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"Our struggle is not a choice!"-  
Insecurities and Protection Strategies of  
Women Land Right Defenders  
A Philippine case study on Leyte and Sicoon Island

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## **Abstract**

In the wake of increasing competition over natural resources, the killing of Human Rights Defenders promoting environmental justice or access to land has seen dramatic increase. Women land right activists, protecting their livelihoods and families, are at the forefront of land struggles. However, despite growing recognition of a human right to land and Women Human Rights Defenders as particularly vulnerable group, national and international human rights mechanisms fail to offer effective protection. Why? This thesis tries to find answers, exploring the opinions, perspectives and socio-cultural background of women land right activists in two Philippine peasant communities, claiming their right for land under the agrarian reform. Narratives of peasant women, put a human face on the gender specific risks and challenges they are facing. A focal point is to explore how women land right defenders understand *security* which indicates the limitations of a human rights approach to address protection needs of women land right defenders. In that respect, alternative safeguard strategies developed by peasant communities themselves, are analyzed and contribute ideas on how effective safeguard strategies for women land right defenders could be conceptualized.

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