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## [Ecuador: A poem for the women of the mangroves](#)

*(Photo: C-Condem)*

The *décima* is a poetic form that has been used for many years as a tool of protest by Afro-Ecuadorians, who keep this cultural traditional alive while denouncing the trampling of their rights by greedy and powerful interests like the shrimp farming industry and others that are destroying the mangroves.

Linver Nazareno dedicates this *décima* to the women who live in the mangroves, as a tribute to the hard work they endure every day.

Mangrove Woman  
by Linver Nazareno

Mangrove firewood is your coal  
The seashell will wait for you  
An oar is your rudder  
Your dear friend, the mangrove  
An open fire is your kitchen  
Your children, your entertainment  
The forest, your medicine  
The shade, your protection  
A good fish, your food  
Chillangua [1], your seasoning  
The mangrove, barrier of life  
Protecting it is your reason  
To obtain your food  
Mangrove firewood, your coal  
Skin weathered by hope  
And by rising so early  
Your mind gives you your strength  
You will walk through the mud  
Tobacco is your passion  
Smoke to chase away the flies  
The wind is your song  
Tapao [2] is your feast  
To nourish you  
The seashell will wait for you  
You heat up the lemon grass  
Before breakfast  
Your way of life is so simple  
You work so hard  
The sun is your faithful timekeeper

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The waves, your heart  
The moon is your calendar  
Your gas, a sack of coal  
To reach the estuary  
An oar is your rudderSmoke from  
burning coconut fibre  
To chase the flies away  
You have drained the milk from the  
coconut  
The tonga [3] must be prepared  
My little mangrove tree  
You have given me so much food  
I have waged a thousand battles  
When I go out to work  
Life has gifted me with  
My dear friend the mangrove