Ecuador: ecologists are not terrorists

The environmental NGO Accion Ecologica, with headquarters in Quito and working in several locations of Ecuador has been accused of being involved in the recent kidnappings of eight oil company technicians that occured near Lago Agrio in the Amazonian region of the country. This organization has released the following statement:

"Accion Ecologica, an environmental organisation which works in the area in the north east of Ecuador where hostages were taken on the 11th of September, wishes to make public its indignation, and rejection of rumours regarding the existence of eco-terrorists in the country.

The use of violence has never been, nor ever will be, a method which environmentalists will use to carry out their work or make problems known. Environmentalists love life and defend nature, and all our actions are coherent with the principles of non-violence and respect for human rights.

The actions of environmentalists, and in particular our own, are directed towards denouncing in the most direct and transparent fashion violations of the collective and environmental rights of the Ecuadorian people.

We feel that the forced nature of the links between environmentalists and the hostage takers could be used to construct arguments and reactions which put us at risk. There are even those who would draw satisfaction from this link, as they know that our vigilance has taken away the possibility of environmental impunity, in particular in the area 'where for many years the population has been taken hostage by being abandoned' according to the bishop of Sucumbios Province, Gonzalo Lopez.

As Ecuadorians and lovers of peace we reject foreign military presence of whatever type in our territory, such as: Colombian guerrilla and paramilitary forces, as well as the United States Army.

We call on all Ecuadorians, to think about the problems of the Amazon region and its people, about the agony that these fragile ecosystems and their peoples are suffering in full view of the whole world, and about the impact of the rumours which have recently been circulating.

Accion Ecologica will maintain its work of monitoring and denouncing problems in the area and in the rest of the country, because we are inspired by and committed to, a country with a lasting future."

Source: Oilwatch Network - Secretariat,