

DEFENDERS OF MOTHER EARTH



Defenders of Mother Earth : *Mexico resists dangerous pipeline project around the Popocatepetl Volcano*

Since 2012, people from the Mexican States of Morelos, Puebla and Tlaxcala organized to fight against the “Integral Project Morelos” (PIM) planned and operated by the Federal Electricity Commission of Mexico (CFE), which consists on:

- 2 fossil-fuelled power plants
- An aqueduct of 12 km
- A 160 km pipeline

The pipeline is intended to run through the entire risk zone (foothills) of Popocatepetl volcano, going through 3 different states, to bring water and gas to the thermoelectric power plants. The project is concessioned to the Spanish companies Abengoa, Elecnor and Enagas, which at the same time co-work with the Italian company Bonatti SPA for construction of the pipeline.

It is important to mention that Mexico already has sufficient installed infrastructure to supply the country's electricity. That means the PIM project is not going to bring any considerable benefits to the surrounded communities, but instead can put in danger more than 2,000 communities at the foothills of the Popocatepetl volcano, populated mostly by farmers and indigenous peoples.



Communities living around the Popocatepetl volcano got together and created the People's Front in Defense of Water and Land of Morelos, Puebla and Tlaxcala ([FPDATMPT](#)). They stood up against the PIM project and the devastation of the areas near the Popocatepetl Volcano, which represents a serious danger for local communities, the violation of their human rights, the displacement of hundreds of farmers, and the pollution of their water.

In 2014 the movement achieved a great victory in court: a temporal suspension of the construction of the pipeline. Up to today the project has been suspended for 2 and half years already, but they are still fighting and standing to protect their lands, even though some of the leaders of the movement have faced repression from the government, such as getting jailed.

Here are some of their inspiring stories during these 4 years of struggle:

Defenders being put in jail

In an attempt to stop the resistance, the government jailed 3 of the main leaders of the resistance movement and up to other 18 members of the movement have now been declared political prisoners.

Juan Carlos Flores Solis is a member of the Community Front in Defense of Land and Water Puebla, Morelos and Tlaxcala. The 36-year-old is a human rights defender, political prisoner in the prison of Cholula, Puebla, since 7 April 2014, accused of mutiny, extortion, plunder, attack on the hydraulic infrastructure and “cellphone theft” of politicians during a resistance demonstration.



Enedina Rosas Vélez, 62 years old, Commissar of San Felipe Xonacayucan, municipality of Atlixco in the State of Puebla, member of the Community Front in Defense of Land and Water Puebla, Morelos and Tlaxcala, seized from April 6, 2014 in Atlixco jail, accused of stealing two cellphones and opposition to the creation of a public infrastructure.

Cordero Abraham Calderon, Front representative of farmers and smallholders of the Sierra Nevada and Texmelucan, political prisoner since 8 April in Atlixco jail. Freed in October 3rd 2014 after a 57,700 pesos bail.



Enedina is free

Enedina Rojas Velez is one of the leaders of the resistance movement in Puebla. She represents one of the communities affected by the PIM project, and refused to give away their land to the government and companies. The oppressive government threatened Enedina and her family and told them that their were going to build the pipeline with or without their permission:

“They told us they were going to build the pipeline underneath our lands, that we are not owners of the subsurface” Enedina

Enedina fought with bravery with her community, and on April 7th she got arrested and put in Atlixco Jail under the charges of stealing two cellphones and opposition to the creation of a public infrastructure. This 60 year old woman was even declared a “Highly Dangerous Prisoner”. Her only crime was protecting the land of her community. Enedina’s health got really bad during her stay in jail, and in October 2014 she was granted house arrest. It was until March 2015, that Enedina was finally freed after 1 year of being unjustly arrested. She is determined to keep fighting to protect the other 2000 communities of the foothills of Popocatepetl volcano.



Human Rights Defenders in Jail

On April 7, 2014, the State Police arrested the activist Juan Carlos Flores Solís, a member of the People's Front in Defense of Water and Land of Morelos, Puebla and Tlaxcala ([FPDATMPT](#)).

Juan got arrested when he filed a complaint with the Human Rights Commission of Puebla after the arrest of social activist: Enedina Rosas Vélez. Juan was arrested under the charges of mutiny, extortion, looting and attacks on the hydraulic work. After nine months in prison, the Criminal Court of the District of Cholula, Puebla, issued an order of formal freedom to the activist.



After Juan was declared free, he said he is committed to fight for the freedom of another 18 political prisoners in Puebla. In March this year, he was nominated for the 2015 Front Line Defenders Award for his activism and defense of indigenous peoples rights.

People demand release of PIM opponents

People demonstrating for the release of Enedina, Juan and Abraham, after they were arrested and catalogued as dangerous prisoners.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpLWofgURN0>



Resistance blocking the roads

The people from [FPDATMPT](#) did a road block demonstration, demanding machines to leave their lands. After 9 hours of blocking and pushing the machines out of their territories, CFE decided to suspend work until reaching an agreement with the landowners.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XS5QG5NT1eU>

Go to the [Spanish Article](#).



Say **Thank You** to the Defenders of Mother Earth in Mexico!
Send your photo or video to info@climatesstrike.net