

# LUCHA, RESISTENCIA Y BOSQUE

## URGENT ACTION

**Stop illegal logging and violence in Sierra Tarahumara  
Struggle, resistance and forest**

**Urgent Action 008**

**Mexico City, May 15, 2023**

More than an Urgent Action, this is an urgent call to stop the illegal logging that since 2015 provoked an increase in the levels of violence in the Sierra Tarahumara, Chihuahua, Mexico.

During the last 8 months, logging has been practiced uninterruptedly. It not only affects indigenous communities of the region, but it is also a planetary deterioration.

It is urgent to stop illegal logging in the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua due to environmental damage, forced internal displacement, murders and multiple and irreparable violations of human rights such as autonomy, self-determination, and free, prior and informed consultation. The right to live in a community according to indigenous peoples' culture, language, community welfare of children, healing through traditional medicine and preserving their food systems. The rights to life, security and freedom from violence have also been restricted.

Indigenous peoples of the region have denounced that illegal logging intensified since 2015 and in the last 8 months it has worsened. Currently, there has yet to be a comprehensive action plan to prevent illegal logging in the forests of the Sierra Tarahumara of Chihuahua. The actions that have been taken by the municipal, state and federal governments are not enough as multiple economic and political interests are involved. In which the authorities do not have adequate control.

Since 1966, at least 22 people have been killed for defending the forest and territory. The devastation affects not only indigenous communities but also local people inhabitants, agriculture, cities and those who benefit from water from the lower parts of the Rio Grande and Pacific watersheds that supply the states of Chihuahua, Sonora and Sinaloa.

### Background:

Indigenous communities in the Sierra Tarahumara have protected the forest with their lives in the face of legal and illegal logging. For more than 30 years they have been fighting and defending themselves through agrarian, civil and criminal proceedings to defend the forest,

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nature, water and territory that by ancestral right belongs to them, against the commercial interests of powerful people linked to criminal groups.

Damage to nature and the water cycle is irreversible. The Sierra Tarahumara eco-region is commercially important because it generates water for the hydrological basins of southern Sonora, Sinaloa, and the Río Conchos, which supply the main agricultural areas of Chihuahua, Sonora, and Sinaloa. In addition, through the course of the Conchos River, more than 50% is contributed to the payment of the water treaty signed with the United States in 1944, and drinking and industrial water is provided to the border cities on the Mexican side on the Rio Bravo basin, in addition to the agricultural region of the Tamaulipas Valley.

Therefore, we demand:

- To develop a comprehensive action plan to stop illegal logging in the Sierra Tarahumara.
- Urgent actions to stop illegal logging immediately, such as the implementation of permanent operations, the review of timber processing centers and illegal timber commercialization networks.
- That displaced persons' right to a dignified and safe return to their communities be guaranteed.

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