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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL URGES GLOBAL SUPPORTERS TO DEFEND DONZIGER FROM CHEVRON THREATS

*Leading human rights organization joins Members of Congress in
demanding President Biden pardon the US human rights advocate*

Washington, D.C. (June 26, 2024) - Amnesty International is urging its 2 million members around the world to write President Biden to demand he immediately pardon US human rights advocate Steven Donziger, the lawyer who was locked up for almost three years in a private corporate prosecution after winning a landmark [\\$10 billion pollution case](#) on behalf of Amazon communities in Ecuador.

Amnesty issues such calls for urgent action “to defend people under immediate threat of grave human rights abuse.” Donziger was put on home detention and sent to prison for 993 days from 2019 to 2022 by Chevron and the oil major continues to deny him his right to travel, work, and practice law all while being threatened with a return to prison.

“Chevron’s abuse of Steven Donziger and denial of his fundamental rights has become an obsession within the company,” **Donziger said**. “That must end and it must end now and President Biden has the power to do it.”

As a result of Chevron’s abuse of the US criminal justice system, Donziger has not been able to visit his clients in Ecuador for more than four years. Many of those clients are members of Indigenous groups who have been stricken with cancer and other major health problems as a result of Chevron’s toxic dumping.

Donziger’s prosecution has been condemned as illegal by the [Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the United Nations](#), [three US federal judges](#), [a team of prominent international trial monitors](#) led by former US Ambassador Stephen Rapp, [68 Nobel Laureates](#), and [dozens of legal organizations around the world](#) including the [International Association of Democratic Lawyers](#).

"I am honored and grateful that the world's leading human rights organization recognizes the urgency of my case and the larger trend of corporations manipulating the criminal justice system to try to silence human rights defenders," **said Donziger, a resident of Manhattan**. "It is an absolute legal and moral imperative that my full rights to travel and work as a lawyer be restored immediately with a pardon by the President given that US courts have turned their backs on me and my clients."

Amanda Klasing, Amnesty International USA's National Director of Government Relations and Advocacy, called for Donziger's pardon outside the White House alongside Congressional Reps. Jim McGovern, Rashida Tlaib, and Cori Bush.

"Steven's detention while under house arrest and then later in prison was arbitrary, and therefore illegal, under international law," **said Klasing**. "The UN Working Group of Arbitrary Detention found his detention lacked any legal basis and was in violation of several norms relating to the right to a fair trial. The case against Steven is emblematic of an alarming trend to silence human rights defenders through the criminal justice system in the U.S., specifically using the RICO statute."

Donziger is both the [only individual in U.S. history](#) prosecuted by a private corporation and the only person ever detained pre-trial on a misdemeanor charge. A judge charged Donziger with the "crime" of contempt of court for refusing to turn over his confidential case file and computer to Chevron lawyers during a civil proceeding. Donziger argued the judge's unprecedented order violated attorney-client privilege.

Natali Segovia, one of the 14 lawyers representing Donziger in his petition for a pardon, emphasized that Donziger's case is "emblematic of the weaponization of the law by a powerful corporation against a human rights defender using corporate-sponsored prosecution, RICO, and SLAPP tactics. If it could happen to Steven, a Harvard-trained human rights lawyer, it could happen to anyone working to expose environmental crimes."

"We cannot let the U.S. become another country that locks up its human rights lawyers and lets corporate polluters harass and intimidate those who hold them accountable", **said Rep. Jim McGovern, who visited Ecuador with Donziger in 2008**. "Chevron deliberately dumped billions of gallons of toxic waste into Indigenous communities in Ecuador. Steven Donziger exposed their corporate violence — so they tried to make an example out of him. President Biden must stand up to Big Oil bullies and pardon Donziger."

"The outrageous, unprecedented corporate criminal prosecution of Steven Donziger, one of the finest human rights attorneys in our country, was intended as a warning to all of us," **noted Rep. Rashida Tlaib**. "By pardoning Steven, President Biden can send a crystal clear message that he will not sit idly by while corporations capture our courts and violate the law. No less than the future of our democracy and our Constitution is at stake."

"What has happened to Steven is part of an authoritarian movement around the world to crush dissent, protest, and advocacy for human rights", **said Rep. Cori Bush**. "Beyond condemnation, the White House must pardon Steven today and force Chevron and all polluters to pay up."

Donziger's pardon petition signed by the 14 lawyers is [here](#). For those wanting to sign a petition and help the campaign, please go to [FreeDonziger.com](#).