

Open letter of support for AIDSESP, its vice-president Miguel Guimaraes and other indigenous human rights defenders in Peru in the face of escalating attacks and acts of intimidation

10th May 2024

In solidarity with the Peruvian indigenous rights federation The Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDSESP), the undersigned organizations and individuals express our grave concern about the serious risk faced by AIDSESP members, especially its vice-president Miguel Guimaraes. **We urge the Peruvian State to take urgent action to put an end to the threats against Miguel Guimaraes, his family and community, and to guarantee the safety of members of AIDSESP and other indigenous human rights defenders in Peru.**

Apu Miguel Guimaraes, a prominent leader of the indigenous Shipibo-Konibo people, from the Flor de Ucayali community, vice-president of AIDSESP and ZTI Steering Group member, returned to Peru from COP 3 of the Escazu Agreement in Chile, to discover that his house had been broken into on the night of April 24. The perpetrators smashed windows, forced the doors and stole belongings. The attackers left death threats spray painted on the fence with the words “No vive” and “No vivira” (He will not live).

This latest incident is the most recent attack in a long line of threats that Miguel has faced. On 14 October 2020, Miguel Guimaraes received a death threat from unknown individuals via a message on WhatsApp following his participation in a public hearing with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). Despite death threats, intimidation and other attacks Miguel Guimaraes continues to defend the rights of indigenous communities across Peru. In 2020 Miguel Guimaraes was made a beneficiary of precautionary measures from the IACHR due to the grave threats that he and fellow members of the Native Community of Santa Clara de Uchunya faced for defending their land in the Amazonian region of Ucayali.

Recently AIDSESP, Miguel and members of the Santa Clara de Uchunya community organized under the ‘Defence Front for the Interests of the Indigenous Community of Santa Clara de Uchunya’, have been defending the community’s collective land rights in the face of palm oil plantations and have publicly denounced that there is a coordinated smear campaign against them. Miguel has also been outspoken in denouncing the impacts of narcotics expansion in indigenous territories in the Peruvian Amazon, including in his community, Flor de Ucayali.

AIDSESP is an emblematic indigenous federation in the Americas, an organization that represents multiple ethnic groups and acts as a structure for Peru’s Amazonian Indigenous movement. AIDSESP works for the defense and respect of collective rights through advocacy, campaigning and promotion of alternative development models, according to indigenous peoples’ worldview and way of life. AIDSESP is made up of 109 federations that represent 2,439 communities made up of more than 650,000 indigenous people. Since its inception, it has been at the forefront of the struggle to vindicate the territorial rights of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon.



Peru is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for indigenous human rights defenders: threats, attacks, assassinations and smear campaigns persist against those who defend human and environmental rights. AIDSESEP have documented and denounced the killing of 34 Indigenous leaders in the Peruvian Amazon since 2013¹. These attacks occur in a context characterised by structural impunity and corruption, organised crime and human rights violations against indigenous communities and their leaders often with the complicity of the State.

We express our solidarity and support to apu Miguel Guimaraes, his family and community, and other indigenous human rights defenders in Peru, and for all of the above reasons, we urge the Peruvian State to:

- Publicly express its support and backing for the work of human rights defenders and in particular Miguel Guimaraes and AIDSESEP, underscoring the legitimacy of their work.
- Ensure security guarantees for Miguel Guimaraes and his family, and members of AIDSESEP.
- Ensure effective implementation of the inter-sectoral mechanism for the protection of human rights defenders, guaranteeing multilevel coordination with the competent state entities and coordinating with indigenous organisations in order to effectively implement protection measures and prevent further attacks.
- Ensure that measures aimed at the protection of human rights defenders focus on preventive and collective measures. Measures should aim to address the structural causes of violence such as the land tenure insecurity of indigenous peoples, corruption, the overlapping of rights granted by the state on indigenous people's territories and the lack of a well funded and sustainable landscape approach to eradicate illegal economies in the Amazon.
- Ensure that the work of human rights defenders is not subject to smear campaigns, harassment and threats and sanction those responsible.
- Ensure the Public Prosecutor's Office carry out the investigation swiftly and diligently to ensure those responsible for the attack are brought to justice.

Signed by:

1. Ação dos Jovens Indígenas de Dourados (AJI), Brazil
2. Agency for Turkana Development Initiatives (ATUDIS), Kenya
3. Arbeitskreis München Asháninka, Germany
4. Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on Extractive Industries and Energy (AIPNEE), Asia
5. Asociación Entrepueblos, Latin America
6. Asociación para el Desarrollo Andino Amazónico - Huñuq Mayu, Perú

1. In February AIDSESEP participated in an IACHR hearing where they denounced the killing of 33 Indigenous leaders in the Peruvian Amazon since 2013. <https://www.actualidadambiental.pe/ante-cidh-exigen-justicia-por-la-muerte-de-33-lideres-indigenas-asesinados-en-la-ultima-decada/>

On the 19th of April 2024, Indigenous leader Victorio Dariquebe of the Harakbut – Wachiperi people was killed bringing the total to 34. <https://aidesep.org.pe/noticias/pronunciamiento-exigimos-justicia-para-nuestro-hermano-victorio-dariquebe/>

 **EarthSight**


EDLC
ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDER LAW CENTER

 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOUNDATION

 eia
environmental investigation agency

 Envoi Vert

EntrePobos
EntrePueblos
herriarte

 FAPI
Federación por la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos Indígenas

 Forest Peoples Programme

 FOREST TRENDS



Friends of the Earth

 FRONT LINE DEFENDERS

global witness 



7. Asociación Proyecto Amigo, Peru
8. Asociación ProPurús, Peru
9. Campaña Nacional de Defensoras y Defensores del Perú, Peru
10. Centro Bartolomé de Las Casas (CBC), Peru
11. Centro de Políticas Públicas y Derechos Humanos - Perú Equidad, Peru
12. Community Empowerment and Social Justice Network (CEMSOJ), Nepal
13. Conectas Direitos Humanos, Brazil
14. Derechos Humanos Sin Fronteras (DHSF), Peru
15. EarthRights International- ERI, US
16. Earthsight, UK
17. Environmental Defender Law Center' EDLC, US
18. Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), US
19. Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), UK
20. Envol Vert, Peru, France and Colombia.
21. Federación por la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos Indígenas (FAPI), Paraguay
22. Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), UK
23. Forest Trends, United States
24. Friends of the Earth United States
25. Front Line Defenders, International
26. Fundación EcuMénica Para El Desarrollo y La Paz (FEDEPAZ), Peru
27. Global Legal Action Network (GLAN), UK
28. Global Witness, International
29. GreenFaith, Uganda
30. Grupo de Formación e Intervención para el Desarrollo Sostenible-GRUFIDES, Peru
31. Informationsstelle Peru e.V./ Red Solidaridad Alemania Peru, Peru
32. International Service for Human Rights, US
33. Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples (LAHURNIP), Nepal



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY



MIGHTY EARTH



34. McCain Institute, US
35. Mecanismo de Gobernanza Territorial, Latin America
36. Mighty Earth, US
37. Oil Refinery Residents Association (ORRA), Uganda
38. Oxfam International EU Office, International
39. Policy Action Initiative, Kenya
40. Protection International, International
41. Proyecto sobre Organización, Desarrollo, Educación e Investigación (PODER), México/Latam
42. Red Muqui, Peru
43. Rights and Resources Initiative US
44. Roots2Justice, UK
45. Sierra Leone Land Alliance-SLLA, Sierra Leone
46. STAR Kampuchea (SK), Cambodia
47. Swedwatch, Sweden
48. Tasha Research Institute Africa (TASHA), Africa

