

Sápara Women's Association of Ecuador
ASHIÑWA
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Ms. Vicky Tauli-Corpuz,
Incoming Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Mr. Diego Zorrilla
Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Ecuador

To Whom It May Concern:

We, the Sápara Women's Association of Ecuador (ASHIÑWA) and the Sápara Nation of Ecuador (NASE) would like to express our kind regards and inform you of the following:

1. For millennia we the Sápara Nation have lived in 400,000 hectares of Amazonian territory between the Conambo and Pinduyacu rivers, we have a population of 480 Sápara, and we have our official Sápara constitution.
2. In 2001 UNESCO declared us an Immaterial Cultural Patrimony of Humanity, insofar as our maternal language is cultural patrimony that should be protected by all of humanity.
3. The existence of our people is in grave danger because the national government wants to extract oil from our territory. There are six oil blocks that cover the totality of our territory. They are blocks 74, 79, 83, 80, 84, and 86.
4. We have resolved in multiple assemblies, congresses, and in indigenous declarations that we do not want extractive industry like oil exploitation in our territory.
 - 4.1 We, the Sápara Nation are in agreement with the other indigenous nationalities that adjoin our territory like the Shiwiar, the Quichua of Curaray, the Quichua of Sarayacu, the Quichua of Moretecocha, and the Quichua of Kausak Sacha, that we will not permit oil exploitation.
5. We, the Sápara Nation, have embraced many people from other nationalities that came to live in our territory. Some came to work in the oil industry in the 1980s, some expelled from conflicts in their own communities, and others were brought in by evangelical missionaries, among others. Unfortunately, these settlers have caused and continue to cause problems in our territory.

6. The Secretary of Hydrocarbons, the Secretary of Political Management, the Socio Bosque Program of the Ministry of the Environment and other state authorities are backing the settlers that live in Sápara territory, the same ones that are dividing the communities and threatening the lives of the native leaders of the Sápara Nation.
7. In February of 2013, one week after the assembly at which we were threatened by Mr. Basilio Mucushigua, Emerson Ushigua Ruiz, a 13-year-old Zápara, was murdered in the River Tsuruyacu in the Community of Torimbo.
8. Facing this grave situation, we the natives of the Sápara Nation organized a congress in Community of Torimbo and we nominated our own native leaders.
9. This nomination was ratified by the Indigenous Sentence through the exercise of the Justice System in the Community of the Jandiayacu with the participation of the Sápara elders who served as judges.
10. This sentence was recognized by CONAIE and CONFENAIE, our indigenous government. It was also recognized by CODEMPE, the Board of Development of the Nationalities and Communities of Ecuador.
11. Right now the national government, through the Secretary of Political Management, in order to exploit oil blocks 79 and 83, blocks in Sápara territory that have been promised in the 11th Oil Round, is pressuring CODENPE, the Board of Development of the Nationalities and Communities of Ecuador to not recognize the Indigenous Sápara Sentence in which we nominated our own native leaders, thereby committing the offense of contempt towards indigenous justice that that is in Article 171 of the Constitution of the Republic and in additional laws.
12. This has aggravated the internal conflict with the settlers, resulting in new death threats from the pro-oil settlers against the native Sápara.
13. Furthermore, the national government initiated a judicial process against the indigenous Amazonian leaders who are opposed to oil exploitation in the central south Ecuadorian Amazon, in particular against the legal representative of the Sápara Nation, Klever Ruiz, the president of the Women's Association of Ecuador, Gloria Ushigua, and the vicepresident of CONAIE, Bartolo Ushigua, all of whom are native Sápara leaders.
14. Moreover, it's worth noting that the Ministry of Education eliminated the Department of Trilingual Sápara Education, gravely affecting the recuperation of our ancestral language.

Given these facts, we request:

- a. To Ms. Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, incoming Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to take the appropriate actions with the UN bodies in order to achieve the suspension of the oil project, which will prevent the kinds of crimes that we are victims to as a nation.
- b. We request that Ms. Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, incoming Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in the most urgent matter, realizes an on-the-ground fact-finding mission to document the state of emergency and threat that we live in the Sápara Nation.
- c. We request the verification of the following crimes being committed against the Sápara Nation:
 - The falsification of public documents with the goal of obtaining illegal permission for oil exploitation
 - The contempt for the indigenous sentence and the usurpation of titles
 - The state of criminalization of we leaders who defend our territories and rights
- d. After the on-the-ground mission, we request that you make the appropriate recommendations to guarantee the Rights of Nature and our rights as the Sápara Nation.

Thank you for the attention you bring to our request.

Attentively,

Klever Ruiz
President of the Sápara Nation (NASE)

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The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE)
The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE)
National and International Human Rights and Indigenous Organizations