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First UA: 47/23 Index: AMR 28/6732/2023 Ecuador of April 28, 2023

## **ECUADOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER PABLO FAJARDO STIGMATIZED**

On April 26, 2023, in the Ecuadorian National Assembly, the Minister of Energy and Mines of Ecuador accused the lawyer of the Union of People Affected by Texaco (UDAPT), Pablo Fajardo Mendoza, of being an "international criminal". The accusation was in relation to his defense of human rights, mainly of indigenous peoples and communities, against the impacts of oil company operations in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

Contrary to its obligations to provide a safe environment for the defense of human rights, the Ecuadorian State continues to defame and stigmatize human rights defenders, especially those who oppose the impacts of oil industry operations and support climate justice.

### **Write to the Ecuadorian President urging the government to:**

- Refrain from using expressions that stigmatize, insult or discredit Pablo Fajardo and the members of UDAPT, and guarantee their safety.
- Guarantee that human rights defenders can carry out their work in a safe environment, and to publicly recognize the extreme importance of those who defend human rights and the environment in Ecuador, and thereby help to combat the current global climate crisis.

### **Write to:**

Mr Guillermo Lasso  
President of Ecuador  
Palacio de Gobierno, García Moreno N10-43  
entre Chile y Espejo, 170401  
Quito, Ecuador  
Email: [atencionciudadana@presidencia.gob.ec](mailto:atencionciudadana@presidencia.gob.ec)  
[pozof@presidencia.gob.ec](mailto:pozof@presidencia.gob.ec)  
Twitter: @LassoGuillermo  
Salutation: Your Excellency:

### **And copy:**

His Excellency Carlos Alberto Patricio JATIVA NARANJO  
Ambassador  
Embassy of the Republic of Ecuador  
99 Bank Street, Suite 230  
Ottawa, ON K1P 6B9  
Tel: (613) 563-8206 Fax: (613) 235-5776  
Email: [eecucanada@cancilleria.gob.ec](mailto:eecucanada@cancilleria.gob.ec)

**Also send a copy to Canada's Ambassador in Ecuador:**

Ambassador Stephen Potter  
Embassy of Canada in Ecuador  
RGG7+CQR, Av. Río Amazonas,  
Quito 170135, Ecuador  
Email: [stephen.potter@international.gc.ca](mailto:stephen.potter@international.gc.ca)

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Pablo Fajardo Mendoza is an Ecuadorian lawyer and activist. Since 1993 he has been active in legal proceedings against the socio-environmental impacts of oil extraction in Lago Agrio (Sucumbíos, Amazonas). In this context, he has represented indigenous and peasant leaders and more than 33,000 people organized in the Union of People Affected by Texaco (UDAPT). Because of this work, Fajardo has been the target of repeated threats and intimidation. For this reason, in 2005, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued precautionary measures for Fajardo and his litigation team. He has also been listed as an "individual at risk" by Amazon Watch.

On April 26, 2023, Ecuador's Minister of Energy and Mines accused defender Pablo Fajardo Mendoza of being an "international criminal" due to his leadership in several judicial processes against international oil corporations operating in the Ecuadorian Amazon. The minister made the accusations during his appearance at the 184th session of the Collective, Community and Intercultural Rights Commission of the Ecuadorian National Assembly. Previously, in an interview in the media "La Barra Espaciadora" the minister made comments meant to discredit the work of the legal enforceability of human rights carried out by Pablo Fajardo Mendoza.

Pablo Fajardo Mendoza is being stigmatized for his work in defense of Amazonian communities, as well as for all of his legal advocacy work against human rights violations caused by the oil industry in Ecuador, a fundamental aspect of climate justice.

The State must guarantee the protection of Pablo Fajardo and other members of the strategic litigation collective Unión de Afectados por Texaco (UDAPT) and put an end to the stigmatization of their actions in defense of the rights of communities affected by oil extraction.