



13 February 2024

**Mexico: Sentence against human rights defenders David Hernández Salazar, member of the Assembly of Indigenous Peoples of the Isthmus in Defence of Land and Territory (APIIDTT)**

Front Line Defenders and the Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos “Todos los Derechos para Todas, Todos y Todes” (Red TDT) condemn the sentencing of human rights defender David Hernandez Salazar, which they believe are in reprisals for his legitimate and peaceful defence of human rights.

On 7 February 2024, the Judge of Control of Salinas Cruz sentenced human rights defender **David Hernández Salazar** to 46 years and 6 months imprisonment, a fine of \$182,818 (one hundred eighty-two thousand eight hundred eighteen pesos), and the payment of \$1,100,015 (one million one hundred thousand fifteen pesos) in damages. The defender had been indicted with 17 other members of the Binniza Indigenous Community of Puente Madera for protesting against the installation of the “Polo de Desarrollo” in San Blas on their common lands El Pitayal as part of the Inter-Oceanic Corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (CIIT) project.

[David Hernández Salazar](#) is a Community Municipal Agent in the area of Puente Madera, a general coordinator of the Assembly of Indigenous Peoples of the Isthmus in Defence of Land and Territory (APIIDTT) and of the National Indigenous Congress (CNI). Since 2017, he has actively worked peacefully in defence of the right to the common use lands known as El Pitayal, for which he has been a target of criminalization since then. As a consequence of his work in the defence of the common use lands of the Binniza Indigenous Community, in 2023 the immediate suspension of the “Polo de Desarrollo” in San Blas Atempa was achieved.

On 7 February 2024, the Judge of Control of Salinas Cruz sentenced David Hernández to 46 years and 6 months for the crimes of damages caused by fire and malicious injury, allegedly committed at the municipality of San Blas while the defender was on his way to the community radio station Didxazza Stipa of San Blas Atempa to report acts of harassment he has been a target of in the previous days. The charges against the defender were filed by the Municipality of San Blas Atempa and the National Agrarian Register (RAN), the latter declining as a complainant later.

This is the second attempt of criminalization against the defender for his defence of the Binniza territory. In 2021, the Secretary of Communications and Transportation (SCT) and the Municipality of San Blas Atempa [filed criminal charges against him for the crime of attacks on roads related to the protests of March 2021](#) in the community of Puente Madera. The defender David Hernández was later excluded of the process.

Concurrently to the sentence object of this appeal, on 18 October 2023, the defender David Hernández was notified with a [new criminal proceeding against him related to attacks on critical infrastructure](#). The initial hearing is scheduled for 21 February. Front Line Defenders, the Red TDT and more national and international organizations [have already called on](#) the context of violence and violation of human rights against the communities that defend their land and territory against the CIIT in the region of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Oaxaca.

Front Line Defenders and the Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos “Todos los Derechos para Todas, Todos y Todes” (Red TDT) reiterates its condemnation of the sentencing of human rights defender David Hernandez Salazar, as the organisations believe it has the intention to intimidate and restrict his human rights work by the imposition of allegations and excessive sentences.

**Front Line Defenders and the Red TDT urge the authorities in México to:**

1. Drop the charges against David Hernández Salazar and allow for his immediate and unconditional release, as his sentence is motivated solely by his legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;
2. Guarantee that the Puente Madera community and the Assembly of Indigenous Peoples of the Isthmus in Defence of Land and Territory are able to exercise their human rights defense at all times;
3. Take measures to guarantee that all human rights defenders, in the carrying out of their legitimate activities in defence of human rights, can operate freely without fear of restrictions or reprisals in Mexico, including judicial harassment.