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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

BERNARDO CAAL XOL
GUATEMALA

JAILED FOR DEFENDING
A SACRED RIVER

BERNARDO CAAL XOL GUATEMALA

Bernardo Caal Xol holds a whole people in his heart, the Indigenous Maya Q'eqchi' in north central Guatemala. Through his teaching and trade union leadership, he has made it his mission to empower his people. He has also done everything he can to peacefully protect their land and natural resources from plunder and biodiversity loss.

So, when a company licensed by the government dammed the Maya Q'eqchi's Cahabón river to build two hydroelectric power plants, Bernardo and his people protested. The river is one of the longest in Guatemala, and is sacred to the Maya Q'eqchi'. Construction of the power plants had already stripped their forests; now they were losing the precious water they needed to survive. Bernardo demanded a stop to the power plants' activities, saying the authorities had failed to properly consult his people – a requirement under international law.

But his actions put him at odds with the company, and economic and political elites. Bernardo was publicly smeared with repeated and baseless accusations. In 2018, a judge sentenced him to more than seven years in prison, convicting him without any evidence.

"Why am I in jail?" Bernardo asks. "For denouncing what they are doing to the rivers, defending what little is left."

Tell Guatemala to free Bernardo today.

ACT NOW

Tell Guatemala's authorities to drop all charges against Bernardo and free him immediately.

Grab a petition and start collecting names and emails.

SHOW BERNARDO YOU'RE WITH HIM

Print off the solidarity letter template and write a message of support to Bernardo, so he knows he's not alone in his struggle to protect his people's lands.

SEND TO

Post your petitions, letters and solidarity letters to:

Amnesty International Australia,
Locked Bag 23,
Broadway NSW 2007
Australia.

Make sure you post them to us by 31 January 2022.

We'll post them to the target, include them in the handover in February 2022 and make sure

CHALLENGE INJUSTICE.

ABN: 64 002 806 233

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