



# **Restart of operations of the Morelos Integral Project **violates** the rights of towns and ejidos and **puts defenders at risk****

- In the early morning hours of Monday, 23 November, the National Guard evacuated the Apatlaco Camp and allowed the entry of machinery to restart the construction of a pipeline.
- The government's initiative to launch the Morelos Integral Project (PIM) violates resolutions issued in 10 of 19 current amparo (constitutional protection) trials that order the suspension of the PIM operation.
- Ignoring the legal status violates the right to protest and the right to defend human rights, and puts members of the Peoples' Front in Defense of Land and Water - Morelos, Puebla and Tlaxcala (FPDTA-MPT) and Ejidos de Ayala en Defensa del Agua in danger.

In the early morning of 23 November, 300 members of the National Guard arrived at the Zapatista Camp in Apatlaco, located on both sides of the Cuautla River in the state of Morelos, to evict the camp that was guarding the territory. The Guard placed metal fences to prevent human rights defenders (HRDs) – who were there to protect their territory – from relocating the camp. Later, the National Guard allowed the entry of machinery to restart construction work that violated the rights to water, to self-determination, to land and territory, and to life in various communities, particularly those in the ejidos of Ayala, Morelos.

It is worrisome that the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) is trying to validate the development of the PIM by placing pipes in the Cuautla River, ignoring the fact that this infrastructure is part of an aqueduct that will feed the two thermoelectric plants in Huexca - the two most important constructions in the PIM. The CFE is also ignoring the 8 protections for the defense of the water of the Sprinkler Treatment Plant of Cuautla that becomes a tributary of the Cuautla River and against the aqueduct that would connect to the thermoelectric plant. It is necessary to listen



to the demands of the affected native peoples who have expressed their absolute rejection of the development of mega-projects such as the thermoelectric plant, the gas pipeline, as well as the aforementioned aqueduct.

It is especially alarming that this occurs in a context of constant and serious aggressions and violations of human rights for more than a decade against the members of the FPDTA-MPT and Ejidos in Defense of Water of Ayala, who live in a context of imminent danger because of their roles as HRDs defending the territory. Its members have faced threats, harassment, and defamation for their work; lawsuits, attacks by armed groups, surveillance, court orders, imprisonment, torture, and the still-unpunished murder of defender Samir Flores.

In 2020, at least 22 aggressions of different types against members of the FPDTA-MPT have been documented. In addition, there is concern that the now present National Guard will also engage in actions that violate the rights to protest and the right to defend human rights in a disproportionate operation. All of this despite the existence of 19 amparos filed against the works, of which 10 have required temporary suspension and/or definitively granted.

As a state-owned company, the CFE has a special obligation to set an example of respect for human rights, as well as to not make use of the security forces to implement its projects, such as the PIM. Instead, the CFE and other government authorities should respect the various legal remedies provided to communities due to the failure to engage in human rights due diligence, including free and informed consultation and prior consent processes.

The current situation is of great concern to the signatory organizations because it shows a lack of compliance by the Federal Executive Branch with the determinations of the Judicial Branch. Once again we reiterate the call for a dialogue between the federal government and the FPDTA-MPT and Ejidos de Ayala in Defense of Water to clarify the legal situation. To continue to ignore the suspensions issued in the judicial system means to that protections are removed and danger is increased for communities and HRDs in a context of harassment, threats and harassment towards people who defend territory and water against the various operations of the PIM.

This is why we once again call on the authorities:

To the Federal Government:

- To publicly clarify the legal situation of the PIM, and to recognize and respect the flat and definitive suspensions granted against the PIM up to now.
- To respect and guarantee the right to consultation and consent of indigenous peoples.
- To guarantee the security and lives of the people who make up the Apatlaco Camp and the members of the FPDTA-MPT and Ejidos de Ayala in Defense of Water
- To suspend the work on the completion of the aqueduct.
- To withdraw the National Guard and any police force that could intimidate and endanger the physical integrity and rights to free association and protest and the right to defend the human rights of the peasants affected by the Morelos Integral Project.
- To revise the PIM in light of the international human rights obligations of the State and its companies, including establishing a process of due diligence in human rights with a preventive approach, of mitigation and reparation for the damages committed.
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To the companies involved in the PIM:

- To express their rejection of the actions carried out by the Federal Government in relation to the lack of compliance with the suspensions granted against the PIM, since these actions do not respect the rule of law.
- To establish a human rights due diligence process to review the adverse impacts that the PIM has caused for the FPDTA-MPT and Ejidos de Ayala communities in Defense of Water, and evaluate its continuation given the human rights risks to them.
- To address their own human rights policies, especially those elements related to the right to community participation, the right to consultation and consent, and the right to defend human rights.
- To refrain from promoting any action by the government that fails to guarantee human rights, and cooperate to implement the decisions of the judiciary.
- To refrain from retaliating against dissenting voices or critical individuals and groups, and instead seek open, honest and equitable dialogue regarding the demands of affected communities.