

DECLARATION OF THE SECOND MESOAMERICAN FORUM AGAINST REPRESSION: “FOR THE WATER AND LIFE OF OUR COMMUNITIES

La Esperanza, Intibuca, Honduras July 18th to the 24th, 2003

Preoccupied by the rising invasion of repressive construction projects that huge transnational corporations and multilateral organisms in alliance with the corrupt governments of the Mesoamerican region impose, approximately 150 of us come together: displaced, widowed, orphaned, we are survivors of the repression.

We meet with the objective of sharing and analyzing our experiences to strengthen the fight in defense of our natural resources, our culture, our lands, and our own lives, which are being threatened by the imposition of economic and military plans against the self-determination of our communities.

To continue with the agreements made during the First Mesoamerican Forum Against Repression in Petén, Guatemala, in March 2001, following up with the accords made during the First Mesoamerican Forum Against Repression in Petén, Guatemala, in March of 2001, **We Consider:**

1. That the proliferation of hydroelectric projects in our countries are not for the energy needs of our communities, but rather respond to the requirement to create the necessary infrastructure to develop the neoliberal economic model through the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the different free trade agreements at the continental level, the Puebla-Panama Plan, and the Plan Colombia, among others.
2. That repressive construction projects exist in all Mesoamerican territory, and that they are located in indigenous and peasant communities characterized by their great natural and cultural richness. These projects work against the survival of our communities and for the disappearance of our territories.
3. That the economic, social, environmental, and cultural impacts of the hydroelectric projects have caused irreparable losses in all the Mesoamerican territory. This is evidence of the enormous contradiction of the supposed development promoted by the government and the disastrous consequences that we are living in the flesh.

Therefore, in exercising the right of free determination of our communities, **WE AGREE:**

1. We energetically condemn and repudiate the cowardly and brutal assassination of our partner Carlos Arturo Reyes, member of the Environmental Movement of Olancho, Honduras, who was riddled with bullets on Friday, July 18th of this year. Reyes was prominent for his constant fighting spirit in defense of the forests and against the Hydroelectric Project Babylon, which is being constructed in Olancho, for which he received numerous death threats.
2. We demand the cease of the persecution, taking of hostages, repression, jailing and assassinations against the leaders who fight in defense of the dignity of the communities affected by these kinds of projects as well as repression.

3. We demand that the governments respect the sovereignty and self-determination of our communities and that they comply with international agreements on human rights, economics, and social and cultural policies.

4. We demand political plans from our governments that respond to the needs of our communities and not to the policies of transnational corporations and international financial organisms.

5. We demand that the governments of our countries immediately cease the construction of all hydroelectric projects that are in the process of construction and that they do not grant more concessions of any body of water to private entities. At the same time, we demand that they guarantee and respect the use of water as a collective community benefit.