



**INDIAN LAW**  
RESOURCE CENTER  
JUSTICE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Indian Law Resource Center calls on Peru to stop the violence and honor Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights**

The Indian Law Resource Center is alarmed and deeply concerned about the violence between Peruvian special forces and indigenous peoples of the Peruvian Amazon. The unfolding situation in Peru is the direct outcome of the government's failure to respect the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples to their land and natural resources. The Center, as an Indian legal organization, is committed to protecting indigenous rights to land and natural resources, as well as the right to physical security, because these rights are essential to the survival of indigenous peoples.

The Center supports the legitimate concerns of indigenous peoples of the Amazon Region, and we intend to offer legal assistance to help protect indigenous peoples' human rights. For the past two months, Amazonian indigenous people have adamantly protested against the Peruvian government, demanding that it repeal controversial legislative decrees regarding the United States - Peru Free Trade Agreement. Indigenous peoples are concerned about this agreement, which proposes to open their lands to oil, gas, and mineral development without their consent.

Because of the lack of effective government recognition of and protection for indigenous peoples' property rights, and especially rights to their natural resources, indigenous peoples have been forced to resort to social mobilization and protests as a means to call attention to this injustice. On May 9<sup>th</sup>, there was a declaration of a 60-day state of emergency in areas affected by the protests. But international human rights law requires that, even in a state of emergency, the right to life and humane treatment must not be suspended.

The Indian Law Resource Center calls upon the government of Peru to:

- refrain immediately from the use of violence against indigenous people seeking to protect their lands and resources,
- seriously address the indigenous peoples' fundamental rights to land, natural resources, and the environment before taking any action that would permit extractive activities on their lands. These lands and resources must not be taken from them under any pretext.

- honor the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, recently championed by Peru and adopted by the United Nations, which demands that countries consult and cooperate in good faith with indigenous peoples to obtain their free, prior and informed consent to any project that even *affects* their lands or resources.

We also call upon the international community to assist in discouraging any further state violence against indigenous protestors, and we urge all parties to refrain from further violence. The government of Peru has the duty to comply with its international human rights obligations, including the protection of property rights and, the right to life of indigenous peoples as required by the International Labor Organization Convention 169, the American Convention on Human Rights, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We ask our allies, friends and supporters to speak out against this tragedy and to help protect the rights of indigenous peoples in Peru.

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