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## Honduras: Struggle against shrimp farming gaining ground

After nine months of denouncing the destruction of wetlands at "El Carey", Marcovia, Choluteca; after several months after members of CODDEFFAGOLF (a local environmental organization) and the Environment Attorney were driven out with threats from that site; after several months of requesting international solidarity for this case; two months after the visit of a RAMSAR representative, and a few days after announcing the mobilization of fishermen and farmers to Choluteca, near the coast of the Gulf of Fonseca, CODDEFFAGOLF launched a Peoples' Peaceful Demonstration, which has already achieved the following results:

On November 29, one of the owners of a shrimp farm at "El Carey" was arrested and she is now facing charges at a Choluteca court. At the same time, there are rumours that her husband took refuge in a hospital alleging to be seriously ill.

Likewise, parliamentarian Victor Argeñal, who has fenced several mangrove areas for converting them into shrimp farms in Guapinol, Choluteca, expressed an interest to discuss the matter with CODDEFFAGOLF. The response was that he should discuss the issue with the commission for mangrove conservation established three years ago.

The shrimp farm company "Granjas Marinas San Bernardo" through its Manager Mr. Hector Corrales, has called the executives of CODDEFFAGOLF trying to intimidate them and expressing that CODDEFFAGOLF's allegations are lies.

There are also unofficial reports that the Undersecretary for the Environment has denied the Environmental License to "Granjas Marinas San Bernardo" and to "Hondufarms", while the Minister of Environment, Xiomara Gómez, has expressed to CODDEFFAGOLF her interest in discussing this issue with executives of those companies and with CODDEFFAGOLF.

Meanwhile, the staff of "Granjas Marinas" has contacted fishermen in order to convince them about the "pressing need" of supporting this powerful company --that has polluted the area with tons of organic wastes coming directly from the more than three thousand hectares of ponds that are currently in operation-- while at the same time they are constantly intimidating those fisherfolk which operate in the mangroves bordering its concession.

Although shrimp farming is still a big problem, things appear to be improving, at least regarding the stricter control that society and to a lesser extent government are imposing on this industry, which has already destroyed large areas of mangrove forests in Honduras and throughout the tropics.

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