



Association of Indigenous Cabildos of Northern Cauca

Friday, July 8, 2011

"Mother Earth is for the community and the people; not to enrich a select few without asking permission; not to fill their wallets with our resources; leave our Mother Earth hurt and the people with more problems than they started with. We will not allow these violations to continue and that is why we will resist as a community in the territory. In the eyes of the people the territory is one, it is sacred, it is our life, and as such, we will protect and defend it autonomously."

What is from Mother Earth should be respected



In accordance with established community mandates and making use of the legitimate and legal tools granted by the Law of Origin (*Ley de Origen*), as well as national and international norms, on July 7, 2011, in the Arauca Indigenous Reserve of Munchique Los Tigres district, the communities that make up the Cabildo Associations Sat Tama Kiwe Caldono and the Cxhab Wala Kiwe-ACIN, authorities of the Cabildos of Pueblo Nuevo, Pioya, Las Mercedes, La Laguna Siberia, La Aguada San Antonio, San Lorenzo Caldono, Canos and Munichique los Tigres peacefully removed the following equipment: two high-power excavators, two powerful water-pumps, various pieces of piping, a

large amount of fuel, and high-capacity metal scaffolding, as well as six machine operators from various regions.

The personnel and equipment arrived in the region the night of July 6 unbeknownst to the community. They intended to mine for gold on the shore of the Mondomo River, without previous consent or consulting the communities as the law requires. The situation was made public by local villagers and passerbys.

According to the communities that defended their right to the territory in Arauca: "Mother Earth is for the community and the people; not to enrich a select few without asking permission; not to fill their wallets with our resources; leave our Mother Earth hurt and the people with more problems than they started with. We will not allow these violations to continue and that is why we will resist as a community in the territory. In the eyes of the people the territory is one, it is sacred, it is our life, and as such, we will protect and defend it autonomously."

The recalled equipment was returned to its supposed owners that afternoon. The owners that did not identify themselves recognized their error due to a total lack of understanding of the situation. They publicly promised that they would not engage in similar actions again in indigenous territories.

Background Information



- Nine months ago, the indigenous Cabildo of Munchique los Tigres warned about the possible intrusion of such people in a community assembly. They urged locals to abstain from accepting proposals that put the territory at risk.
- On March 25, 2011, the communities and authorities of the indigenous Cabildo of Canoas and the Council of the ACIN removed heavy machinery, tools, personnel and inputs from the communities of El Arbolito, which under the jurisdiction of the Canoas Reserve, and Moterilla, which is under the jurisdiction of the Mercedes Caldon reserve.

Given this situation, indigenous authorities, communities, and local councils alert the surrounding communities of the possibility of actions that risk the integrity of the territory, communities, and organizations of the region.

We reiterate to the multinational corporations, private companies, economic groups and the general public to abstain from entering our territory with economic development projects or other initiatives without previous consent, community consultation, and free determination of the communities. If actions are taken without said consent, the communities, authorities and organizations will once again take action to invoke our ancestral right to defend our land.

ASSOCIATION OF INDIGENOUS CABILDOS OF NORTHERN CAUCA (ACIN) – CXHAB WALA KIWE AND CORRESPONDING INDIGENOSU AUTHORITIES

Santander de Quilichao, Cauca, July 8, 2011.