

# Assassination of Honduran water protector deeply grieves Sisters of Mercy

*John Charles McAllister-Ashley, Institute Justice Team*

The Sisters of Mercy have been accompanying water protectors in the Guapinol River region of Honduras. Juan Antonio López, a Honduran environmental activist and lay Catholic leader, was assassinated on Sept. 14, 2024 in the town of Tocoa after advocating against an iron oxide mine that is polluting local rivers.

Sister Mary Kay Dobrovolny, RSM said that López, just days before he was killed, had called for Fúnez, the Tocoa mayor, to resign because of his links to drug traffickers. Dobrovolny wrote in a statement, “Too many people have died striving to protect the land that they love.” She also said that, while visiting Honduras with a solidarity delegation organized by the Share Foundation in 2021, she witnessed the assassination of a man in front of his wife and children. “The wailing of intense grief and shock of his family is a sound that I will never forget,” she wrote. “I join my voice with the loved ones of Juan López and all environmental activists who say the killing must end,” Dobrovolny, the congregation’s new membership ministry coordinator, wrote.

This killing is part of a broader pattern of violence against environmental activists in Honduras that calls for an international investigation. López’s death reflects the dangers faced by environmental activists in Latin America, where many are targeted by commercial and political interests. We invite you to offer prayer and to [read the words](#) of the ILT on their statement. You can learn more about Juan López’s senseless death [here](#).