

(translation by Amazon Watch)
Press Statement
January 8, 2017

Amazon Women Are Threatened and Attacked for Defending Life and Their Territories

When They Threaten One Of Us, They Threaten All of Us!

We, Amazon women of the Kichwa, Waorani, Achuar, Shuar, Shiwiar and Sapara nations and of mixed heritage, publicly denounce the following:

On Friday, January 5th at 1am, the home of Patricia Gualinga was attacked with rocks. The attack broke windows and the assailant yelled directly at Patricia Gualinga and repeatedly threatened her with death.

This attack occurred at the in the context of the national government announcing an end to mining and oil concessions in indigenous territories. However, the government has granted concessions for blocks 74, 75, 79, 83, 28, and the expansion of block 10, which affect the Villano and Curaray river basins, the territories of the Kichwa of Sarayaku, the Sapara, Achuar Shuar, Shiwiar, and the communities of Santa Clara, San Jacinto and the city of Puyo, Shell-Mera. Amazon women and the affected communities have repeatedly expressed their rejection of these concessions.

Threats and harassment of women has repeatedly and systematically occurred [in Ecuador], putting at risk their physical safety, as in the cases of Gloria Ushigua, Nema Grefa, Alicia Cahuiya, and Margoth Escobar. Mysterious deaths of the family members of women leaders have also occurred, circumstances that have never been clarified by the justice system.

For these reasons we Amazon women voice our rejection.

We demand that the Ecuadorian government guarantee the wellbeing and take measures to protect women who defend nature and life.

We believe that these [threats and attacks] seek to generate anguish, fear, destabilizing terror, insecurity within the family and the community, in order to break the spirit of resistance and struggle to defend territory.

We have identified these strategies and intentions to destroy the natural will to defend life. We indigenous women have made ourselves into custodians of the right to life and the protection of the rights of nature.

We Amazon women are united and strong and have a lifelong commitment to the defense of Mother Earth. Although they try to frighten us, we will not be defeated and we will continue to stand united in struggle no matter the costs!