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## Ecuador: Ancestral peoples of the mangrove forests attacked and evicted

At 9:00 a.m. on December 4, uniformed officers of the National Police set fire to the homes and crops of residents and families in Bilsa, located in the canton of Muisne in Esmeraldas province. This community has ancestrally inhabited this spot, where they make a living through gathering crabs and agro-ecological farming practices. The fact that they have lived here for more than 20 years means they have the right to legal title to the land in compliance with the provisions of the country's Civil Code.

The Ancestral Peoples of the Mangrove Ecosystem, grouped together in the National Coordinating Committee for the Defence of the Mangrove Ecosystem (C-CONDEM), energetically and categorically reject this criminal act, and denounce that "this violation of the human rights of the peoples of the mangrove forests is just one more in a string of incidents of this kind along the Ecuadorian coast in recent months, in which peoples of the mangrove are evicted under orders from the authorities, as is the case of Verdún in the province of Manabí, Bajo Alto in the province of El Oro, and the inhabitants of the estuary in Guayas. These evictions are ordered either at the request of the alleged owners of the land, or due to allegations of environmental damage, while government policies legalize the occupation of thousands of hectares by industrial shrimp farming operations that usurp our land." <http://www.ccondem.org.ec/boletin.php?c=1238>