



**Aura Tegría Cristancho** is a 26-year old indigenous lawyer from Colombia's U'wa Nation. Since late 2013, she has served as the legal advisor to the U'wa Association of Traditional Authorities and Councils (ASOU'WA).

During her tenure, Aura has been central to a number of important advances made by the U'wa people in the defense of their ancestral territory. Extraordinarily, the U'wa were able to successfully challenge a natural gas exploration platform, called Magallanes, which was constructed within their ancestral territory in early 2014. Through nonviolent protest, international advocacy, media campaigns, and direct negotiations with the government, the U'wa were able to stop the project in its tracks and by early 2015 the platform had been dismantled. Over this process, Aura served as a liaison with Colombian and international allies, and a spokesperson before international media outlets and the government.

More recently, the U'wa have raised grave concerns about ecotourism that has been expanding on El Cocuy, the snow-capped mountaintop within their territory that is one of their most sacred sites, the resting place of their elder's spirits. As in the past, Aura has been an integral contributor to the actions of the current U'wa leadership.

Aura has served as an international ambassador for the U'wa, participating in the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2014 and 2016. On those occasions, she also traveled to Washington, DC to meet with human rights lawyers at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which formally admitted the U'wa case in late 2015 in large part due to Aura's diligent work.

Following are some examples of Aura's work as U'wa spokesperson, in which she is featured or otherwise quoted:

[U'wa Mobilization 2016](#) (Aura offers context at beginning of video, 14 April 2016)

[Indigenous defenders close park after tourists play soccer game on melting glacier](#) (Aura quoted in article in Fusion.net, 29 March 2016)

[Colombian tribe scores 'historic' victory versus Big Gas - State company Ecopetrol pulls out of drilling site in territories belonging to the indigenous U'wa people](#) (Aura quoted in article in The Guardian, 26 March 2015)

[El lío de los indígenas U'wa con la petrolera colombiana](#) (Aura interviewed on Club de Prensa program on NTN24 channel, 30 May 2014)

[Colombia's U'was Say No to Gas Drilling in Their Territory](#) (Aura quoted in article in Upside Down World, 28 May 2014)

[Colombia's U'wa Indians Continue Oil Protests After Talks Fail – Shutdown of Pipeline Has Cost the Government Over \\$130 Million](#) (Aura quoted in article in Wall Street Journal, 25 April 2014)