
Support requested to forest indigenous peoples in Peru

The Mashco Piro, Yora, Amahuaca, and Yaminahua indigenous peoples in the amazonic Alta Piedras region of Madre de Dios in Peru, are being threatened by pending forest concessions. These peoples -called "uncontacted"- which have chosen to remain in isolation from Peruvian society, would have their way of life, as well as their natural resources severely impacted if logging in their ancestral lands actually takes place.

The indigenous organization Madre de Dios Native Federation (Federación Nativa Madre de Dios - FENAMAD) has been trying for years to find the way to make the survival of the native inhabitants of that region possible. Nevertheless, the authorities have completely ignored them. FENAMAD took part in the initiative promoted by the Regional Environmental Committee of Madre de Dios to elaborate a proposal for the ecological and economic zonification of the area, which includes the delimitation of indigenous peoples traditional lands to avoid that their territories and resources end in the hands of a few predatory companies. An operative plan for such delimitation was also presented to the regional office of the Ministry of Agriculture, but the only response obtained until now was that the area is being considered for granting logging licenses.

The Peruvian government is up to decide about the licensing of the concessions. Those interesting in supporting this struggle can address the following Peruvian authorities by means of the below model letter:

Alberto Fujimori, President of the Republic of Peru, Fax: (51) 1 426 6770
Victor Joy Way, Prime Minister of the Republic of Peru, Fax: (51) 1 447 1628
Belisario de las Casas, Ministry of Agriculture, Fax: (51) 1 431 0109 / 433 2951
Jorge Santisteban de Noriega, People's Defender, Fax: (51) 1 426 5617

Dear Sirs:

We write to express our grave concern regarding the licensing of forest concession in the Alta Piedras region of the Department of Madre de Dios between the Brazilian border and Ucallali and the effect the concessions would have on the uncontacted indigenous peoples of this region.

The concessions to international logging companies in the Alta Piedras region will have a devastating impact on the Mashco Piro, Yora, Amahuaca, and Yaminahua peoples who remain in voluntary isolation from Peruvian society. We understand that one transnational logging company has already begun construction of a 180 kilometer road into the region and that there have already been confrontations with one of the uncontacted peoples of the area.

In addition to threatening the natural resources which sustain indigenous communities, logging operations will inevitable expose these peoples to new diseases and violence that could cause great suffering. We remember the Kugapakori-Nahuas of the Urubamba and Manu basins who lost half of their community members in violent confrontations with loggers and petroleum workers. The Mashco Piro, Amahuaca, Yaminahua, and Yora peoples' lives depend upon the forest and they protect it and

all of its wealth.

For these reasons above, we strongly urge you to prevent the licensing of concessions in the forests of Alta Piedras and seriously consider the Operative Plan for defining and protecting the ancestral territories of the indigenous people in this region put forth by the Federacion Nativa de Madre de Dios (FENAMAD.)

Yours Sincerely,

Name

Organization

Country

Please, send a copy to:

Antonio Iviche Quique, President of FENAMAD, Fax: (51) 84 572 499