

Executive summary

Environmental rights violations, forced displacement and community resistance:

Extractive projects against life and as factors of
community displacement in Colombia, Honduras and
Mexico





This comparative report on forced displacement resulting of environmental rights violations in Mexico, Honduras and Colombia aims to give visibility and expose the relationship between the multiple violations of environmental rights and the impact of transnational corporations on forced displacement, highlighting the work of human rights defenders and community resistance against the so-called mega-projects threatening land and life.

The first part of the report provides a contextual analysis while framing regional and national regulations on environmental subjects, the situation of indigenous peoples and the protection of human rights defenders.

The second part of the report addresses socio-environmental conflicts as a result of the symbiosis between globalization and capitalism, in which the imposition of neoliberal economic policies in the countries of the so-called Global South has fostered liberalization, uncontrolled foreign capital inflows and the lack of effective regulation to prevent the plunder of land acting in detriment of the guarantee of human and environmental rights for local populations, mostly indigenous peoples and farmers.

In that sense, we want to point out the co-responsibility of the Global North by exposing how the action of transnational corporations is not something arbitrary but in fact their actions respond to systematic patterns that, through a legal and political framework, allow them to act with impunity and opacity, imposing its agenda and interests all the while plundering and seizing land and natural resources to the detriment of the guarantee of human rights.

With this report, from the CCAR, we want to contribute to the analysis and reflection of how the environmental degradation, in its many forms, increasingly conditions human mobility and becomes a factor in the forced displacement of people. In that way, processes of organized resistance are very important so that the territories are not decapitalized and that when forced displacement occurs in the first place, it occurs as an internal level (from the rural areas to cities) and ultimately as a cross-border displacement (from the city to another country).

At the same time, we want to point out that the systematic violation of environmental rights endangers directly the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), which becomes especially relevant when it affects indigenous peoples and the work of human rights defenders.

In that sense, the report is based on a one-year field work identifying, researching and analyzing socio-environmental conflicts that ultimately generates organized resistance networks fighting forced displacement. It has had the complicity of national and regional institutions and organizations as well as their counterparts in Catalonia and other organizations linked with the project. This was followed by observation and verification visits to the affected territories.

During the research work carried out in the framework of this report we have been able to see how the impact of the action of large corporations - both national and transnational - has devastating effects on both the environment and its inhabitants, people from communities, especially from indigenous peoples and farmers.

The historical, economic and socio-political context becomes fundamental to understanding how global hierarchical relations between the North and the South are perpetuated, in which the latter becomes a strategic space for the provision of resources benefiting the countries of the North. In this way, a conception of a world-system divided into center and periphery is established, marked by a capitalist model based on neocolonialism and subordinates the most vulnerable populations by destroying their social, cultural and economic ecosystem.

We have also identified that although there is a relationship between environmental rights violations and forced displacement, being able to establish a direct causal link becomes extremely complex due to several factors:

-Because displacement is multicausal, and while the underlying reasons are surely environmental, there are other factors such as socio-political violence, organized crime, socioeconomic conditions, and other personal factors that also influence the migratory decision.



-There is not a homogeneous quantification criteria or institutions monitoring forced displacement caused by violations of environmental rights and the impact of transnational corporations.

-The non -self- recognition as displaced by the communities themselves, that mostly resist this displacement.

Throughout the report we have witness how megaprojects, led by national and transnational corporations, with the connivance of states and public institutions, take over territories and natural resources in favor of capital accumulation and to the detriment of the environment and of the well-being of the indigenous and farmer populations. However, organized resistance movements are vital for the defense of the right to land and territory as well as for the protection of the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples as well as for the defense of the ESCR. In addition, the work of human and environmental rights defenders and its articulation strengthens communities and prevents the decapitalization of territories.

Facing this situation, it is necessary to work towards demanding justice and reparation for people who are deprived or whose environment is destroyed.

This intrinsically also means protecting those who are forced to cross a border or forcibly move within the same country: two situations that are invisible today and in which there is a lack of political and legal response or a regulatory framework to protect them. In this sense, it is also necessary to seek effective protection mechanisms against forced displacement, both internally and cross-border, and to advance in the recognition of the environmental subject (beyond the climate) as a generator of forced displacement.

Lastly, it is important to make visible and support community resistance by promoting international solidarity and denouncing the co-responsibility that we have as countries of the global North.



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