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## Peru: New attacks against environmental rights defender Wilson Bautista Sánchez

On 6 July 2021, environmental defender **Wilson Bautista Sánchez** was physically assaulted by a group of around 15 unknown people who beat him with sticks and held him for more than half an hour in the community of Santa Catalina de Chongoyape. The events occurred while the environmental rights defender was about to verify part of the protected land, following the illegal incursion of at least 10 people from outside the community who tried to take possession of protected areas of the Chaparri nature reserve.

[Wilson Bautista Sánchez](#) is a community leader and member of [Frente de Defensa Salvemos Chaparri](#) (Save Chaparri Defense Front), an organisation of members of Santa Catalina de Chongoyape community and of Asociación para la Conservación de la Naturaleza y Turismo Sostenible Chaparri - ACOTURCH (Association for the Conservation of Nature and Sustainable Tourism) dedicated to the defense and conservation of the natural reserve "Área de Conservación Privada Chaparri".

On 6 July 2021, environmental rights defender Wilson Bautista Sánchez was about to carry out an official verification of the territory as part of his work with the peasant patrols, in order to gather information about a possible invasion of the protected territory, when he was attacked by unknown individuals unrelated to the community of Santa Catalina de Chongoyape. The aggressors beat the environmental rights defender's body repeatedly with sticks and held him there for more than half an hour without access to his mobile phone. After his release, Wilson Bautista Sánchez tried to file a complaint at the Chongoyape police station, where the authorities refused to open a report. This is not an isolated incident. On 16 January 2021, Wilson Bautista Sánchez was [attacked](#), handcuffed and beaten by members of the Environmental Unit of the National Police accompanied by six unknown civilians.

The attack against environmental rights defender Wilson Bautista Sánchez takes place in a context in which members of the Muchik Santa Catalina de Chongoyape Community and the Frente de Defensa Salvemos Chaparri have reported being under continuous risk of being targeted, due to recent attempts by unknown persons to install barbed wire fences within the protected territory and deforestation actions. Additionally, there has been a pattern of [multiple criminalisation attempts](#) against environmental rights defenders such as [Edivar Juan Carrasco Vásquez](#), Wilson Bautista Sánchez and other leaders of the Chongoyape Campesino Community and the Frente de Defensa Salvemos Chaparri.

In this context, the Ministry of Justice granted protection measures in favour of different leaders of the Frente de Defensa Salvemos Chaparri, including Wilson Bautista Sánchez in February 2021. According to information from the beneficiaries themselves, so far there has been no effective implementation of the protection measures, or investigations into who is behind the attacks.

Front Line Defenders condemns the new attack against environmental rights defender Wilson Bautista Sánchez and is deeply concerned for the safety of those who legitimately defend the natural protected areas of Chaparrí. The organisation is also concerned about the lack of effective implementation of the protection measures granted by the Ministry of Justice in favour of the leaders of the Front for the Defence of Save Chaparri and the judicial proceedings against them, which appear to be linked to the defence of the environment.

Front Line Defenders has repeatedly [denounced](#) the persecution of environmental rights defenders in Peru as an attempt to hinder their valuable work in defence of indigenous, environmental and territorial rights in the country.

**Front Line Defenders urges the Peruvian authorities to:**

1. Conduct an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the attacks against human rights defender Wilson Bautista Sánchez, with a view to bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Carry out the necessary measures to guarantee the security and physical and psychological integrity of Wilson Bautista Sánchez and his family members including ensuring the practical implementation of the protection measures that have already been granted by the Ministry of Justice;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Peru, in particular environmental defenders, are able to carry out their legitimate activities without fear of reprisals and free from all restrictions, including judicial harassment, including judicial harassment.