

## **Ad Hoc Motion**

### **Protect, don't persecute and criminalize young climate activists!**

The 2023 Delegates Conference of terre des hommes has adopted a Strategic Goal to support young environmental activists. In this light, we are alarmed by the global phenomenon of persecuting and criminalizing young climate activists.

According to Global Witness, 200 land and environmental defenders were killed in 2021. Many more cases of killings and persecutions of environmental activists are not or underreported. There are numerous examples reported by partner organizations of terre des hommes in Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America:

- In **Nepal**, Dilip Mahato had been protesting against the illegal extraction of river materials in his community for a while. On January 10, 2020, during his protest on the premises of the local crusher factory, he was brutally murdered by factory workers and run over by a tipper truck.
- In **Zimbabwe**, in a project supported by terre des hommes, Headman Chiyadzwa and Environment Youth club members were arrested for protesting at a mine gate, citing climate and environmental related violations.
- In **Germany**, climate movements and activists are regularly criminalized, such as Charlie Kiehne and Samuel Bosch who dedicated their lives to ecological campaign work. They set up and lived in the climate camp directly in the Altdorf Forest in southern Germany. In addition to their educational work on climate change, they use civil disobedience and non-violent resistance as means of their protests. A criminal warrant was issued against them during the occupation of a ban forest, now they are facing criminal charges.
- In **Chile and Argentina**, youth from the Mapuche indigenous people are systematically criminalized because they defend their traditional territories from mining enterprises and fossil exploitation. However, Latin American States have adopted the Escazú Agreement which guarantees the right to access environmental information and participate in environmental decision-making. Most significantly, it also requires states to prevent and investigate attacks against environmental defenders.

In 2022, the UN Human Rights Council resolution 48/13 unequivocally recognized the **human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment** for all people. Environmental activists are human rights defenders. In 2023, on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, the Delegates of terre des hommes urge States to protect environmental rights defenders rather than criminalizing, persecuting, torturing, and killing them.

To fight against the climate crisis means defending life – life of people and nature.

Siegburg, 25 June 2023