

54th Human Rights Council Session, 28th of September 2023

ID with Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous People

Mr. President,

In its accompaniment to indigenous peoples Peace Brigades witnesses many of the violations highlighted by the SR.

In Guatemala, we draw the council's attention to the increasing number of violent attacks, criminalization and judicial and extrajudicial evictions of communities claiming their rights in the face of development projects counting in part with financing by International Financial Institutions, such as the Peaceful Resistance of Cahabón by q'eqch'i communities and their struggle against the hydroelectric plants Renace and Oxec.

In Honduras we are concerned about the use of the crime of forced displacement aimed at protecting families from criminal groups but misused by the government and extractive companies to criminalize environmental defenders. This is the case of the indigenous Lencas Victor Vásquez and José Vigil, imprisoned in 2020 for almost a year and still waiting for their case to be resolved.

In Colombia, serious violations persist against indigenous peoples who defend their territories from large-scale economies, such as the Resguardo San Marcelino de Putumayo, on the border with Ecuador, where on July 29 the Kichwa community was subjected to violence by the Ecuadorian Army, with the acquiescence of the Colombian Army. We further stress the urgency for the Colombian Constitutional Court to ratify the Escazú Agreement.

In Canada, we draw your attention to the continued harassment of Wet'suwet'en land defenders opposed to the Coastal GasLink pipeline by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Community-Industry Response Group. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has repeatedly called on Canada to remove the Mounted Police and private security from Wet'suwet'en territory.

*Full Version*

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Mr. President,

In its accompaniment to indigenous peoples Peace Brigades witnesses many of the risks highlighted by the SR, such as evictions or the disrespect of right to free, prior, and informed consent.

In Guatemala, we draw the council's attention to the increasing number of violent attacks, criminalization and judicial and extrajudicial evictions of communities claiming their rights in the face of development projects counting in part with financing by International Financial Institutions. Examples include the Peaceful Resistance of Cahabón by q'eqch'i communities and their struggle against the hydroelectric plants Renace and Oxec, or the Unión Verapacense of Peasant Organisations and the Council of Communities of the Highlands Verapaces, facing violent evictions by the palm oil company Naturaceites.

In Honduras we are concerned about the use of the crime of forced displacement aimed at protecting families from intimidation and threats by criminal groups but misused by the government and extractive companies to criminalize environmental defenders. This is the case of Victor Vásquez and José Vigil, Lenca environmental defenders, imprisoned in 2020 for almost a year for their opposition to a hydroelectric dam and are still waiting for their case to be resolved.

In Colombia, serious violations persist against indigenous peoples who defend their territories from large-scale economies. One example is the Resguardo San Marcelino de Putumayo, on the border with Ecuador, where on July 29 the Kichwa community was subjected to arbitrary detentions, aggressions and violence against women and children by the Ecuadorian Army and with the acquiescence of the Colombian Army.

We further stress the urgent need for Colombia to become a State Party to the Escazú Agreement, as the law approving it is still under review by the Constitutional Court.

In Canada, we draw your attention to the continued harassment by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Community-Industry Response Group of Wet'suwet'en land defenders and water protectors opposed to the Coastal GasLink pipeline. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has repeatedly called on Canada to remove the Mounted Police and private security from Wet'suwet'en territory.