



# HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG

## CONO SUR

Santiago de Chile, 13/10/2019

The Regional Office Cono Sur of the Heinrich Böll Foundation expresses its deep concern for the safety and physical integrity of Rodrigo Mundaca, spokesperson of our partner organisation MODATIMA (Movimiento por el Acceso al Agua, la Tierra y la Defensa del Medio Ambiente) who has been victim of a vile campaign of intimidation in social networks. This is not the first time that Rodrigo Mundaca, whose fight for the access to water in Chile has recently been recognized by the International Price for Human Rights of the City of Nuremberg, has been menaced.

Unfortunately, it is not an isolated case. In February, a homicide attempt was committed against Verónica Vilches, president of a rural water cooperative (APR = Comité de Agua Potable Rural) of San José, Cabildo, Province of Petorca. Accompanied by another worker of the water cooperative, a car accelerated and tried to hit the two women close to the water plant. What is particularly preoccupying is the fact that the local police declined to take Veronica's report on the pretext that she did not know the licence plate of the car which almost run her over.

Apart from the fact that this clearly violates Chilean law, we are also concerned that representatives of provincial authorities in Petorca, in alliance with the big avocado exporters have repeatedly intended to criminalize social and environmental leaders exercising their constitutional rights as „terrorists“ and „subversives“.

Attacks against those who defend the human right to water have also targeted the human rights work of the Regional Office Cono Sur of the Heinrich Böll Foundation which – together with other human rights organizations in Germany – has been informing consumers and supermarket chains about the violations of the human right to water in the Chilean avocado export business.

We call upon the Chilean authorities to take all measures necessary to protect the life and physical integrity of both Rodrigo Mundaca and Verónica Vilches.