



**JAILED FOR DEFENDING**

**A SACRED RIVER**

**BERNARDO CAAL XOL**  
Guatemala

### **Bernardo Caal Xol, jailed for defending a sacred river in Guatemala.**

Through his teaching and trade union leadership, Bernardo Caal Xol has made it his mission to empower his people, the Indigenous Maya Q'eqchi' in north central Guatemala. 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 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 allies of the company. 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 drop all charges against Bernardo and free him immediately.**

#### **WRITE TO GUATEMALA'S AUTHORITIES**

Tell them to drop all charges against Bernardo and free him immediately.

TO: Attorney General of Guatemala

C/O: Ambassador Alfonso Quinonez Lemus  
Embassy of Guatemala

2220 R St. NW, Washington DC 20008

TO: Attorney General of Guatemala

EMAIL: [carrecis@mp.gob.gt](mailto:carrecis@mp.gob.gt)

TWITTER: [@MPguatemala](https://twitter.com/MPguatemala)

FACEBOOK: [@mpguatemala](https://www.facebook.com/mpguatemala)

SALUTATION: Dear Attorney General

#### **SHOW BERNARDO YOU ARE WITH HIM**

Send your messages of hope and solidarity, so Bernardo knows he's not alone in his struggle to protect his people's lands.

Mail TO: Bernardo Caal Xol

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Colonia del Valle Alcaldía Benito Juárez  
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