

To whom it may concern

Bern, 8 December 2017

Dr Ricardo Villalba: Letter of concern

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In writing to you, we join other national and international science organisations in expressing our profound concern about the situation of Dr Ricardo Villalba, who is indicted on criminal charges related to his glacier inventory work in the area of San José de Jáchal.

As a legal scholar and in my capacity as the Delegate for Human Rights of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, I urge you to respect due process of law when considering the case of Dr Villalba. This needs to take into account that there are internationally recognised standards, which apply to the inventory of glaciers.

Beyond this, we are concerned about the effect that a process against Dr Villalba may have on the wider scientific community in Argentina. If criminal charges are brought against a scholar who, according to all the information available to us, has applied best practice in his scientific work, other scientists will be much less readily available to assist in drafting and implementing national policies and therefore deprive them of that important contribution to the well-being of society and the environment.

Please consider this letter in a positive spirit and I thank you in advance for your kind attention.

Respectfully yours,



Prof. Martina Caroni
Delegate for Human Rights of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences &
Chair for International, Constitutional and Comparative Law, University of Lucerne

- Copy to:
- Ministro, Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación Productiva de la República Argentina
 - Presidente, Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET)
 - Head of International Relations Division, State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation, Switzerland
 - Science and Technology Counsellor, Embassy of Switzerland in Argentina