



22 August 2014 - International experts are calling for a global protection regime to defend and support campaigners engaged in environmental activism as a result of increased documentations of them being subjected to harassment and abuse.

Activists, donors and researchers gathered in Bali, Indonesia, earlier this month for the world's first international summit on climate and women - during which a large part of the discussion was centered on attacks on people campaigning to protect the environment.

"We need to come up with an umbrella organization that looks after environmental activists' rights and is in a position to launch rapid action that assists those in trouble, like what we see with media organizations," Emilienne de Leon, a board member of the International Network of Women's Funds ([INWF](#)) told [IRIN News](#) .

The need for a global response is becoming more evident as documentation of attacks

increases.

Between 2002 and 2013 at least 903 citizens engaged in environmental protection work were killed, just shy of the 913 journalists killed in the same time period, according to a [report by Global Witness](#), an international organization that investigates corruption and environmental degradation.

Calling the issue of violence and threats against environmental campaigners “notoriously under-reported”, Global Witness argued in its report *Deadly Environment* that “the death rate points to a much greater rate of non-lethal violence and intimidation” and noted that “three times as many people were killed in 2012 than 10 years previously, with the death rate rising in the past four years to an average of two activists a week.”

In her 2011 [report](#) to the Human Rights Council, Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders Margaret Sekaggya noted that environmental campaigners may be particularly vulnerable to abuse and called for increased attention to their plight, saying: “defenders working on land and environmental issues are particularly disadvantaged due to the often limited knowledge they have about their rights and lack of information on how to claim them, scarce resources and weak organizational capacity.”

Brazil, the Global Witness report found, is the world's most deadly country for communities defending natural resources, with 448 deaths between 2002 and 2013, followed by 109 in Honduras and Peru with 58. In Asia, the Philippines is the deadliest with 67, followed by Thailand at 16. More than 80% of the recorded deaths were in Latin and Central America.

Source: *IRIN News*, [The Guardian](#)