Rafael Correa Delgado
Presidente de la República
García Moreno N10-43 entre Chile y Espejo,
Quito, Pichincha,
Ecuador

Dear President

**SAFETY OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS**

I write to express my concern for the security of Carlos Zorrilla and other human rights defenders in Ecuador who have been arbitrarily accused of destabilizing activities, as this may lead to indiscriminate retaliation against them. I am also concerned that these declarations could deter others from engaging in public actions to defend human rights.

I am also concerned about the closure of Fundación Pachamama, which works to defend indigenous peoples and environmental rights and which has denied any involvement in violent acts.

I urge the Ecuadorean authorities to

* refrain from arbitrary accusations of human rights defenders
* revoke the order to close Fundación Pachamama and start a fair process to investigate the allegations of violence during the recent protests and those responsible for them

May I remind the Ecuadorean authorities that States have the responsibility to protect human rights defenders and create the conditions necessary to ensure that they can carry out their legitimate activities without any unfair restrictions or fear of reprisals, as established in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

Yours sincerely