

OPEN LETTER OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DECLARATORY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY

IN THE FACE OF THE EVIDENT DISABILITY AND LACK OF WILL OF THE STATES OF BOLIVIA AND BRAZIL TO PROTECT THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND BIODIVERSITY FROM FOREST FIRES IN THE BOLIVIAN CHIQUITANIA (SANTA CRUZ DE LA SIERRA) AND THE STATES OF ACRE, RONDONIA, MATO GROSSO AND MATO GROSSO DEL SUR IN BRASIL

QUITO, AUGUST 22, 2019

The voice of Indigenous Peoples in the light of a Genocide before the eyes of the World!

CONSIDERING

That the recognition of our rights in different international covenants such as the ILO Convention 169, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the OAS, the Amazon Cooperation Agreement, the United Nations Framework Convention against Climate Change and the Convention of Biological Diversity, among others, is the result of the historic struggle of Indigenous Peoples all over the world and under the mandate of our own laws.

That there is a common interest at the international level in continuing to advance in the consolidation of an alternative development model that emphasizes the protection of biodiversity, climate stability and the conditions to guarantee life for future generations, for which traditional and spiritual knowledge of indigenous peoples are fundamental contributions.

That for years, Indigenous Peoples and Organizations have urged to change priorities in the “Sustainable Development Goals” to focus all social, cultural, political and economic efforts on the protection of life and habitat, in order to generate harmony and balance which guarantee climatic stability.

That despite our struggles, little progress has been made, while the prevailing economic model continues to use the planet as a resource bank. This applies mainly to indigenous territories, where a physical and cultural Genocide is clearly happening, before the eyes of the world, and the risk of the planet becoming uninhabitable is rising.

That even though international declarations and agreements have been formulated, governments such as those of Brazil and Bolivia demonstrate their indifference, negligence, racism and structural discrimination against the life and integrity of Indigenous Peoples, and only seek to favor the interests of large economic groups who intend to divide up Amazonia into lots for agricultural megaprojects, mines, dams and energy projects. Therefore, they criminalize and denounce our indigenous authorities and organizations.

That the actions and omissions of the governments of Evo Morales and Jair Bolsonaro have subdued all environmental and social strategies to strengthen the environmental governance of the Amazon, not only going against the millennia-old exercise of

government by indigenous peoples which is based on traditional knowledge, but also contradicting the objectives set out in the international climate agenda. The flagrant incompetence of these governments and their lack of political will have caused the unprecedented environmental tragedy that has been continuing for weeks and already shows to have irreparable environmental repercussions.

That joint action of all social, public and private actors is necessary to intervene and put a stop to this threat against life in all its forms, which already poses an imminent risk of extinction to more than 506 Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon basin and thousands of species of flora and fauna: 73,843 sources of fire have incinerated more than 700,000 hectares of forest in the course of 18 days of neglect and obstruction; and according to preliminary data, more than 100,000 indigenous people have been affected.

WE DECLARE

That, referring to our Law of Origin, Basic Rights and Natural Law, we Indigenous hold the Governments of Jair Bolsonaro and Evo Morales responsible for the destruction and physical, environmental and cultural genocide that is currently presented in Amazonia, which, owing to their action and omission is becoming increasingly grave and has already caused irreparable losses for humanity. Therefore we sanction, condemn and declare these two governments *non gratae* for the Amazon Basin.

That the responsibility of these leaders is further aggravated as they point to indigenous and social organizations, holding them accountable for the damages caused by their very own economic policies that favour the indiscriminate extraction of biodiversity and ignores the basic laws of indigenous peoples that are recognized in international agreements.

That in the face of these events, social, cultural, political and economic sanctions for these governments is essential, paired with the empowerment of civil society to govern sovereignly, in order to protect life in all its integrity and to give a twist to the formulation of the policies that define the concept of development for the Amazon.

That therefore we call on all humanity to act immediately against the criminal actions that exacerbated the different causes of this unprecedented tragedy, at a time when climate stability is at risk.

We support the coherent position of the CIDOB of Bolivia, in rejecting and denouncing the Bolivian government for perpetrating this environmental and social disaster in order to promote an economic agenda contrary to reason and disrespectful of indigenous fundamental rights.

We support Brazil's COIAB position to continue on the hard path of struggle against the political, economic, administrative and procedural visions and actions of the Brazilian Government that permanently violate indigenous fundamental rights and those of humanity as a whole.

We request the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to the United Nations to declare the need for immediate measures by the international community in order to address this emergency and to formulate measures of international character to prevent them in the future.

We request the activation of international cooperation and other allies with humanitarian and solidary purposes so that the basic needs of the peoples affected by this scourge can be met and restoration measures of the affected biodiversity can be initiated.

We recognize the heroic work of the indigenous peoples and all allies from the civil society that are facing the fires, doing whatever is humanly possible to stop them.

We request and summon the unity and solidarity of all the Indigenous Peoples of Abya Yala and the world to testify, denounce and end the genocide and ecocide that the peoples are suffering in the ancient territories of the Amazon Basin.

The balance of Mother Earth depends on the Amazon Basin, allowing its devastation implies the extermination of Humanity.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND ORGANIZATIONS OF THE AMAZON BASIN