

23 June 2021

Costa Rica: New death threats against Brörán indigenous leader Pablo Sibas Sibas

On 22 June 2021, Whatsapp audio messages containing various death threats against indigenous peoples' rights defender **Pablo Sibas Sibas** were released. The messages were disseminated on social media networks and urged habitants of Cabagra, Puntarenas province, to "give him a good hard kicking and to blow up the car and the university bus" in which Pablo Sibas Sibas, a lawyer and a representative of the National University (which identities remain anonymous for security reasons), all of whom are human rights defenders from Terraba, were travelling in.

[Pablo Sibas Sibas](#) is a Brörán indigenous peoples' rights defender and is the current coordinator of the National Front of Indigenous Peoples (FRENAPI), focusing on the rights to freedom, autonomy and land for indigenous peoples. For over 40 years, he has promoted peaceful resistance initiatives for the restitution of indigenous peoples' lands that were usurped by non-indigenous occupiers.

On 22 June 2021, defender Pablo Sibas Sibas was in the indigenous territory of Cabagra when the audio messages with threats and incitement to attack him began to be disseminated, revealing the exact location of the human rights defender and his companions. The new threats are not an isolated incident. In recent months, Pablo Sibas Sibas and other Brörán defenders of the territory have repeatedly denounced to local authorities that they have received [threats on social media networks](#).

These events are particularly worrying, given that Pablo Sibas Sibas was the victim of an assassination attempt in July 2020 by a worker of one of the non-indigenous occupiers in the Terraba territory, who attempted to run him over. This is added to the context in which two indigenous peoples' rights defenders have already been killed in connection with their legitimate defence work: [Sergio Rojas Ortiz](#) on 18 March 2019 and [Jhery Rivera Rivera](#) on 24 February 2020.

Over the years, indigenous peoples' rights defenders have reported being the target of attacks, harassment, verbal and physical violence and death threats by non-indigenous occupants of the territory and have reported that the precautionary measures granted to the Brörán People of the Bribri territory of Salitre by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) have not been implemented by the Costa Rican government.

Front Line Defenders reiterates again its deep concern regarding the threats and incitement to violence against human rights defender Pablo Sibas Sibas and other defenders of the Brörán people, as well as the unwillingness of the Costa Rican State to satisfactorily and effectively implement the protection measures granted by the IACHR.

Front Line Defenders urges the Costa Rican authorities to:

1. Conduct an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the death threats against defender Pablo Sibas Sibas and other defenders of the rights of Brörán indigenous peoples, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Take all necessary measures, including the resumption of security and protection measures for both defender Pablo Sibas Sibas and collective protection, in order to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of all defenders of the rights of indigenous peoples in the territory of Térraba, in consultation with them, and refrain from taking unilateral measures concerning their security arrangements;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Costa Rica, in particular those defending indigenous rights, are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and without any restrictions.