



*International Gathering of Defenders: Indigenous Autonomies in the Face of Illicit Economies*

## Pucallpa Declaration

### In Defense of Life, of Our Territories, and of the Right to Self Determination of Indigenous Peoples

We, representatives of diverse Indigenous organizations and Self-Governments from Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, gathered at the International Gathering of Defenders and Autonomies held in the city of Pucallpa on February 23 and 24, declare before our States and the international community the following:

We denounce that the expansion of illicit economies, organized crime, territorial dispossession, and the imposition of extractive projects gravely violate our rights, generate violence against our authorities, and weaken our structures of self-government. They impact the cultural life of our peoples, our spirituality, and our own systems of life. These economies are facilitated by infrastructure projects and illegal roads imposed without consultation with the affected peoples.

We have assessed the serious threats posed by illegal economies in our territories and conclude that self-determination, the exercise of self-government, and effective territorial control by Indigenous Peoples are the best ways to contain and reverse the environmental and humanitarian crisis facing the Amazon due to the advance of drug trafficking, mining, illegal logging, and other activities that devastate our forests.

These conditions are expressions of rights recognized in ILO Convention 169 and in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, yet they are not adequately implemented by all of our States.

We reaffirm our decision to strengthen territorial governance, our Indigenous guards, our knowledge systems, our own justice systems, and our community-based self-protection practices. Protection must be collective, territorial, and community-based, recognizing our authorities and

without subordination.

We maintain that the response to illicit economies lies in strengthening our own Indigenous economies—regenerative and sustainable—based on our ancestral knowledge and life plans. We demand full legal security for our territories, fair markets for our production, and direct financing for our initiatives.

There is no autonomy without the full participation of Indigenous women. We commit to guaranteeing their leadership, eradicating all forms of violence, and strengthening their economic and political independence.

Therefore, we demand from States and international institutions:

- That they address this emergency with genuine commitment, controlling the growing co-optation and corruption of illegal economies within their own executive, legislative, military, and police institutions.
- Effective respect for self-determination. All countries must recognize the integral territory and legal status of Indigenous Peoples and their representative institutions within their systems of government.
- The effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in the design, implementation, and evaluation of all policies related to security, the control of illegal economies, and the promotion of projects in our territories at the national and international levels.
- The implementation of protection mechanisms for defenders with sufficient budget and operational capacity; the investigation of violations against the lives and rights of defenders and the determination of the causes of violence in order to end impunity. Legal recognition must be granted to our own systems of security and justice. Peru and other countries that have not yet done so must also ratify the Escazú Agreement.

We call upon the international community and our allies to respect our agendas, strengthen our capacities for self-government, and support our initiatives without imposing external approaches or development models foreign to our interests. This includes advancing environmental policies and climate agreements that respect our self-determination.

The defense of territory is the defense of life.

Indigenous territorial autonomy is the best solution to the environmental and social crisis in the Amazon.

Self-determination is a condition for justice and intercultural democracy. Given in Pucallpa, on the

24th day of February, 2026.