

By email and post to:

Edward S. Walsh
United States Ambassador to Ireland
Deerfield Residence
Phoenix Park
Dublin
and
US Embassy
Donnybrook
Dublin

Sunday 11 January 2025

Dear Ambassador Walsh,

It was a pleasure to meet you at the IRL Forum Conference in the Pillo Hotel, Ashbourne, Co Meath, earlier today. Thank you for inviting me to write to you regarding my friend Steven Donziger.

Steven Donziger is a New York Attorney and human rights defender best known for his legal battles with Chevron (the owners of Texaco), particularly *Aguinda v. Texaco, Inc.* and other cases in which he represented over 30,000 farmers and Indigenous people who suffered environmental damage and health problems caused by Texaco's oil drilling in the Lago Agrio oil field of Ecuador.

As I mentioned to you in our brief chat, Steven is the first person in US legal history to be prosecuted by a corporation. He won a landmark case against Chevron Texaco for their deliberate destruction of tropical forests in Ecuador and the social, health and environmental impact it had and continues to have to this day on the livelihoods and health of 30,000 farmers and their families. Chevron are the same company that have been sued in Louisiana for costal damages by a number of Louisiana parish communities and *have been ordered by a Louisiana Jury to pay \$US745 Million in Damages.* (Source: [The Guardian](#))

The U.S. District Court judge involved in the civil case against Steven Donziger, Judge Lewis Kaplan, was criticized for having investments in Chevron. The subsequent criminal contempt case was presided over by another judge, Loretta Preska, who also faced criticism for her alleged pro-corporate and fossil fuel industry ties.

Judge Lewis Kaplan presided over the civil RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act) lawsuit that Chevron filed against Steven Donziger. Critics pointed out that Judge Kaplan held investments in Chevron at the time of the trial, a fact that

raised conflict of interest concerns. He also made comments from the bench that critics argued demonstrated a lack of impartiality toward Donziger. Judge Loretta Preska was assigned to preside over Donziger's criminal contempt of court trial after the U.S. Attorney's office declined to prosecute. Judge Kaplan took the unusual step of appointing a private law firm to act as special prosecutors in the case, which also had ties to Chevron. Judge Preska found Donziger guilty of all counts of criminal contempt. Critics of Judge Preska pointed to her seat on the advisory board of the New York chapter of the Federalist Society, which Chevron is a donor to, as evidence of pro-corporate bias.

Steven was refused a jury and was incarcerated for almost 1,000 day between house arrest (wearing an ankle bracelet) and prison on a misdemeanour charge of not handing over his laptop containing the files of his clients. Both judges' perceived lack of impartiality was a significant point of contention throughout Donziger's legal battle, leading human rights campaigners and a UN working group to call the treatment of Donziger "judicial harassment" and his pre-trial detention "illegal".

*Two US Supreme Court Judges, Gorsuch and Kavanaugh, ruled that Steven's detention was illegal.

Here in Ireland, Chevron Texaco have very successfully greenwashed their atrocious human rights record in Ecuador by providing sponsorship of the Texaco Children's Art Competition and Sports.

Irish Times journalist Catherine Cleary asks, '*Why is a fossil fuel firm allowed to sponsor a children's art competition?* (Source: [THE IRISH TIMES](#))

Steven is still not a free man. As part of the sentencing mentioned earlier, he also had his bank account frozen, his passport confiscated and his licence to practice law suspended.

Steven Donziger needs to get back into the courtroom in order to continue his case against Chevron Texaco and demand that they pay the court-ordered compensation to the Ecuadorian communities affected. But in order to do this he needs to have his law licence restored. Coincidentally, I am launching my [SayNoToTexaco](#) sponsorship for children's art and sport in Ireland today across a number of social media and press platforms. The purpose of which is to protect our children from the adverse effects of fossil fuel company advertising.

So, Ambassador Walsh, I am pleading with you and your good office to intervene and use your influence both as a respected diplomat and as a highly-regarded philanthropist of cancer research to help Steven regain his law licence so he can help the thousands of cancer victims of Chevron Texaco's criminal acts in Ecuador.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,



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***Cite as: 598 U. S. ____ (2023) 1 GORSUCH, J., dissenting SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES STEVEN DONZIGER v. UNITED STATES ON PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT No. 22-274.**

Decided March 27, 2023 The petition for a writ of certiorari is denied. JUSTICE GORSUCH, with whom JUSTICE KAVANAUGH joins, dissenting from the denial of certiorari.

For decades, Texaco, a corporate predecessor to Chevron, allegedly polluted rain forests and rivers in South America. See *Aguinda v. Texaco, Inc.*, 303 F. 3d 470, 473 (CA2 2002). In 1993, residents of Ecuador came to court seeking relief for personal and environmental injuries they said the company had caused. Represented by Steven Donziger, the plaintiffs filed a class-action suit in the Southern District of New York. *Id.*, at 473–474. At the company’s insistence, the court transferred the litigation to Ecuador. See *Republic of Ecuador v. Chevron Corp.*, 638 F. 3d 384, 389–390 (CA2 2011).

Later, Chevron came to regret that move. After trial, it found itself on the wrong end of an \$8.6 billion judgment. *Id.*, at 391.

SOURCE: https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/22pdf/22-274_2c8f.pdf#:~:text=He%20argued%20that,nonprosecution%20decision%20and%20that%20our