

ZEROTOLERANCEINITIATIVE

WORKING TO END VIOLENCE AND KILLINGS IN SUPPLY CHAINS

The Zero Tolerance Initiative (ZTI) is a global coalition made by and for indigenous peoples, local community representatives, grassroots organisations and supportive NGOs and CSOs, working collectively to stop killings and violence against human rights defenders in global supply chains.

“ZTI belongs to us and it is ZTI that will take us to where we want to go.”

**- JOHN PAUL BAI, ZTI STEERING GROUP MEMBER,
SIERRA LEONE LAND ALLIANCE**

HOW DOES THE ZTI WORK?

A pioneering and participatory network, the ZTI was founded by rightsholders in 2019 in response to this ever-increasing wave of attacks and killings linked to global supply chains. ZTI is led by a Steering Group of organisations and communities from Asia, Latin America, and Africa that oversees strategic direction, supported by focal points from each region and a global coordination team.

The ZTI focuses on three strategic areas:

- **improving public policies and corporate practices**
- **building global solidarity**
- **strengthening collective protection of indigenous peoples and communities at risk**

To complement these strategies, in 2021 the steering group launched the ZTI Urgent Response and Prevention Fund - a flagship initiative, which provides rapid access to funding for both emergency situations and longer-term innovative prevention initiatives.

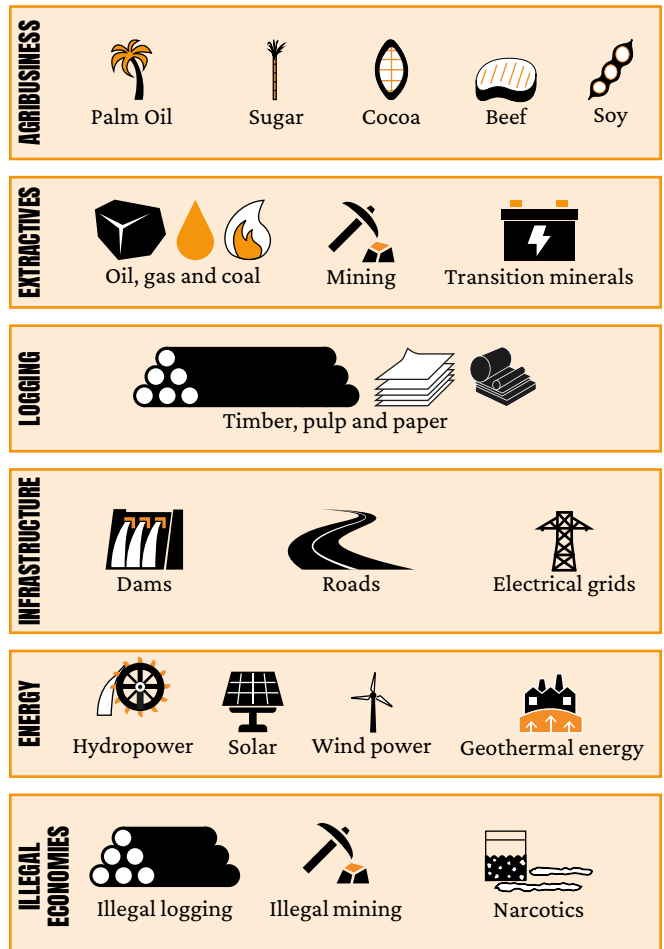
WHY DOES THE ZTI EXIST?

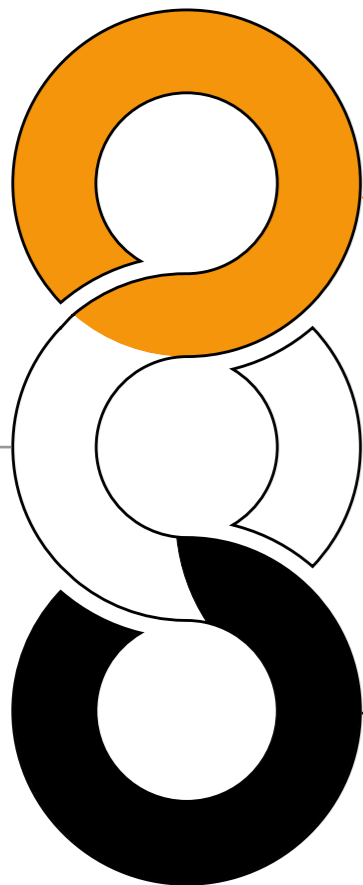
Environmental human rights defenders are key to upholding human rights, protecting the global environment and fighting against climate change. However, they face significant - and growing - violence, intimidation, criminalisation, and even killings for protesting the harmful impacts of agribusiness, extractive industries, logging, infrastructure, and energy projects.

This must stop.

There is an urgent need to tackle the root causes of this violence. These actions need to be led by the human rights defenders and communities themselves, who are putting their lives at risk to defend their land and the future of our planet.

SECTORS MOST LINKED TO ATTACKS ON ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS





BUILDING GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

The Zero Tolerance Initiative acts as a global solidarity network. When urgent protection or advocacy needs arise, the ZTI regional focal points connect organisations within the coalition and beyond, guided by the priorities of rightsholders. This involves a meticulous process of identifying relevant skills of coalition members and aligning different levels of support for specific cases.

Through this process, members can support each other to formulate comprehensive protection and advocacy strategies and foster South-South solidarity actions.

In 2023, ZTI members joined forces in advocacy actions at the request of Indonesian communities suffering from human rights abuses by a palm oil company. Together, members elevated the case in international advocacy spaces, resulting in ten consumer goods companies suspending sourcing. Communities continue to call on the international companies involved to use their leverage to provide remedy.

IMPROVING PUBLIC POLICIES & CORPORATE PRACTICES

The Zero Tolerance Initiative calls on States, businesses and investors to commit to taking urgent action to turn the tide of rising levels of violence against human rights defenders. ZTI provides a platform for coordinated advocacy calling on companies, investors, and industry initiatives to make zero tolerance commitments. Through the ZTI, different members are able to coordinate, catalyse and connect, ensuring that different advocacy streams within the coalition include strong engagement from the rightsholders' organisations.

A Zero Tolerance Policy commits stakeholders to not tolerate or contribute to attacks against HRDs, to expect their business relationships to do the same, and to actively engage HRDs to ensure these commitments are met. When allegations of attacks or reprisals against HRDs are identified as being connected to a business operation, stakeholders should take swift, definitive and monitored action.

STRENGTHENING COLLECTIVE PROTECTION

ZTI promotes a collective approach to protection strategies and human rights work, facilitating spaces for rights holders to share best practices, increase resilience, and strengthen community-level collective protection across continents.

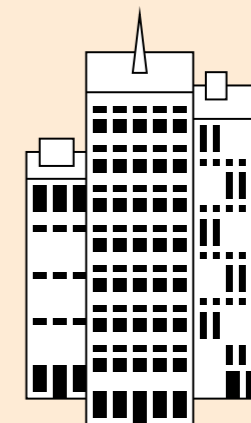
A more locally rooted version of protection, collective protection is a set of context-specific strategies, measures, and actions that aim to protect a group – rather than an individual – that is at risk because of their work defending human rights. Collective protection initiatives that communities have carried out for centuries are tailored to that community's specific needs, but they have traditionally received less attention and support than efforts linked to individual defenders.

Strategies for collective self-protection that have been supported by ZTI include strengthening of indigenous guards, security and protection training, development of FPIC protocols, medical fees for attacked defenders, community led research and documentation, urgent relocation, and legal fees in criminalisation cases.

PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS HAS MOVED TO THE TOP OF THE BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA

ZTI's collective efforts and effective coordination with allies directly influenced corporate policies on protecting and safeguarding human rights defenders, including the progressive Zero Tolerance policies of Unilever - the most comprehensive to date - and of the Voluntary Principles Initiative.

The tireless advocacy work of many ZTI members means that we have gone into 2024 in a much stronger position, with the two worst offending sectors for attacks on rightsholders (Agribusiness and extractives) having adopted comprehensive corporate zero tolerance policies.



This sets an important bar to push for companies to effectively implement their own guidance and policies, as well as to use these policies as a benchmark to encourage other companies to develop their own.

INTEGRATING RAPID RESPONSE & PREVENTATIVE FUNDING

The Urgent Response and Prevention Fund, managed by the Steering Group, provides small grants to ZTI members. The fund covers urgent resources to communities, integrating both elements of reactive and preventative support. This aims to ensure that the fund can respond in an agile way in emergency situations but also be accessed to cover holistic, preventative collective protection approaches that foster long term community resilience.

\$111,800

funds disbursed through the Urgent Response and Prevention Fund since 2021

URGENT RESPONSE TO THREATS

COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE SHARING

URGENT LEGAL ASSISTANCE

MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS GUARDS AND SECURITY TRAINING

COMMUNITY-LED RESEARCH

OTHER COLLECTIVE PROTECTION INITIATIVES

36 sub-grants across 13 countries

URGENT RESPONSE IN COLOMBIA

“There was a dispute between armed groups. They killed a friend of mine - he was a guard like me and a social leader. Two days later, they sent someone to tell me that if I didn't leave my territory, they were going to kill me too.”

- ENVIRONMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER IN COLOMBIA

In Colombia, afro-descendent Cimarrón guards, were forced to leave their homes due to death threats to them and their family.

This was a result of their human rights work defending the collective territory of their community. The flexibility and immediate support of the Urgent Response and Prevention Fund meant they could relocate to safety – before it was too late.

COLLECTIVE PROTECTION IN KENYA

In northern Kenya, ZTI member Agency for Turkana Development Initiatives (ATUDIS) utilised resources from the Urgent Response and Prevention Fund to prevent attacks through strengthening indigenous communities in Turkana affected by crude oil extraction.

As these communities were not officially recognised as indigenous, their right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) was not being respected, leaving their land vulnerable to exploitation by oil projects. ATUDIS used the funding to support indigenous communities to register their collective land under the Community Land Act 2016 so that they can better protect their lands and livelihoods. Five communities have now officially registered their land, and 12 others are in the process of registration.

“The practical and timely support I received came at a moment where I truly needed it.. I’m very thankful, and I hope that ZTI continues to help other people like us in similar situations.”

- ENVIRONMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER IN COLOMBIA

The Urgent Response and Prevention Fund has a huge impact for a small investment, but due to increased demand to access this fund over the last few years, the ZTI needs more funding to continue this vital work.

GROWING THE GLOBAL NETWORK

Since ZTI was created, it has become clear that the work it does is vital to supporting communities in defending their lands, enhancing their resilience, and ensuring their safety.

The ZTI is now gaining real momentum, going from 38 members in 2019 to over 100 members today, covering 44 countries, 70% in the Global South.

Building this vital network from the bottom up requires sustained financial support.

To learn more about the ZTI please contact Adam Lunn, ZTI Global Focal Point and Facilitator zti.zerotolerance@gmail.com

