

FOREST DEFENDERS: NEW THREATS AND NEW RESPONSES

Tuesday, 23 April 2019 | 18:30-20:00

Conference Room 4 | United Nations Secretariat, New York

Official Side Event for the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)

Tropical forests are critical for addressing climate change and achieving sustainable development. They are also home to indigenous peoples and forests communities, who have protected and managed them for generations, and now find themselves on the front lines of the deforestation crisis, their lives and livelihoods threatened by illegal logging and mining operators, poachers, agribusiness, drug traffickers and even governments. In 2017 alone, 207 environmental defenders were killed protecting their lands, territories and forests from destruction, a disproportionate number of them indigenous people. As the threats to forest defenders are growing, new responses are also emerging. This side event will showcase several new and innovative initiatives that are defending the defenders of forests and can inform future work in this area.

Host and Moderator: **Alec Baldwin**, Actor & Activist

Opening Invocation

Benki Piyako, Shaman, Ashaninka people of the Amazon

Introductory Remarks

Reverend Fletcher Harper, Executive Director, GreenFaith and member of the Global Steering Committee of the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative

The role of religious leaders in defending environmental defenders

Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and member of the Global Steering Committee of the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative

Global Campaign Against Criminalizing of Indigenous Peoples

A brief introduction to the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI), an international, multi-faith alliance working to bring moral urgency and faith-based leadership to global efforts to protect tropical forests and the rights of indigenous peoples. This event is organized by IRI to compile lessons from existing initiatives about best practices in defending the defenders of rainforests and explore where religious leaders and faith communities can add value to this effort.

Threats to Forest Defenders and New Responses

Andy White, Coordinator, Rights & Resources Initiative (RRI)

Overview of threats and update on new initiatives to stop criminalization of defenders

Gregorio Diaz Mirabal, General Coordinator, Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA)

Status of forest defenders in the Amazon and new programs including the Andes-Amazon-Atlantic Corridor

Carole Excell, Acting Director, Environmental Democracy Practice, World Resources Institute

Raising the bar on advocacy & action: Update on the work of the Defending Land & Environmental Defenders Coalition

Patricia Gualinga, Kichwa people, Sarayaku, Ecuador

Amazonian Women Defenders Against Extraction

Leila Salazar-López, Executive Director, Amazon Watch

International solidarity to protect the Amazon & defend indigenous land defenders

Alexander von Bismarck, Executive Director, Environmental Investigation Agency

New technologies and systems on the ground to empower and protect environmental defenders

Sonia Guajajara, National Coordinator, Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB)

Responding to rollbacks and attacks to indigenous rights and territories

Rukka Sombolinggi, (invited) Secretary General, Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN), Indonesia

Video, "Aruanas" TV Series and campaign, featuring Beatriz Azeredo, Director of Social Responsibility, Globo TV

A showcase of new and innovative approaches to defending the defenders of forests by raising their profiles, securing their rights, and creating political space for them to continue their important work. Featured initiatives include emerging international campaigns, faith-based mobilization projects, an innovative TV series, and new technologies to protect forest defenders.

This section will also include reflections from indigenous leaders on the threats facing forest defenders, what indigenous peoples and forest communities on the frontlines see as the most promising interventions for creating enduring change, and guidance for movements looking to partner with indigenous peoples and make their safety a main focus of their advocacy and mobilization efforts.

Responses from Governments

HE Mona Juul, Ambassador to the United Nations, Government of Norway

Interfaith Rainforest Initiative and the UN Human Rights Council resolution on environmental human rights defenders

HE Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous Relations, Government of Canada

Reflections from governments actively promoting forest protection and the rights of indigenous peoples on their motivations and commitment to continue to support this issue, and a call to other governments to adopt, fulfill and expand upon existing commitments to defend forest defenders.

Respondents

Lizardo Cauper Pezo, President, Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana (AIDSESP), on the work of the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative in Peru to protect forest defenders

Tuntiak Katan, Vice-General Coordinator, COICA on the Sacred Headwaters of the Amazon initiative

Closing Remarks

Alec Baldwin, Actor & Activist



INTERFAITH
RAINFOREST
INITIATIVE



Norwegian Ministry
of Climate and Environment



WORLD
RESOURCES
INSTITUTE



Pachamama
Alliance



ENVIRONMENTAL
INVESTIGATION
AGENCY



Environmental
Rights Initiative
Promote, Protect, Respect Environmental Rights



Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara



AIDSESP
Asociación Interétnica
de Desarrollo de la
Selva Peruana



Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas
de la Cuenca Amazónica