



## **Plataforma Europa Perú**

<b>Press Release</b>
----------------------

The Peru Europe Platform (PEP) expresses its deep indignation, concern and strong condemnation of the recent violence over the last few days in the Amazon region of Peru (Bagua).

For nearly 20 years, successive Peruvian governments have focused their economic policies towards an excessive liberalisation, export promotion and attracting large investments in the extractives sectors. Extractives - mining and hydrocarbon production - particularly affect indigenous peoples, as they are largely developed on their territories - the first mainly in the mountain region (the Andes), the second in the Amazon region. During the current government of President Alan García this situation worsened as more privileges were granted to companies, ignoring the rights of indigenous peoples. In 2008, the García Administration approved about a hundred legislative decrees within the framework of the powers it was granted by Congress to implement the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States. Many of these legislative decrees affect the indigenous population again as they violate the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention 169 (which refers to the duty of states to consult indigenous communities on any government decision that may affect them), as well as the right of communities to own their land and access nearby resources. The decrees also threaten the sustainability of ecosystems - many of which are very fragile - and the biodiversity they host, by reducing the environmental requirements for new investments.

The conflicts, tensions and protests in the Amazon region during the past year have shown the inability of the government to address the issue of managing the region's natural resources and to provide solutions to social conflicts through dialogue with indigenous peoples. This situation led to a significant increase in social protests - with a virtual paralysis of economic activities in the region - since April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009. As a reaction, the government declared a state of emergency on May 9<sup>th</sup>, which led to an intensification of the social protests.

On June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the government's decision to send in security forces to put an end to the road block near Bagua resulted in tragedy. Depending on the source, there are thought to have been anywhere between 30 and 84 deaths, with hundreds of people injured. Official figures report that 24 policemen and nine indigenous people died. Local witnesses have spoken of more indigenous victims, as well as 'disappeared' people. There are many indications that there has been a disproportionate use of violence by the police, which provoked a strong reaction from the indigenous people and led to the deaths of several policemen who had been kidnapped.

Because of a lack of reliable information on the exact number of deaths, wounded and missing people, and furthermore because of a lack of clarity surrounding many aspects of what exactly happened before, during and after the confrontation, we call for a thorough and independent investigation of the facts. Recently, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights expressed the same concerns.

We call on the Government of Peru to repeal definitively the decrees enacted within the context of the implementation of the FTA with the U.S. and which are considered by indigenous organisations as a threat to their rights. The laws, decrees and regulations not only have to match ILO 169, but also be registered within the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

(self-determination, prior, free and informed consent, etc...). It should be noted that Peru was a leading sponsor of that statement.

In addition we ask the Peruvian government:

- To reopen dialogue and negotiations with indigenous rights group and to cease the prosecution of indigenous people;
- To review planned mega-projects which affect the rights of indigenous peoples, such as dams, and roads;
- To promote a broad discussion on a transparent and sustainable use of the Peruvian jungle, rather than the short-term exploitation by extractives industries;
- Revise mega-projects that are already planned and that influence the rights of indigenous communities, like dams, highways,...

We ask the European Union and its Member States:

- To condemn the disproportionate use of violence by the police at the 'devil's bend' (curva del Diablo) in Bagua
- To request an independent investigation
- To call for the creation of effective mechanisms for dialogue between the government and indigenous population
- To suspend trade negotiations with the Andean countries under their current form. A reorientation of negotiations is needed within the framework of an Association Agreement on the sustainable development of the Andean countries, governed by a democratic clause. Political dialogue must come first in order to establish the principles under which economic integration within the Andean Community and between the two regions will take place.

Brussels, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Platform Europe Peru <sup>1</sup>  
CATAPA

---

<sup>1</sup> The Platform Europe Peru (PEP) is a network of European civil society advocacy organizations coordinating with their counterparts in Peru to raise awareness both to the European public as the politicians of our respective countries on issues of human rights and development in Peru. The PEP promotes compliance with the recommendations of the TRC.