

During the years that followed, Felipe continued to work to improve the life of the mountain peasants. He tried, as he puts it, to continue being a 'moral leader'. Despite the efforts of Felipe and others, the logging continued, and the forests continued to disappear.

The peasants blamed the huge American company, Boise Cascade, for much of the damage that was being done to their environment. During the nineties, the company enlarged its mill in Papanao, on the Guerrero coast, and increased the amount of logging they were doing. In 1998, Felipe and other members of a group called the Peasant Environmentalist Organization of Petatlán and Coyuca blockaded Boise Cascade's logging trucks. As a result, logging was stopped, and Boise Cascade announced that it was leaving Guerrero. After this success, Felipe and others had to hide in mountain caves for several months because they were again being hunted by soldiers.

When the army stopped looking for him, Felipe, working with his wife Celsa, concentrated on educating his fellow peasants. He taught them how to prevent pesticide pollution by growing fruit and vegetables organically. He encouraged them to use their land as efficiently as possible by sowing fruit trees in the ravines. He explained the importance of protecting the water supply and preventing erosion.

By 2003, however, logging was increasing again. In the Petatlán mountains, as in many parts of Mexico, country bosses, called caciques, were doing their best to control the peasants on behalf of government, or the army, or big business. One of these bosses, Niño Bautista, was working on behalf of lumber companies and trying to get cancelled logging licences renewed. Felipe spoke out against this at a public meeting.

Shortly after criticizing the renewal of the licences, on November 3, 2004, Felipe was arrested and charged with the murder of one of Niño's sons, Abel. Abel had been killed in a roadside ambush in 1998. His brother, Priscilliano, who was driving with him at the time, was the only witness. When Felipe appeared in court, Priscilliano testified against him. He said he had hidden under a rock after his brother had been shot and that he had recognized Felipe and twelve others who had ambushed the vehicle. He didn't remember what any of them was wearing, but he knew all their names. It turned out later that one of the people whose names he gave had been dead for two years when the murder took place.

Felipe told the court that on the day of the murder he had been in a village called Las Mesas three hours' drive away. He had gone there, he explained to get treatment for a back injury. He had many witnesses to back up his story, but the judge decided that there was enough evidence to keep him in jail. Felipe's friends say he was framed—to get him out of the way and to frighten people who support him. When he was interviewed in jail Felipe himself said, "The simple truth is that I was working against the interests of the rich and powerful. Everyone who was secretly stealing lumber from the forests was against me."