They've found coal, so it will be turned into a mine, which will need lots of water. We'll have to see if we will be able to remain here," says Maria.

She looks out over a dry and barren landscape. It hasn't rained in six months and the water in wells and water-courses is drying up. The plantations in Maria's agricultural cooperative in the region of La Guajira in northern Colombia are drying out. Maria describes Colombia as a rich country with plentiful natural resources and fertile agricultural land. However, 81 % of the total agricultural land is owned by just 1 % of the country's farmers.

"At the same time there are people who don't have anything to eat. Children are dying of hunger and thirst. And the government provides no help. We live in a country with no future," she says.

"They have found coal, so it will be turned into a mine."

Like many other women in rural Colombia, Maria is a farmer with no land who is doomed to have to rent land to grow food for her family. Together with 40 or so other smallholder farmers, Maria belongs to an agricultural cooperative that grows cassavas, bananas and tomatoes on land they don't actually own. The small quantity left over once they have taken what they need themselves is sold.

"I grew up here and want to stay, but being a farmer with no land is not workable," says Maria.

When formulating its policies, the national government puts large-scale farmers and private companies at the forefront. Smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples and the Afro-Colombian community have been driven off land they have been living on and farming for generations. Politics favours exploitation of natural resources such as minerals, forest and hydropower or planting of vast areas of monocultures of bananas, sugar cane and oil palm from which palm oil is extracted. Products that are then primarily exported.

With no access to their own land many smallholder farmers lack the means to provide for their families. In La Guajira alone, 5,000 children have died from malnutrition since 2010. The huge social and economic disparities were at the root of the conflict that began in the 1960s and ended up being the longest civil war in the world. For over 50 years, the left-wing FARC guerrilla group waged war against the Colombian state. More than 250,000 people were killed, tens of thousands disappeared and more than seven million were forced to flee.

"Being a farmer with no land is not workable."

When a peace treaty was signed between the warring parties in 2016, this ignited a spark of hope among many in Colombia. However, peace is still a long way off. In rural Colombia, armed conflict still prevails. In some parts of the country the situation is described as chaotic, even worse than during the war. The victims now, as then, are smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians and women.

Ana is a member of the same agricultural cooperative as Maria. When she was 17, her father was murdered by paramilitary soldiers.

"Up to that point I had ignored the conflict. I didn't want anything to do with it, but we were poor farmers and belonged to an indigenous group. That was enough for us to become targets for action by the paramilitary," says Ana.

During the years of war, armed groups seized a total of almost eight million hectares of land, primarily from smallholder farmers, the indigenous population and the Afro-Colombian community. People were driven from their homes and farmland. Ana and her family were affected by this.

In La Guajira, Ana is now facing a new threat. Together with Maria and several others in the area she is working to stop the new coal mine.

"Here, it's the women who are taking up the fight. We know what the mining industry brings with it. Illnesses and other hardships for our children. We barely have any water as it is. If it runs out, what will we drink then? If the soil is depleted, what will we live on tomorrow?" asks Ana.

All over Colombia more and more people are doing the same as Maria and Ana. They are defending land and natural resources. They are defending the right to farm their own land that they feel they have been deprived of. They are defending access to water and other natural resources. They are fighting for their fundamental human rights – with their lives at stake.

"Here, it's the women who are taking up the fight."

Since the peace treaty was signed in 2016, more than 600 human rights defenders and social leaders of grassroots movements have been murdered in Colombia. The promised land reforms of the peace treaty are unpopular with the country's large-scale farmers and the wealthy upper class and have consequently not been implemented. The 2018 presidential election was won by the politicians who wanted to undermine the redistribution of land promised by the peace treaty. At the same time violence against those demanding that the peace treaty be implemented has increased.

Rosa, living west of La Guajira, is a member of another farming collective. So far no one she knows has been murdered, but she's sure it's only a matter of time.

"They will try to kill us. Because we're farmers protecting our natural resources and we want to make things better for everyone, not just the few," says Rosa.

She wants children to be able to go to school, the sick to receive healthcare, and everyone to have food on the table and a roof over their heads. Things that many in Colombia currently lack. For many women in rural areas, access to their own land for growing crops is a matter of survival. It's key to lifting themselves out of the poverty trap.

Economic empowerment and independence are also needed in order for women to strengthen their means for participating in political processes and building peace. With no land it's difficult for Maria, Ana and Rosa to be concerned with anything other than how to put food on the table every day.

"Having no land means that we don't have the means to develop other projects. To grow crops we need land. To build homes we need land. With rented land we can only manage small initiatives," says Rosa.

As the future looks now, Maria's, Ana's and Rosa's children will grow up facing the same challenges as their mothers.

"We have nothing. We are born poor, we continue to be poor, and we will die poor," says Ana.

RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Indigenous peoples are over-represented among those living in poverty in Latin America and under-represented in decision-making positions in society. The same applies to those who are descendants of people brought to the region as slaves from Africa. Both groups have a history of being excluded from society and not being viewed as full citizens. They are being driven off their land, their water sources are being polluted and their soil degraded. They are grappling with malnutrition and widespread teenage pregnancy. They are still subjected to discrimination and racism, in schools and on the labour market, for example. Despite the fact that the rights of indigenous peoples are protected by international conventions adopted by their countries, and sometimes also guaranteed in national laws, indigenous peoples generally lack secure access to land.

World Bank Group, UNDP

"WE ARE BEING PERSECUTED, VILIFIED, IMPRISONED"



Daniel Pascual, Guatemala. Photo: Anna Nylander.

Daniel Pascual lives under constant threat. One year ago, four members of his organisation were murdered – simply for fighting for the right to land and the rights of indigenous peoples.

"Land ownership is still predominantly what determines who has power in Guatemala," says Daniel Pascual, who is coordinator of Comité de Unidad Campesina, CUC.

The organisation has been subjected to violence and persecution for decades, due to conflicts over land. Daniel explains how a small minority of people in Guatemala own the vast majority of all land. Above all, it's a matter of fertile agricultural land being used for export crops, while the majority of the rural population in Guatemala have no occupation and can barely put food on the table for their families.

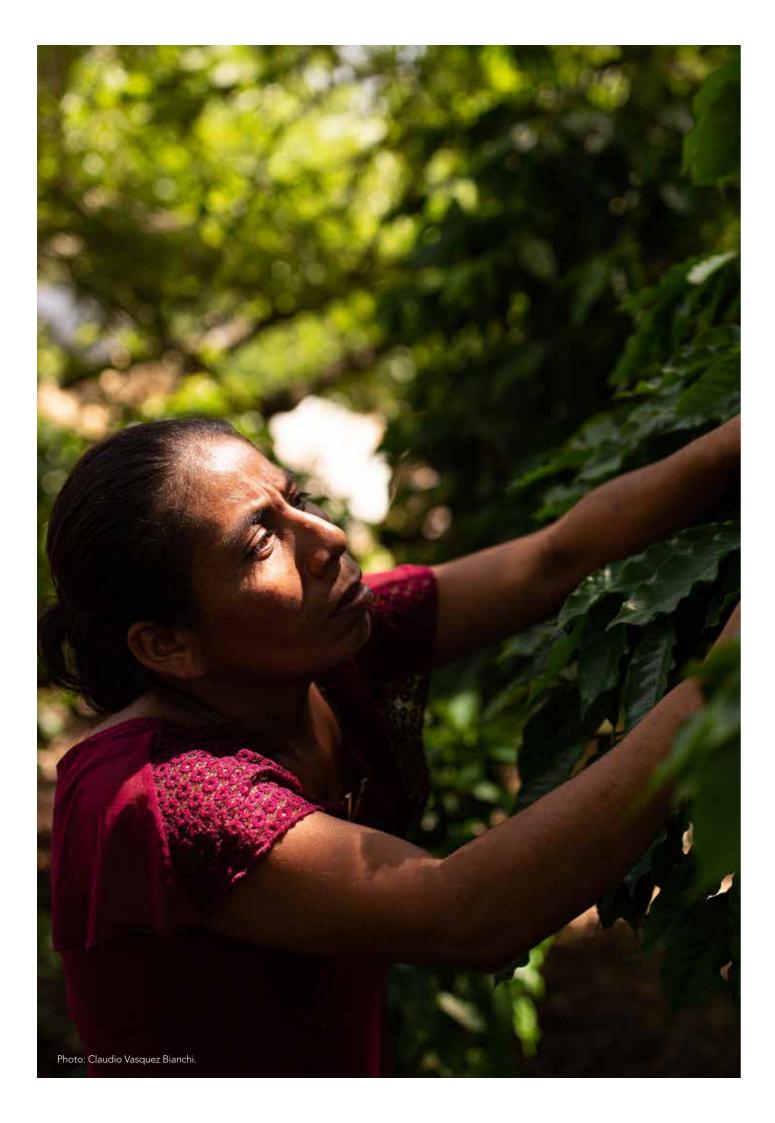
According to Daniel, the unequal distribution of land has a historical explanation. It's primarily down to the country's indigenous population being denied the right to own and farm land. An attempt was made to rectify the problem after the civil war (1960–1996), but with no tangible results.

CUC has been fighting for 20 years to ensure the comprehensive land reform promised after the war is implemented. Since nothing is happening, the organisation's members are occupying land that, after thorough investigation, they deem not to have a legitimate owner.

"However, private companies are often also interested in the land. They want to establish a mine or produce palm oil, for example, so our occupation frequently leads to confrontations. We are persecuted, vilified, imprisoned, they evict us by violent means and murder us. This is carried out by both the military and the police, as well as representatives of private security companies," says Daniel.

The attacks on CUC and other organisations fighting for access to land in Guatemala often take place with the knowledge of the government and the legal system. Therefore CUC has turned to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and international organisations, for support.

"It's about more than just the right to land. It's about fundamental rights such as access to healthcare, education, infrastructure, transport, a roof over your head and employment," says Daniel.



FORCED TO OCCUPY THEIR LAND

The land conflict in the Polochic valley has been going on for generations and has led to several murders and one massacre. Victoria and Claudia have been forced to occupy the land farmed by their ancestors – to prevent big companies from taking it over.

"We didn't even have chance to get our stuff out. They destroyed everything," Claudia explains in tears about the day in 2011 when the military forced out 800 families.

Claudia and Victoria live with their families in the Polochic valley in central Guatemala and have been fighting for their own land to farm and own since childhood. Like hundreds of other families, they have found themselves forced to occupy the land they consider they have a right to, in order to have somewhere to grow crops. Land that their ancestors farmed and lived off, but that big companies want to access for production of palm oil and sugar.

"The land is everything to us. Without it we have no food for our children, no water, no health. Without the land we are nothing," says Victoria.

"Without the land we are nothing."

In Guatemala, the majority of the population live in rural areas, and access to land is a guarantee of survival for millions of people. However, despite the fact that Guatemala is a rich country with vast natural resources and fertile farming land, very few people in rural areas have the means to live a dignified life. Victoria is no exception. She has no papers to say she owns her land. Neither did her parents, or their parents before them.

When the state seized the land a century ago, it was distributed to large-scale farmers and private companies. The indigenous population in the valley found themselves reduced to the lot of cheap labour or tenant farmers. Those who had lived in the valley for generations and transformed the dense jungle area into fertile farming land never got to reap the benefits of their hard work. Instead they were left living in slave-like conditions.

"We are battling to be able to feed ourselves, to give our children better opportunities, for them to be able to study, but we are constantly opposed," says Victoria. In the 1960s the inhabitants revolted. The protests went on during the country's bloody civil war (1960–1996) and culminated in a massacre in 1978, when more than 50 people were killed by the military. However, despite the peace, the unrest has continued. Private companies, backed by Guatemala's government and those in power locally, are buying up land to grow rubber trees, oil palms, sugar cane and bananas, widening rivers and establishing mines. New hydroelectric and mining projects are started up without consulting the local population.

Large-scale agriculture, based on monocultures and chemical pest control, threatens the biological diversity, and the living conditions of the smallholder farmers. Twenty years after the end of the war, local inhabitants of the Polochic valley are still being killed when they demand their rights and oppose the large-scale farming operations and the extractive industries. The military, police and representatives of private security companies carry out evictions on a regular basis that often end in violence.

"Houses were burned down and our crops were destroyed."

Four times, Claudia has been forced off land that she and her family have occupied by the military. The last time was the most dramatic, but it also resulted in her finally getting her own land.

"We women stood in front of the security forces to stop them, but it didn't do any good," says Claudia. Her voice breaks, and the tears flow as she thinks back on that fateful day in March 2011.

"The houses were burned down and our crops were destroyed. The most important thing for us was to get our children out alive. It is for their sake, for their future, that we continue to fight," says Claudia.

A total of 800 families were forced out. They left behind burning homes and fields. Several people were injured and one person was killed. Two months later, two more inhabitants were shot dead by unknown men. One of them was a local leader, María Margarita Chub, 37, who was executed in her own garden in front of her two children. It is often the women who are hit the hardest. They are the ones who take care of the home, provide food for the family and take care of the children. When the security

GUATEMALA

THE PHILIPPINES

forces come, the women place themselves in the front line to protect their families and communities. The conflict not only leads to physical violence, but also mental health problems. Many families have been torn apart.

"My husband left me and the children, it was too hard to keep fighting. But I continued to give my children a dignified life. Today I own my own land," says Claudia.

In 2011, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights compelled the Guatemalan government to take protective measures for the families that had been forced out of their homes that year. According to government sources, over 200 families have received support to buy their own land in the Polochic valley.

Women owning land in Guatemala is highly unusual, and the land that the women are allocated is usually less productive. However, women such as Victoria and Claudia in the Polochic valley are continuing to fight to change that.

"We intend to stay here. We are not afraid," says Claudia.

FACTS ABOUT GUATEMALA

- 6 % of land is used for production of palm oil
- 26 % of land is used for growing sugar cane
- 30 % of girls in Guatemala are married before the age of 18
- 76 % of the rural population live in poverty (2016)
- **0.84** is the Gini coefficient for land distribution in Guatemala (0 stands for maximal equality of distribution, 1 for maximal inequality)
- **16** % of the land is owned by smallholder farmers
- 8 % of the farmers who own or have secure access to land are women

Source: Oxfam 2016, FAO GLRD, ILC

GUIDELINES FOR THE BUSINESS SECTOR

For companies and investors who want to safeguard human rights and natural resources, there are several guiding, voluntary international instruments.

- ▶ The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, a framework endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011.
- ➤ The voluntary guidelines of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests includes guidance regarding land rights.
- ➤ The principles of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems are a set of ten principles.

- 26 -

Sources: FAO, CFS, UN.

CHINESE DAM THREATENS RAINFOREST

The Philippine government wants to build a dam in the middle of the rainforest, using funding from China. The local population and biological diversity have not been taken into account. As a result of the dam construction project, indigenous leader Conchita is living under the threat of death.

"It doesn't scare me. It would be an honour to die for something I believe in," says Conchita, 57.

"It is my duty to protect the forest."

She is a leader of the Dumagat-Remontado indigenous group, who since time immemorial have lived in the rainforests and river basins of the Sierra Madre mountain range, which encompasses hillsides, peaks and valleys. Here and there among the dense vegetation are small clearings with individual houses and vegetable plots. Conchita stands in one such plot among her crops.

"We live a simple, but good, life here. The forest has been a part of my life since I was born," says Conchita. But now the culture and livelihoods of the indigenous people is threatened by construction of a dam that will be 60 metres high and supply the 13 million plus residents of the metropolitan region of Manila with 600 million litres of water per day. The Kaliwa dam will only be operational for five years – at the expense of 300 hectares of forest being lost and thousands of families being forced to leave their homes and land. Thousands more will be living in the risk zone for flooding and other hazards if the dam were to fail or break. Some of the areas that will be affected are nature reserves that are home to many endemic plant and animal species, some of which are endangered. In addition, the indigenous population have burial grounds all around the region, as well as other sacred sites.

"That is where we worship, pray and go for healing."



- 27 -

Photo: Jesper Klemedsson

Conchita feels that the government do not respect the religion of the indigenous peoples, and she is one of the most active leaders in the Stop the Dam coalition, which is trying to halt the construction project. The coalition is supported by We Effect.

"The government views the forest as something they can exploit. To us, the forest is sacred. My grandparents taught me that we have inherited the forest's resources from our ancestors. It is my duty to protect the forest," says Conchita.

The Philippines have signed up to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the ILO's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, but have yet to ratify them. However, there are many national laws that guarantee the right of indigenous peoples to live in their ancestral domains. Stop the Dam feels that the authorities have breached several of these laws and will be pursuing the case in court.

"I believe that we can win the fight through legal processes and by uniting with other groups. Together we are strong," says Conchita.

"I am an indigenous leader and at risk of being murdered."

If the dam is constructed, the nearby Agos river will dry up and around 100,000 farmers downstream will be left without water, as will their cereal, sugar cane and rice crops. The bartering between the tribal communities in the uplands and the river basin will become merely a memory. The people of the uplands obtain fish and rice from the lowlands in exchange for bananas, coconuts and

other crops that grow in the forests. In a lowland river basin, in the southern regions of the Sierra Madre, 59-year-old mother-of-eight Nelly stands knee-deep in the water drawing in a fishing net. She is also an indigenous leader and active in the coalition against the dam. She receives frequent visits from representatives of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, which is behind the dam project. Nelly states that they try to bribe her and other indigenous leaders to get them on their side.

"Only the other day they came here, giving out food and sweets to people. We don't need their food. The forest gives us everything we need," she says.

At the end of 2018 the Philippine government entered into a loan agreement with China, which is to fund the dam project. Despite the fact that only one, out of six, indigenous organisations involved has given its consent for the project, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has issued an environmental compliance certificate. Construction of an access road to the site of the planned dam has already begun. Chinese workers and armed men are showing up in the area.

"I assume that the Chinese are engineers and that the armed men are their bodyguards. It's scary to have armed groups here. I am an indigenous leader and at risk of being murdered," says Nelly. Not that she will let the dangers stop her from fighting, despite the fact that the Philippines is the most dangerous country in the world for land rights and environmental defenders, with 49 activists murdered in 2019.

"We will keep fighting," says Nelly.

FACTS ABOUT THE KALIWA DAM

- ▶ The plan for the Kaliwa dam was presented in 2012. The process was speeded up after water shortages in the Metro Manila capital region in March 2018, and a loan agreement was entered into with China for funding of the dam construction. Opponents state the water crisis is due to mismanagement and not a shortage of water.
- ▶ The dam is estimated to be 60 metres high, but otherwise there is no final design. It will be developed during the construction process. This poses many questions, including the actual size of the dam.
- ▶ The rainforest in the Sierra Madre is the largest in the Philippines and its biological diversity is vast. It includes 334 bird species, 1476 fish species and 963 species of invertebrate. Several of these are globally endangered species.

Sources: FAO, CFS, UN.



CAUSE OF DEATH: FARMER

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Afrikagrupperna, "Fröer", 2018.
- Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). "Our Right To Safety: Women Human Rights Defenders' Holistic Approach to Protection", 2014.
- Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC). https://www.business-humanrights.org/en
- BHRRC. "Human Rights Defenders & Business, January 2020 Snapshot" https://dispatches.business-humanrights.org/ hrd-january-2020/index.html
- CIVICUS. "People Power under Attack", 2019.
- Committee on World Food Security (CFS). "Principles for responsible investments in agriculture and food systems", 2014.
- Council on Hemispheric Affairs. "Human Rights Violations in Honduras: Land Seizures, peasants' Repression, and the Struggle for Democracy on the Ground", 2014.
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

 "Gender and Land Rights: Understanding Complexities;
 Adjusting Policies", 2010.
- FAO. "The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security," 2012.
- FAO. "Realizing Women's Rights to Land in The Law. A Guide for Reporting on SDG Indicator 5.a.2", 2018.
- FAO. "Biodiversity for Sustainable Agriculture", 2018.
- FAO. "Annual report 2018 Latin America and Caribbean", 2019.
- FAO regional office for Latin America. "Panorama of Rural poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean 2018," 2018.
- Federal Court of Accounts of Brazil. "The Coordinated Audit for the Sustainable Development Goals", 2018.
- Freedom House. "Freedoms under Threat", 2019.
- Front Line Defenders (FLD). "Front Line Defenders Global Analysis 2018", 2019.
- FLD. "Front Line Defenders Global Analysis 2019", 2020.
- Global Witness. "At what cost?", 2018.
- Global Witness. "Defending the Philippines", 2019.
- Global Witness. "Enemies of the State?", 2019.
- Guatemala Human Rights Commission (GHRC). "Crushed by injustice", 2018.
- Indepaz. "Todos los nombres, todos los rostros", 2019.

- International Advisory Group of Experts (GAIPE). "Dam violence", 2017.
- International Land Coalition (ILC). "SDGs and Land Rights", https://www.landcoalition.org/en/sdgs-and-land-rights
- IPBES. "Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services", 2019.
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). "Climate Change and Land", 2019.
- International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL). "Coronavirus and Civic Space", 2020.
- Landesa. "Women Gaining Ground: Securing Land Rights as a Critical Pillar of Climate Change Strategy", 2015.
- Land Matrix. "International Land Deals for Agriculture. Fresh insights from the Land Matrix: Analytical Report II", 2016.
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). "The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights", 2011.
- OHCHR. "Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment", 2018.
- Oxfam. "Unearthed: Land, Power and Inequality in Latin America", 2016.
- Reuters, 27 February 2020 https://www.reuters.com/article/ us-guatemala-corruption/guatemala-approves-civilsociety-restrictions-despite-u-s-pressure-idUSKCN20L2VX
- Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC). "The 2030 Agenda and Ecosystems", 2016.
- Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, (SSNC). "Environmental defenders under attack", 2019.
- UN Human Rights Council report A/HRC/43/3/Add.3, 2020
- UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst. Report A/72/170, 2017.
- UN Women. "Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", 2018.
- World Bank Group. "Afro-descendants in Latin America: Toward a Framework of Inclusion", 2018.
- World Resources Institute (WRI). "The Wealth of the Poor Managing Ecosystems to Fight Poverty", 2005.

- 30 -

CAUSE OF DEATH: FARMER



We Effect operates in more than 20 countries on four continents.

Global pressure on land and natural resources is increasing due to climate change and large-scale economic interests. At the same time civic space is shrinking and land and environmental defenders are being threatened and murdered.

We Effect works in four of the world's deadliest countries for land and environmental defenders, Colombia, the Philippines, Guatemala and Honduras. We are working with member organisations for women, small-holder farmers and indigenous peoples. In all these countries farmers are forced to become human rights defenders in order to keep farming the piece of land that is their only means of subsistence. The report 'Cause of death: Farmer' aims to bring their voices to the fore and has charted the threats and violence linked to their work.

