



*Comisionado  
Nacional de  
Derechos  
Humanos*



**global witness**

## **New Independent Forest Monitoring reports document illegal activities in Honduran forests**

**29/03/06**

Three new mission reports published by the Independent Forest Monitor in Honduras today document more cases of illegal logging in the Department of Olancho. Reports No. 8 and 9 relate to the management plan of a municipal forest that is at the heart of a serious social conflict in the region. The main parties involved are the Municipality of Salamá, the cooperative 'Primero de Mayo' and the Environmentalist Movement of Olancho. The main findings reveal a fraudulent use of the cooperative by the Municipality and local loggers to cover up the involvement of Sawmill Sansone in the harvesting of the area attributed in the annual operational plan. It also exposes how the Mayor of Salamá has in several occasions seriously failed to comply with instructions issued by higher level government institutions, such as the Olancho Departmental Government and SERNA.

Report No.10 deals with various local sales of plagued timber and provides a good example of how manual harvesting is not only feasible but has clear advantages over industrial logging, such as the creation of local employment (especially crucial in an area like the one the report is related to) and the reduction of soil erosion and compacting caused by the opening of roads and tracks and the circulation of heavy machinery. However, concerns remain about the boundaries being too broad, thus allowing the harvesting of a larger volume of timber than needed to control the plague. Although only a hypothesis, as there is not enough evidence to present it as a fact, previous reports published by the independent monitor and anecdotal evidence seem to suggest that drawing too large boundaries might be common practice.

The reports, published in Spanish and in English, are the latest output of the Independent Forest Monitoring (IFM) project in Honduras, which has been running since May 2005 and is being jointly implemented by Global Witness and the National Commission for Human Rights in Honduras (CONADEH). Previous field mission reports and a first summary report have already documented a number of cases of illegality in harvesting, transport and transformation of timber. All reports are available at <http://www.globalwitness.org/projects/honduras/>

*For further information, please contact Laura Furones ([lfurones@globalwitness.org](mailto:lfurones@globalwitness.org)), Filippo del Gatto ([fdg@hondutel.hn](mailto:fdg@hondutel.hn)) or Fausto Mejía ([fmejia@conadeh.hn](mailto:fmejia@conadeh.hn))*