

*Translation of Spanish original.*

The Indigenous Nations continue their struggles against the mining and oil companies that have invaded our territories

The Council of Government of the Confederation of the Indigenous Nations of Ecuadorian Amazonia CONFENIAE, directs itself to the national and international public opinion to show the following:

1. The mining and oil companies and others that have invaded our territories in Amazonia have organized a campaign by a false CONFENIAE, lead by José Aviles, who is sending out communiqués in the international arena, to confuse public institutions, governments, and international cooperation organizations about what is happening in the Ecuadorian Amazonia.
2. The indigenous Mafia lies in the most shameless and condemnable way, usurping the name of the CONFENIAE and of the Federation Shuar de Zamora Chinchipe FEPNASH-ZCH, presided over by our colleague Ángel Awak. They are not ashamed to send communiqués prepared in the public relations offices of the mining companies, affirming such ridiculous things as that mineral exploitation provides education, hospitals, and culture to our communities. If we have received so many benefits, how is it possible that we live in the situation of misery and abandonment that they themselves recognize in their writings?
3. They falsify the facts so, that they make our organizations responsible of having attacked and injured members of the national police, when it was in fact they (the paramilitaries of the mining companies), who shot at them to avoid having them protect our communities that were recovering their territories. It is certain that there are military detachments protecting the mining companies, which is a shame for the country, and demands a firm answer from the government of president Correa. It is not possible that our Armed Forces are being used to defend private interests, which in addition threaten the life and well-being of Ecuadorians.
4. The CONFENIAE rejects this new manoeuvre of the mining companies and condemns the actions of this indigenous Mafia that tries to usurp the name of our organization. They were allies of the government of Lucio Gutiérrez and are it implicated in innumerable cases of corruption that are being investigated so that those responsible may be sanctioned. Neither money nor the lies and the threats against the CONFENIAE will be able to stop the struggle of our organizations. We will not stop until all the mining companies leave our territories.
5. The CONFENIAE, directed by its Governing Council, is recognized and registered by the state and the Ecuadorian government through CODENPE, as well as through the Confederation of the Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, CONAIE. In the coming days we will initiate legal actions so that José Aviles and his accomplices may be processed and sanctioned.
6. The problem that we are suffering at this moment in Amazonía is caused by the mining companies Lowell and Ecuacorrientes, which entered the indigenous territories in an illegal manner, violating constitutional norms and Convention 169 of the ILO. This situation has been partially resolved by the national government cancelling part of the operations of these companies. But they are still operating in many places, in spite of the repeated requests and struggles undertaken by the Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of the provinces of Azuay, Morona Santiago, and Zamora Chinchipe. We do not want mining concessions in our territories; we did not accept the destruction of our biodiversity and our future – a destruction that would not be allowed in the countries of origin of these companies like Canada, the U.S.A. and others.

7. The Government of President Rafael Correa must intervene in a clear way to cancel the illegal mining concessions, to respect and protect the collective rights of the nationalities and Indigenous peoples. The military must be removed from the mining camps. They are there to defending the country, not to protect the illegal actions and the businesses of the mining companies. Those responsible for attacks against the Indigenous populations must be sanctioned.

8. It is difficult to go up against the millions of dollars that these companies spend in corrupting bad leaders, in buying the complicity of a few military officers, and in disinforming public opinion. But we are demonstrating that our power is greater, because it is based in the teachings of our own cosmovision, principles, and values, and above all, in the dream of a better future for our families.

9. The CONFENIAE is in a process of strengthening all the organizations of the Indigenous nationalities of Ecuadorian Amazonia. We are holding workshops, meetings, and forums in all the provinces. We are communicating our joy. Those that destroy life are losing, their accomplices losing hope, and we, the Indigenous nationalities, are advancing.

10. We wish to thank the human rights organisations, the aid agencies, and the non-governmental organizations for their support and solidarity at the national and international level, because they demonstrate that we share the same hopes and dreams for a more just and democratic world.

11. We will always be vigilant. We will not accept more invasions because we have decided to fight until the very end.

(signed and sealed)

Domingo Akuash  
President of the CONFENIAE  
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