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Autonomies today Indigenous peoples in Latin America

Working Group
Newsletter

Indigenous
peoples, autonomy
and collective
rights



PAR TICIPATE IN THIS ISSUE

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| Presentation

Indigenous peoples' demands for the recognition of their rights are becoming increasingly present in our continent. At this juncture, the struggle for autonomy has taken center stage as a strategy of resistance that articulates their cultural and territorial demands and their collective rights. These are peoples struggling to continue being peoples, making their autonomies unique and heterogeneous processes, legacies of their most diverse histories and geographies.

The Bulletin: "Autonomies Today", of the CLACSO Working Group "Indigenous Peoples, Autonomies and Collective Rights" aims to bring together (throughout its issues) a diversity of autonomous experiences that permeate our Latin American reality. With the collaboration of brief articles and interviews, we seek to build bridges between indigenous peoples in resistance and researchers of the continent, allowing the creation of networks that allow us to advance in this long journey-questioning of human emancipation and decolonization. "We can already see the horizon," some of these comrades tell us.

The bulletin welcomes contributions from other Working Groups, in order to encourage the active participation of the academic community on the topic of autonomies, as well as from indigenous organizations that **c a n** collaborate based on their own experiences. Texts should be short (between 1,500 and 2,000 words) and the bibliography should follow APA + gender norms. CLACSO uses APA + gender norms, including the full names of the authors in the citation.

(for example: Gómez, Fernanda instead of Gómez, F.), to make gender more visible.

From the Working Group "Indigenous Peoples, Autonomies and Collective Rights", we invite you and wish you an attentive reading. Doubts, criticisms and collaborations, please contact us by email: boletin.autonomias@gmail.com

In this second issue, we have reflections and analysis on: Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia and Guatemala.

Fabio Alkmin and Waldo Lao

Attention! From Guatemala

(Community Press)

EL ESTOR: The struggle for the recovery of the Q'eqchi people's land

Nelton Rivera*

Baudilio Choc**

Nelton Rivera*

Baudilio Choc**

Baudilio Choc**

Nelton Rivera

The Q'eqchi people in the southern area of El Estor seek to recover the land they were dispossessed of during the war in Guatemala. Pedro Cuc Pan, one of the community leaders, explains that the most serious agrarian problems in this territory are land invasions by companies to plant and produce palm oil, evictions promoted by landowners linked to this type of monoculture, mining companies and others.

Pedro Cuc, also an ancestral authority, is part of the four Q'eqchi' Councils, which since October 4, 2021 declared themselves in anti-mining resistance, in addition to oil palm, one of the main threats is nickel mining.

* Historian and photojournalist, founder of Prensa Comunitaria and member of the research team Green Blood and Colibrí Zurdo.

** Maya Q'eqchi'en El Estor Izabal journalist.

Since October 22, they were repressed by thousands of police, riot police and army agents, with the sole objective of allowing the Guatemalan Nickel Company CGN to bring in hundreds of tons of coal to keep the processing plant operating within the Fénix mining project. Two months later, a contingent of police tried to arrest two of the community leaders, but they were expelled from the territory by the people themselves.

Chapín community down in El Estor

The community of Chapín Abajo is located in the southern area of El Estor, about 40 minutes by boat from the center of this municipality, across Lake Izabal. From the capital city of Guatemala it is about 263 kilometers by land and is a community mostly inhabited by the Q'eqchi' people.

The families who live there are fighting for the recovery of the land. It is a 13-hectare farm that historically belonged to the Q'eqchi, who during the war, accused of being guerrillas and repressed by the Guatemalan army, were forcibly displaced to the mountains and other places.

With the end of the armed conflict and the signing of the peace agreement in 1996, the former inhabitants gradually returned and settled back on the land, but with the arrival of the NaturAceites palm oil company, the problems continued. The company invaded the land, occupying some 7 hectares and 25 manzanas where it has planted palm monoculture.

Pedro Cuc Pan, Q'eqchi' community leader, affirms that the current struggle of the communities is for recognition of their ancestral rights as owners of the lands of El Estor. The community members claim 13 caballerias of land that belong to Chapín Abajo, but which the NaturAceites company refuses to return.

NaturAceites as well as Palmas del Ixcán are companies owned by the Maegli-Müeller, a group linked to the counterinsurgency during the war and who expanded their agribusiness business in the Polochic Valley, Alta Verapaz, Izabal and Quiché (Solano, 2011).



Source: Nelton Rivera

The origin of this agrarian conflict

The community leaders explain that it was in 1994 when the INDESA company appeared publicly in El Estor, for a whole year, until 1995, they were dedicated to explaining to some people about the implementation that they intended to make of land for food cultivation by oil palm or African palm.

Three years later, in 1998, two companies merged: INDESA, which was in charge of planting the palm, and Grasas y Aceites, the second company, which was in charge of buying all the production.

NaturAceites. Although the AGENXPORT recognizes the foundation of the company NaturAceites until 2002.

The community members say that during 2002 and 2003 all of NaturAceites' production was lost due to the distance to transport the product to a processing plant, so it was in 2004 that the company completed the construction of the extraction plant and expanded its palm oil processing level. This plant is located 4.6 kilometers from the Chapín Abajo community and the same distance from Lake Izabal.



Source: Community Press

Repression and imposition by an illegal mining company

More than 97 authorities from the four councils demanded the state the right to participate in the community consultation, as ordered by the Constitutional Court CC, in relation to the Fénix mining project. Consultation from which they were excluded by the Ministry of Energy and Mines MEM, the Municipality of El Estor and Cahabón and the mining company, a subsidiary of the Russian-Swiss transnational Solway.

Chapín Abajo is one of the four Maya Q'eq-chi Ancestral Councils that oppose this mining project.

For this anti-mining struggle Pedro Cuc and other ancestral authorities were criminalized and their homes raided and a state of siege imposed. The military occupation of the municipality served to open the way for the mining company's illegal operations, but also for Naturaceites to continue evicting the families of the communities of Chinebal Palestina, Chapin Abajo and others.

Leaders such as Pedro Cuc are singled out and criminalized by NaturAceites, as well as by those who protect the interests of the Guatemalan Nickel Company CGN and Solway.

In the same farm and community of Chapín Abajo, about 300 meters away, the Guatemalan army installed a small military detachment, about 15 soldiers remain in surveillance and control of the population, the community explains that the presence of the army is only to protect the operations of the oil company.

On December 20, the Ministry of the Interior ordered an operation to arrest two community leaders, two pick up radio patrols of the National Civil Police raided the community, the population took action and arrested about 15 police officers.

They also complained about the burning of the community houses of the people of Chinebal Palestina, and the repression of October 22 and 23 in the center of El Estor, in another eviction attempt against the Q'eqchi' people.

For more information, watch the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrbw1H72fyg&t=13s>

IACHR Court to rule in March on land ownership in Lot 9, El Estor

Juan Calles

After a long hearing, where the arguments of the legal representatives of the indigenous Q'eqchi' community of Agua Caliente, today known as Lot 9, of El Estor, Izabal, and representatives of the Guatemalan State were heard, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has until March 11 to issue its final verdict on the claim regarding the ancestral right to land ownership.

At the hearing held at the seat of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in San José, Costa Rica, the testimony of Eduardo Tot, community and religious leader of Lote 9, was heard. He told how they have struggled to obtain legal certainty for their land, even paying more than 30,000 Quetzals for it, but never obtained title to it. In addition, their land is located in the area of influence of the Félix mining project, which, according to Tot, managed to obtain a mining license on their land through anomalous acts. Tot also recounted how his son, Edin Leonel Tot, was killed as a result of his struggle to obtain legal certainty of ownership of his land.

For his part, Jorge Luis Donado, representative of the State of Guatemala, downplayed the importance of Mr. Tot's statements, arguing that there are other community members who do not recognize him as a leader.

• Journalist and amateur photographer.

There are records dating back to the 1800s that recognize the community

Roberto Estuardo Morales Gómez, independent expert, explained before the IACHR Court the relationship between the cadastre and the evolution of the land registry in Guatemala. In his presentation, he explained that the first record of the community, today known as Lot 9, dates back to 1832 and that prior to this year there was a land registry that responded to the Spanish laws of the colonial era.

"In 1892 a boundary demarcation was carried out and the colindances of the community Lote 9, Agua Caliente, in El Estor, Izabal were marked," said the expert.

According to Morales, in 2002 the community made a payment to the Guatemalan State of more than 32,000 quetzals, but no response has been given with legal certainty, causing the conflict that was addressed today in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

The parties presented their closing arguments

Donado, in his concluding remarks, assured that he will demonstrate that the Inter-American Court does not have jurisdiction to hear the case, that the prior and informed consultation in the Lote 9 community for the Fénix mining project was complied with, that the community members have been violent and that their human rights have not been violated. He presented his arguments before the Court and focused on narrating how the Ministry of Energy and Mines developed a community consultation process, in compliance with the provisions of Convention 169.

Donado, when questioning the community representative, Eduardo Tot, asked him repeatedly if a popular consultation had been held recently in El Estor, Tot responded that yes, but that they had not been informed of it. The state representative insistently wanted to demonstrate that the communities in El Estor had been consulted.

However, Donado forgot to mention that the consultation took place under a state of siege, decreed after the government itself repressed the communities opposed to the Fénix mining project, who were protesting precisely because they were excluded from the community consultation, among them Lote 9.

For his part, Judge Humberto Sierra Porto of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights asked expert Victoria Sandford, who presented a historical expert opinion, why prior consultation is creating conflicts in the region of El Estor, Izabal. Sandford responded that the consultation is not prior and does not respond to legal guidelines, "on paper the State of Guatemala complies with the consultation, but in practice they are not doing it".

Leonardo Crippa, of the Indian Law Resource Center, which legally represents the community Agua Caliente, Lot 9, in his closing arguments said that for 17 years the Land Fund has refused to report what happened on the property occupied by the community Lot 9, in El Estor, Izabal, because of the "overlap" that exists between the community and the Fénix mining project. He also explained how the property registry allowed for the mutilation of the registry book where it would be evident that the community's boundaries were moved. "They do not explain how, after it was discovered that they tore the sheets of paper from the file where the dimensions of the Lote 9 community are recorded, they magically appeared from one day to the next," he said.

Representatives of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, IACHR, present at the hearing asked the judges of the IACHR Court to declare the State of Guatemala guilty for violating the rights of the community members of Lote 9 and for denying the right to ancestral ownership of the land, as well as for carrying out a community consultation that does not comply with the provisions of Convention 169, since the one held last December was not free, consensual and informed. "The consultation was carried out under a state of siege and was not conducted in the Q'eqchi' language, nor was information provided on the health and ecological consequences of mining extraction," the representatives claimed.

Late in the afternoon, the hearing that began at 9:00 a.m. came to an end when the presiding judge said that, after hearing the parties, the session would be adjourned and that the judgment in this case, in which for the first time the Guatemalan State will be judged for denying the ancestral land rights of an indigenous community, will be handed down on March 11, 2022.

In the face of the rights of indigenous peoples in the Mexico

The delaying strategy governmental

Araceli Burguete Cal y Mayor

In general, the Mexican State has deployed a strategy of dilution to respond to the indigenous agenda that was articulated with the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and the indigenous emergency that simultaneously erupted throughout the country. This "delaying strategy" in the face of the indigenous challenge, attempts to manage time with distracting measures to weaken the indigenous demand and, finally, to postpone or dilute it. There are several episodes in the recent history of the country that show this, but here I will only refer to three of these moments.

• Professor-Researcher at CIESAS-Southeast, Mexico. Coordinator of the CLACSO Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, Autonomies and Collective Rights.

1. From the Zapatista armed phase to the cancellation of the EZLN-Mexican Government dialogue.

The armed uprising that broke out on January 1, 1994 led to the immediate solidarity of millions of Mexicans who spontaneously moved to the city of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, to form civilian belts to protect them, while at the same time demanding guarantees from the State to initiate a peace process.

In February 1994 the "cathedral talks" began, with the mediation of Bishop Samuel Ruiz. But at the same time the Mexican Army penetrated the rebel territories, creating uncertainty for the incipient process that was beginning, which was recurrently threatened, among other things by the persecution unleashed in February 1995 when the government tried to detain Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.

As a demand of the mobilized civil society, on March 11, 1995, the Congress of the Union approved the Law for Dialogue, Conciliation and Dignified Peace in Chiapas, which opened the door to begin new negotiations, with new mediators, which led to the creation of the Commission for Concord and Pacification (COCOPA), made up of deputies, and the National Commission for Intermediation (CONAI). On April 9, the "Mesas de San Miguel" were installed, where the topics to be discussed in four negotiation tables were agreed upon: 1. Indigenous rights and culture; 2. 4. Women's rights in Chiapas.

The first roundtable was only a few days old when the Attorney General's Office (PGR) detained Comandante Germán, which led to the halt of the roundtable. Despite threats, pressures and distractions, the roundtable achieved results. On February 16, 1996, the Agreements on Indigenous Rights and Culture (San Andres Larrainzar Agreements) were signed. In addition to the command, several thousand indigenous leaders, men and women, from different parts of the country participated in the debate.

The only agreement between the belligerent parties was the one that accompanied the dialogue.

And this was so because Table 2 which began on February 15, with the theme of Democracy and Justice, which contained the intention of a radical State Reform, after months of work, in July of that same year COCOPA took the Zapatista proposals to the official tables on State Reform which were being discussed in Mexico City. The federal government refused to give relevance to the Zapatista contributions, while at the same time ignoring the Agreements on indigenous rights. Faced with these results, on September 3, 1996, the EZLN withdrew from the dialogue tables, from then until now. The government's bet has been that in the absence of an interlocutor, the EZLN will disappear; but the EZLN remained, and has remained, in resistance and rebellion.

II.- The delaying strategy to empty the San Andres Larrainzar Agreements of their content.

After the San Andres Accords were signed, COCOPA elaborated different drafts to materialize them in a constitutional reform, but these were recurrently rejected by the president in office, Ernesto Zedillo, of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), who remained in power until the year 2000. At the juncture of a change of president and political party, when Vicente Fox came to power, finally, after 5 years, Article 2 of the Constitution was modified (August 2001), but its scope was far less than what had been agreed upon, and the EZLN denounced it as a simulation and refused to return to a dialogue table that only sought to manage the conflict.

III.- Indifference and delay: President AMLO's response to the indigenous reform proposal.

It has now been two decades since indigenous peoples in Mexico have constitutional and conventional rights, which in theory should guarantee their individual and collective rights. There was special hope in the rise of the new president Andrés Manuel López Obrador in 2018, who arrived with strong support at the polls and anointed with the symbolic power of the delivery of a sacralized baton, received on his first day in office, handed to him by representatives of Mexico's 68 indigenous peoples. With this act, an imaginary of promise was configured.

But months have passed and hope is fading, for many reasons, one of them being the lack of commitment on the part of the President with the initiative of "Constitutional Reform on the Rights of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican Peoples" that has been delivered to him so that he can send it to the legislative bodies from the moment of his investiture.

On September 28, 2021 in an activity equally loaded with symbolism, the authorities of the Yaqui Tribe, along with more than two centenas of indigenous representatives who gathered in the territory of this people, when the president visited them to inaugurate public policies and "ask forgiveness for the grievances" that this and other peoples have suffered, the president received the document containing the reform proposal, signed it and put it in his bag. And, there it remained.

Meanwhile, it has promoted large investments in the peoples' territories, such as the construction of the Tren Maya and Tren Transistmico railroad projects, among other economic projects of mining companies, which have meant dispossession and threats to their territories. In the face of these interventions, the peoples resist.

The constitutional reform proposal has been promoted from the office of the director of the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples and

Afromexican, Mixe anthropologist Adelfo Regino, who was part of the team that accompanied the EZLN in the elaboration of the San Andres Accords. The proposal has been under construction for several years, since August 2019 and was finalized in July 2021. It has been estimated that more than 20 thousand community, agrarian and municipal authorities of indigenous and Afro-Mexican peoples participated in the process.

The proposed reform involves amending 15 articles of the Constitution, which among other things seeks to recognize indigenous and Afro-Mexican peoples as subjects of public law. Other recognitions are: autonomy in the community, municipality and region; as well as rights to land, territories, biodiversity, environment; indigenous normative systems; free, prior and informed consultation; rights of women, children, adolescents and indigenous youth, and political participation and representation; among others. It is a well formulated proposal, of great depth, which is, as its promoters have said, the point and the point that was written in the San Andrés Larráinzar Agreements.

But despite all these efforts, the president continues to drag his feet, through undue delaying measures, even though he continues to be repeatedly handed the baton. Still on February 16, 2022, in the context of the celebration of the forum "The Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Mexico. 26 years after the San Andrés Larráinzar Agreements", held in the Senate of the Republic, the INPI's director and the indigenous deputies urged the chambers of deputies and senators to give way to the proposals of the indigenous peoples. However, the decision is not theirs, but in the President's pocket.

In the shadow of multiculturalism

The construction of indigenous autonomies in Bolivia.

Patricia Costas Monje*.

Introduction

Twelve years after the beginning of the process of building indigenous autonomies, much can be said. It has been 12 years of a novel process full of challenges for those indigenous peoples who decided to promote it. There is ample bibliography on the subject, whether academic texts, press releases, official reports, among others. A topic perhaps less addressed but of equal relevance is the performance of the central government: is the State being adapted to the plurinational model or has it remained in the previous republican regime; have the transformations been carried out to accept the new model of indigenous government as part of the state structures; what relevance does the new model of indigenous government have; and, if so, what is the impact of the new model of government on the indigenous peoples?

* Bolivian sociologist. She was director of indigenous autonomies in the Ministry of Autonomies in Bolivia (2011-2012). She holds a Master's degree in Gender and Public Policy from FLACSO-PRIGEPP. Invited researcher

of the CLACSO Working Group Indigenous peoples, autonomies and collective rights.

For those who are promoting indigenous autonomies, should the State adopt the plurinational model? These are some of the questions that will guide the reflections on where the process of indigenous self-governments in Bolivia is heading.

1. The initial impulse to build the Plurinational State.

The new Political Constitution of 2009 plays an important role in charting the path towards the necessary transformation of the Bolivian state. The constituent process can be understood as a moment that condenses historical demands of indigenous peoples, including that of the exercise of their self-determination and indigenous autonomies; and on the other hand, it symbolizes a starting point for the construction of a new societal project. (Costas, 2018: 72) For the first time the Political Constitution of the State was to be drafted by a Constituent Assembly and despite its party representation structure (candidates had to belong to a party), the diversity of the assembly members and their contributions could be appreciated. (Coordinadora de la mujer, 2014: 53) The active participation, both of women and indigenous peoples was also reflected in the spaces that were enabled for the debate and the collection of proposals.(Ibid.)

The constituent process was characterized by its unprecedented transforming force, the multiplicity of actors involved would have generated a moment of much creation and transformation.¹ Once the new Political Constitution of the State (2009) was promulgated, the stage of building the new state institutionality was next. Supreme Decree No. 212 of 2009, which created the Plurinational Public Management School (EGPP), emphasized the need for the "construction and consolidation of the new public management of the State", through the education and training of public servants. (art.4) This did not happen and instead, this stage (post-constituent) was delegated to former

¹ Texts such as Schevelson (2010) and Iamamoto (2013) are important for understanding the work of the assembly.

public officials, who although they were familiar with Bolivian public management, were mostly alien to the constituent process and its transformative impulse.

2. State tutelage in the construction of indigenous autonomies2

The recent process of indigenous autonomies in Bolivia responds to the context of the new political constitution of the State. Both the enactment of the Framework Law on Autonomies and Decentralization (LMAD) and the creation of the Ministry of Autonomies made it possible to begin the process of building indigenous autonomies3. A first step was to call a referendum so that municipalities that so wished could begin the process of converting to indigenous autonomies. Then, the deliberative assembly was to be formed and their autonomous statutes were to be drafted (Art. 292 of the CPE).

The central government designated the Ministry of Autonomies as the one in charge of supporting the processes in conversion to indigenous autonomy, both economically and technically. Regarding this technical support, some officials made their own interpretation of the minimum contents of the Constitution, based on their conservative professional training and practice, and tried to "translate" the demands and proposals of the actors into legal terms, defined by them as "appropriate". Uru Chipaya assembly members described the technical support as good, but that, at times, it was detrimental to the debate among Chipayas (Guarachi, 2017:19). There was a similar example in the Guarani case (Exeni, 2015: 158). Then, it will have to be asked to what extent the technical support,

² For more on the beginnings of the indigenous autonomy process see: Costas (2018). "Asking permission. Indigenous Autonomies and the Bolivian State." In P. López and L. García, (coords.), *Movimientos indígenas y autonomías en América Latina: escenarios de disputa y horizontes de posibilidad*; Buenos Aires: El Colectivo, Colección Abya Yala, Grupo de Trabajo CLACSO 2018.

³ The Ministry of Autonomies was created after the promulgation of the new Constitution, with the objective of migrating towards a state structure based on autonomies. However, this instance has undergone many modifications until it was finally reduced to a vice-ministry of the Ministry of the Presidency.

although it may have eased the work with its legal guidelines, in many cases, it has shaped or framed the debate instead of allowing the indigenous peoples to express themselves, debate and shape their government project in their statutes. This shows the excessive tutelage, described by Alberto García (2018:139) on the part of the central government in its accompaniment of the indigenous representatives in this statutory stage.

Parallel to the statutory stage, other procedures required the intervention of other State bodies. The certificates of ancestrality and governmental viability are issued by the Electoral Body. The Judicial Branch, through the Constitutional Court, is in charge of the constitutional review of the autonomous statutes. Finally, the Legislative Body was to issue the law for the creation of new territorial entities when needed. In the text of Costas (2022) it was evident how the social organizations themselves were the ones who, knowing the Constitution and other norms, identified the procedural gaps and summoned governmental instances (the different organs of the State) to do their part. The government agencies did not "do their work" on their own initiative or to comply with the Constitution, but at the request of the organizations themselves. However, this involvement resulted in excessive bureaucratization and slowdown in the processes (Foronda, 2017), which resulted in complying with countless requirements and waiting up to a year to complete each procedure.

It is important to reflect on the progress made. It should have started with the training of officials who provided technical support and the adaptation of certain institutions to facilitate the work of social organizations in the construction of their autonomies. Instead, an implementation support body, the Ministry of Autonomies, was designated, which operated in isolation from the other institutions that only "did their part" at the request of the organizations. The result was to have begun with the construction of the indigenous autonomy process on the parameters, behavior and structures of the old republican state.

Despite the obstacles, the social organizations made progress and currently there are five autonomous indigenous governments in place: Uru Chipaya, Charagua Iyambae, Raqaypampa, Kereimba Iyambae and Salinas de Garcí Mendoza.⁴ Once the indigenous self-governments were consolidated (i.e., statutes approved, election of their authorities and implementation of their government) new challenges emerged.⁵ (Exeni, 2018: 113) Once again, national officials and authorities, not understanding this new reality, were systematically simplifying it and translating it into their own terms, to the point of treating these new indigenous governments as "something similar to a municipality "⁶ but indigenous. Once again, the indigenous people had to adapt to the old model of the State.

3. The structural bases of the current State

The above would have a certain logic if we were talking about a Constitution that *does not mention the recognition of indigenous peoples* (Article 2). It would make sense if, instead of being a plurinational State, it were an exceptional public policy in "favor of the indigenous". There is a contradiction between the actions of national authorities and public officials and what is established by the Constitution, which dedicates ample space to the inclusion of indigenous institutions in hierarchical equality within this complex engineering called Plurinational State.

The current construction of indigenous autonomies in Bolivia responds more to a Republic with a multiculturalist matrix than to the paradigm of a multiculturalist paradigm.

⁴<https://www.sea.gob.bo/estatutos-autonomicos-y-cartas-organicas/estatutos-gaioc.html>

⁵The obstacles that they had to go through as an Indigenous Government in full management, is extensively developed in Costas and López (2022), "Autonomías indígenas en Bolivia: los desafíos en la construcción de un nuevo pacto social plurinacional" (Indigenous autonomies in Bolivia: the challenges in the construction of a new plurinational social pact). Soon to be published in a collective book by CLACSO.

⁶Territorial base of local governments, with a legislative and an executive body.

of a Plurinational State. From multiculturalism, indigenous peoples can exercise their right to self-determination (i.e., the right to decide on their territory and have their own organizations), but from their subordination to a hegemonic state structure (Attard and Bellot, 2020: 62-63), where cultural diversity is accepted and/or tolerated but plurality is not promoted. This type of State may appropriate indigenous names or identity elements, however, in fact, the indigenous institutionality (forms of organization, territorial management, exercise of democracy, etc.) is not an operative part of the State.

In December 2021, Vice President David Choquehuanca attended the inauguration of the National Summit of indigenous autonomies "Consolidating the Plurinational State".⁷ Instead of responding to the observations made by representatives of the autonomy processes regarding the permanent obstacles, the Vice President referred to indigenous autonomies in three ways:

- a) Indigenous autonomies as a process of indigenous cultural revaluation. He referred to the fact that "*indigenous autonomies must allow us to return to the path of brotherhood, balance and harmony*", as if it should reverse a process of desaculturation when it comes to the exercise of their self-determination.
- b) The responsibility of the central government is omitted. He referred to the indigenous autonomies as if they had their own rhythm in dependence on state performance. He stated that "*we must have patience, brothers, we have waited 500 years, we can wait*". Instead of referring to the need to transform the State, he has a rather passive attitude.
- c) Responsibility for the progress of the autonomy process is attributed to the indigenous peoples when it is stated that "*from the indigenous autonomies we have to dress the Plurinational State*". These are statements that

⁷ Facebook Fanpage: Vicepresidency of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Enlace: https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=205770858412195&id=100064507457725&m_entstream_source=timeline

overlook the fact that indigenous peoples are moving forward despite the adversities and that it is the State that is responsible for slowing down the process.

In general, their interventions have a strong ideological charge with the message that this government is of the indigenous people, however, this discourse is contradictory to the actions of the central government.

4. Towards the construction of the Bolivian Plurinational State

In August 2021, an organic agenda was made public, which reflects the critical view of the indigenous peoples with respect to the actions of the government and its pending commitments.⁸ With respect to indigenous autonomies (see Annex 1), their observations focus on three issues: a) concrete demands to the three organs of the State (Legislative, Judicial and Electoral) to speed up the procedures; b) a change in the approach to the incorporation of indigenous autonomous governments into the structures of the State; c) finally, they state that the full exercise of indigenous autonomy, in terms of the management of their governments, will only be viable within the framework of *plural and intercultural public management*, which basically refers to the need for the State to incorporate indigenous institutions into its structures, i.e., their ways of managing the common good from their own forms of organization, election of authorities and management of their territories.

Therefore, from the paradigm of plurinationality, it is necessary to transform the structures of the State to allow indigenous peoples and their institutions to be part of the new State and that the right to self-determination is the right of indigenous peoples to be part of a State whose structure is plural (Attard and Bellot, 2020: 62).

⁸ Facebook Fanpage: Territorio Indígena Multiétnico -TIM 1- "Bosque Chiman". Enlace: <https://m.facebook.com/101422294941296/photos/pcb.357931002623756/357929995957190/?type=3&source=49>.

decolonization, as a process that allows us to deconstruct the relations of asymmetry (with respect to indigenous peoples, for example) that are the basis of the previous State. (Ibid.: 68) Therefore, the plurinational project must first undo the structures of the previous State in order to be able to build a new one.

Final thoughts

There is no coherent commitment to transforming the State to incorporate indigenous autonomies on equal footing with other forms of government. It has been seen that, once again, indigenous peoples are expected to adapt to the State and not the other way around, as should have been the case. The actions of the State still respond to the multiculturalist approach, where other realities can be recognized and/or tolerated, but are not allowed to be part of the management of public affairs. When we talk about transforming and decolonizing the State, we should not only try to change its name, nor talk about indigenous autonomies with the exoticism with which the Vice-President of the State does it, when in the end the State institutions continue to function as before.

It is interesting to note the political maturity with which indigenous peoples assume their leadership in the advancement of indigenous autonomy, challenging the government with concrete proposals and providing solutions to regulatory and procedural gaps. Despite the various obstacles they must overcome, they continue to advance in their decision to consolidate their own governments. Therefore, the transformation of the State must first start by deconstructing the bases of the previous State and from there, transform its structures to include indigenous peoples and their institutions in its structures and planning, from the foundations of the new Plurinational State.

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Annex 1

Platform of demands. Indigenous mobilization for autonomy, self-determination and integrity of indigenous territories within the Plurinational State (August 15, 2021, Puerto San Borja community, Beni).

The section on indigenous autonomies states the following:

- *Amendment to the framework law on autonomy and decentralization to allow the exercise of autonomy and self-government in digena within the framework of the provisions of the Political Constitution of the State and the block of Constitutionality.*
- *Enactment of the bill for the Consolidation of the TUs of: TIM-1, Monkoxi de Lomerío and Cavineño, by the Plurinational Legislative Assembly.*
- *Issuance of the Declaration of constitutionality of the modified articles within the TIM-1 Autonomous Statute, by the TCP.*

- *Formation of the autonomous governments of TIM-1, Lomerio and Cavineño, under new regulations that allow the exercise of indigenous autonomy in the framework of a plural and intercultural public management.*
- *Respect and recognition by the OEP of the approval of the Autonomous Statute of the Monkoxi Nation by its own rules and procedures carried out in the Assembly of December 4, 2020.*
- *Installation of an intergovernmental commission with the participation of the indigenous organizations for the discussion of a new Plural and Intercultural Public Management Law that will allow the materialization of the Plurinational Community Statute with indigenous autonomies and we demand the participation of the indigenous peoples in the discussion and elaboration of the Fiscal Pact Law, only with the fair distribution of financial resources will the indigenous autonomies be exercised.*
- *Modification to the Law on Jurisdictional Demarcation for the full exercise of indigenous jurisdiction in indigenous territories and autonomous communities.*
- *Restitution of the POA's of the Municipal Indigenous Districts of TIM-1 and TIMI that were worked on in a consensual manner with the communities and were modified by the Municipal Executive without consultation.*

The institutionalization of authoritarianism for the achievement of the 4T?

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Source: Iyar i Balderas Cruz.

The AGREEMENT instructing the agencies and entities of the Federal Public Administration to carry out the actions indicated, in the following areas

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The relationship with projects and works of the Government of Mexico considered to be of public interest and national security, as well as priority and strategic for national development (SEGOB 2021). This is not surprising, if we consider that it is part of a pattern of relations that the current government has established with Civil Society Organizations, especially environmental and human rights organizations. These organizations have proven to be uncomfortable for any regime for more than thirty years, for being partisan and for raising a Human Rights discourse that contests any public policy that wants to impose itself over their heads. This period of time is marked and framed by the struggle of the Black and Popular Indigenous Movement of 1989, also by the signing and ratification of Convention 169 of the ILO in 1990, the signing of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that came into force in 1992 and on which the EZLN in January of that year, would show its discontent with its declaration of war against the bad government in office.

Thus, the nature of CSOs, especially those that accompany popular and social processes of indigenous peoples and communities, is to contest any government. Because of this relationship with organizations and communities, rural and urban, indigenous or not, it is surprising that the current president of the republic places so much emphasis on questioning these organizations, and therefore, their work. We can speculate on the matter, saying that by showing himself in this way he consolidates himself as the only populist who takes these sectors into account, or else to show the businessmen, whom he openly considers his friends and advisors, that he has no other loyalty and commitment than with this sector.

Apart from these speculations, we can affirm that the attack of the current president of Mexico, in fact, is not against the CSOs -which does not stop worrying us, because when referring to us, he places us as the causes and the scapegoat of his failures, mistakes and criticisms that he receives from the opposition and the right wing.

We affirm that when he confronts CSOs, he is in fact directing his attack against the rule of law based on the separation and balance of

powers and internationally recognized human rights.

This rule of law has cost the social mobilization of different sectors of Mexican society which, together with CSOs, we have been able to cement it in the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States (CPEUM), with the so-called block of constitutionality of human rights in 2011.

This is clear, because contrary to what the Mexican president constantly pointed out about constitutional supremacy, summarized in the principle "Nothing and no one above the constitution", with the agreement in question, the Mexican president disdains placing himself and his government above the Federal Pact, which is precisely the CPEUM. And there is no lack of social organizations that, as with previous governments, remind the president of this, and for this reason, we defenders of nature and human rights are uncomfortable for him.



Assembly in the Halachó ejido after the removal of ejido representatives for possible acts of corruption in collusion with FONATUR and the Agrarian Attorney General's Office. Source: Elisa Cruz

In addition, this pattern of relationship established by the Mexican president with certain social organizations -because they are not unconditional to him or to any party or organization- is not the same as the one established by the Mexican president.

political -began before the inauguration of the current government. Below, we point out several facts that mark the route to the establishment of this relationship that the Mexican government is determined to normalize and install in the thinking of Mexican society, in order to put an end to more than 30 years of struggle for rights and human rights:

1. On November 15, 2018, a letter was addressed to the president-elect, whose content referred fundamentally to the so-called Mayan Train. In that letter, those of us who signed noted with concern that the project called Tren Maya, would be executed without complying with the elementary principles of human rights (Cruz, 2021:52).
2. On August 29, 2019, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination issued a recommendation to the Mexican government, which basically consists of indicating its concern about the information it has received on the execution of citizen consultations regarding the execution of large investment projects such as the Mayan train and the transisthmian corridor; since in this information it is expressed that the Mexican government has not taken into account the word of communities and peoples (Cruz, 2021:52), recommending the Mexican government to translate the recommendation of this Committee into indigenous languages and disseminate it. A matter that the Mexican government has not resolved.
3. In Chiapas, compañeros and compañeras who are part of the human rights area of the Diocese of San Cristobal, gathered more than six thousand signatures opposing the way in which these types of projects have been imposed, such as the hydroelectric plant La Huesca, the Palenque-San Cristobal-Palenque highway (the latter also affected by the so-called Tren Maya, and where work was carried out despite the declaration of a pandemic and a recommendation from the CNDH to stop the works).
4. In November 2019, the federal government called for a consultation and citizen participation process on the Tren Maya development project, to be held on November 14, 2019.

and December 15. However, by that time, several standards and principles of the Indigenous Consultation, as stated in Articles 6 and 7 of ILO Convention 169, had already been violated.

Thus, on December 19, the Mexican government invited the United Nations High Commissioner in Mexico as a witness of honor to these consultations, and this international human rights monitoring body, in a statement, disqualified the serious way in which the Mexican government violated the right to consultation of the indigenous peoples, since it did not follow or comply with the relevant international standards.

5. The outlandish revelation of alleged foreign funds received by those whom the Mexican president called "those who want to derail the train", made by the Mexican president in his morning confession on August 20, 2020. And we point out that we agree with him, the donations should be transparent, and the CSOs that support the resistance of the peoples do not receive resources to derail the Mayan Train, but precisely to address specific issues of access to justice for indigenous peoples and their peoples. And in the same way, we ask that your cabinet personnel who were once part of CSOs and also received resources from foreign foundations, be held accountable so that it is clear how the Mexican president came to power with the support of these people.
6. The delay in the resolution of the judge of the First District Court in Campeche on various appeals filed (mainly by the plaintiffs) in the amparo lawsuit 12/2020.
7. The declaration of reserve of the same judge for the resolution of the appeal for review because she rejected the presentation of evidence in the amparo trial, stating that she would resolve the case until the return of normality after the pandemic had passed.
8. The Concentration Agreement SECNO/CE/4/2021 issued by the Plenary of the Judiciary Council in session dated July 7, 2021, whereby it determines that the amparos filed against the

Tren Maya, regardless of the diversity of legal subjects and impacts of the acts of authority, must be processed in the First District Court in the State of Yucatan. This contravenes Article 25 of the American Convention on Human Rights in its Article 25 (JUDICIAL PROTECTION), which states as an international standard of access to justice, that the normative frameworks of the states must guarantee the right to have a simple, rapid and effective recourse.

9. The periodic and constant questioning of journalists and the media in his daily morning conferences, with the chapter Who's Who in the Lies of the Week (Caro 2021) and the frontal attack on Carmen Aristegui Noticias for the report "El programa sembrando vida y la fábrica de chocolate", where apparently children and relatives of the current Mexican president are involved.
10. On October 29, the Mexican President declared: "that neoliberal policy promoted in the world, 'to plunder at will, the so-called new rights, and feminism, environmentalism, the defense of human rights, the protection of animals, all very noble causes, were greatly encouraged, even by themselves, but the purpose was to create all these new causes so that we would not repair, so that we would not turn to see that they were plundering the world'" (Poy and Sladierna, 2021).

Faced with these facts, the agreement mentioned at the head of this article, although it does not surprise us, represents a blow that the federal government gives to the Human Rights recognized in international treaties and conventions. We are concerned about the desperation of the federal executive to stop the amparo agreement (Bote 2021), losing any sense and proportion of the social movement that brought him to the presidency, abusing his power and imposing his will over the CPEUM, setting a dangerous precedent against the citizenry.

Ultimately, the president betrays his word, when he insists that he not only represents the people, but that he "is the people", and in that incarnation he places himself above the CPEUM, justifying the transgression of rights in general, human rights and their guarantees, supposedly for the sake of the common good.

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A new Zapatista map Zapatista centers and routes of resistance and rebellion in the EZLN's autonomous political- territorial equation

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Fábio M. Alkmin**

The current offensive of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) aims to expand and widen vital spaces through sketches, routes and roads, in order to strengthen the struggle for life. Two have been the latest expressions of this fact: the first one acquires a scale of

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provincial that was announced on August 17, 2019, in the communiqué "And We Broke the Siege", with the creation/construction of four new Zapatista Rebel Autonomous Municipalities (MARZ) and seven new Caracoles¹³. Adding to the already existing 05 Zapatista Caracoles and 27 MARZ, we have as a result a new autonomous political-territorial equation, with 43 centers of resistance and rebellion (12 Caracoles + 31 MARZ= 43) (**Map 1**, at the end of the article).

The second expression occurs on the international scale, where they decide to "**draw**" / **trace traces in the** face of the civilizational collapse that is being experienced worldwide, as well as in one of its most contemporary **m a n i f e s t a t i o n s**: the pandemic of Covid-19. In October 2020 the EZLN announces an international initiative, which already marks a historic event in its genealogy. This consists of leaving the Zapatista villages, the state of Chiapas and the country, Mexico, to **sketch** possible **paths and routes** in the five continents, or in metaphorical terms, to **carry** and **expand** the seed for life throughout the length and breadth of Planet Earth: Europe, Africa, Asia, America, Oceania.

The autonomous political-territorial equation represented in 43 Seeds for *Zapatista Resistance and Rebellion*, on a provincial/Chiapas scale, is achieved through a tremendous and marvelous mixture of Pain and Love. With this, the EZLN puts a forceful limit to the criminal actions of the patriarchal system (capitalist-patriarchal). It is a manifestation of a new **YA BASTA!** for the defense of the territory and Mother Earth, from where the construction, care and flourishing of at least three of the foundations of the Zapatista Autonomies will be strengthened: the material and spiritual self-support, the self-governments from radical democracy and self-defense with acts of non-war.

In this way, the EZLN will comply with the commitment made at the Assembly of the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) in October 2016:

¹³The EZLN is characterized for having achieved a political-territorial expression after a process of territorial recovery, reconfiguration and resignification, from where a multiplicity of centers of resistance and rebellions are built, having as seed the "recovered land" in the armed uprising of 1994, to later define the Zapatista Rebel Autonomous Municipalities and Zapatista Caracoles.

generate resistance and rebellion through the organization of the indigenous peoples-peasants-Zapatista Mayas, who will rehearse the "what we don't want and what we do want", in the so-called "ethics of compliance".

In sum: this offensive, in metaphorical terms, **expands and widens the collective heart for Life**, by creating, expanding and linking two threads of the fabric of the autonomies. The first, extending and defending the territorial expression of the Zapatista autonomies. The second, empowering respect and attachment to Mother Earth, defending her with acts of non-war²⁴.

Both initiatives, on a local and international scale, are a response to the continuous and reinforced attack, invasion and dispossession directed primarily towards the territories of indigenous peoples. Both actions respond to and confront the "projects of death" executed by bad governments in the world - such as the so-called Mexican Fourth Transformation -, projects that are developed on the basis of actions of persecution, invasion, harassment, intimidation, slander, abuse and violence. Thus, on different geographical scales, the Zapatista movement denounces the assassinations and disappearances of human rights defenders, as well as the violence against collectives, communities, organizations and peoples who resist with creative acts in the face of systemic collapse.

At the local level, and as a reaction to the new territorial reconfiguration of the EZLN, "those from above" are urgently activating the continuous and ongoing **Integral War of Attrition (GID)**, from the three levels of bad government: federal, state, municipal, and during 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. This GID strategy is characterized by the forms of control, subjugation and extermination of expressions of resistance and rebellion against the dominant system. The potential of this war lies in the execution of new and renewed modalities of attrition of the population. Below we list six of these strategies:

² We refer to the Zapatista Autonomies from at least three foundations, which are also crossed by the 7 principles, the 7 directions and the 13 seeds for resistance and rebellion.

1. *Agrarian*. Through legal maneuvers of possession over land ownership, generating disputes to present them as "inter-community conflicts", when in reality they are forms of legal dispossession aimed at plundering the agrarian rights of the autonomous communities;
2. *Economic*. The use of welfare/government programs and policies, as devices of social control and transformation of the population's cultural habits: food versus processed products; education versus schooling; health versus sanitary control; education versus schooling; health versus sanitary control; education versus schooling; health versus sanitary control. Education versus schooling; health versus sanitary control;
3. *Political*. Division from within the communities, by generating groups aligned with different political parties and religions, in order to encourage internal power disputes;
4. *Media*. Daily campaigns by the media to defame, slander and criminalize individuals, organizations and peoples who defend their living spaces/territories;
5. *Psychosocial Emotional*. Intimidation through permanent surveillance, generating physical, mental and emotional exhaustion to make people more vulnerable, especially young people, women, boys and girls. Violence to the rights to free transit, access to water and crops, care of animals and crops, affecting personal, family, social and economic integrity in general;
6. *Military, paramilitary and narco-paramilitary*: Implementation of a military geographic encirclement of barracks, camps and soldiers of the Mexican Army, together with the armed force of the National Guard. Articulated with the actions of paramilitary groups, and/or armed men and landowners, financed and trained with the permissiveness and logistical support of the State and the Mexican Army to execute criminal actions from within the communities.

The criticism is that it is not a "low intensity war", but on the contrary, it is integral and of attrition to exterminate through the epis-temicídio, cultiricídio and terricídio. They thus seek to attack the root that gives

vitality to the fabrics of life proper to each people (I); the separation and

violent tearing apart of its relationship with nature (II) and the exploitation to generate exhaustion, mainly towards women (III).

As the *indigenous-peasant* population, from their *being-doing-feeling*, such actions place as the main objective to dispossess them of what gives them "reason for being and vital basis" for their re-existence: **the land/territory** and **Mother Earth**. This explains the onslaught that is currently being experienced in three expressions:

- a) Invasion of *reclaimed land*, through enclosures of vital spaces that allow autonomies to flourish, such as: schools and health clinics, springs, rivers, bean fields, corn, wheat, fruit trees;
- b) Crop theft: corn, coffee, beans, cassava, plantain;
- c) Burning of crops, houses, cooperatives, collective stores, etc.

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Zapatista Autonomous Territories (Chiapas, 2021)

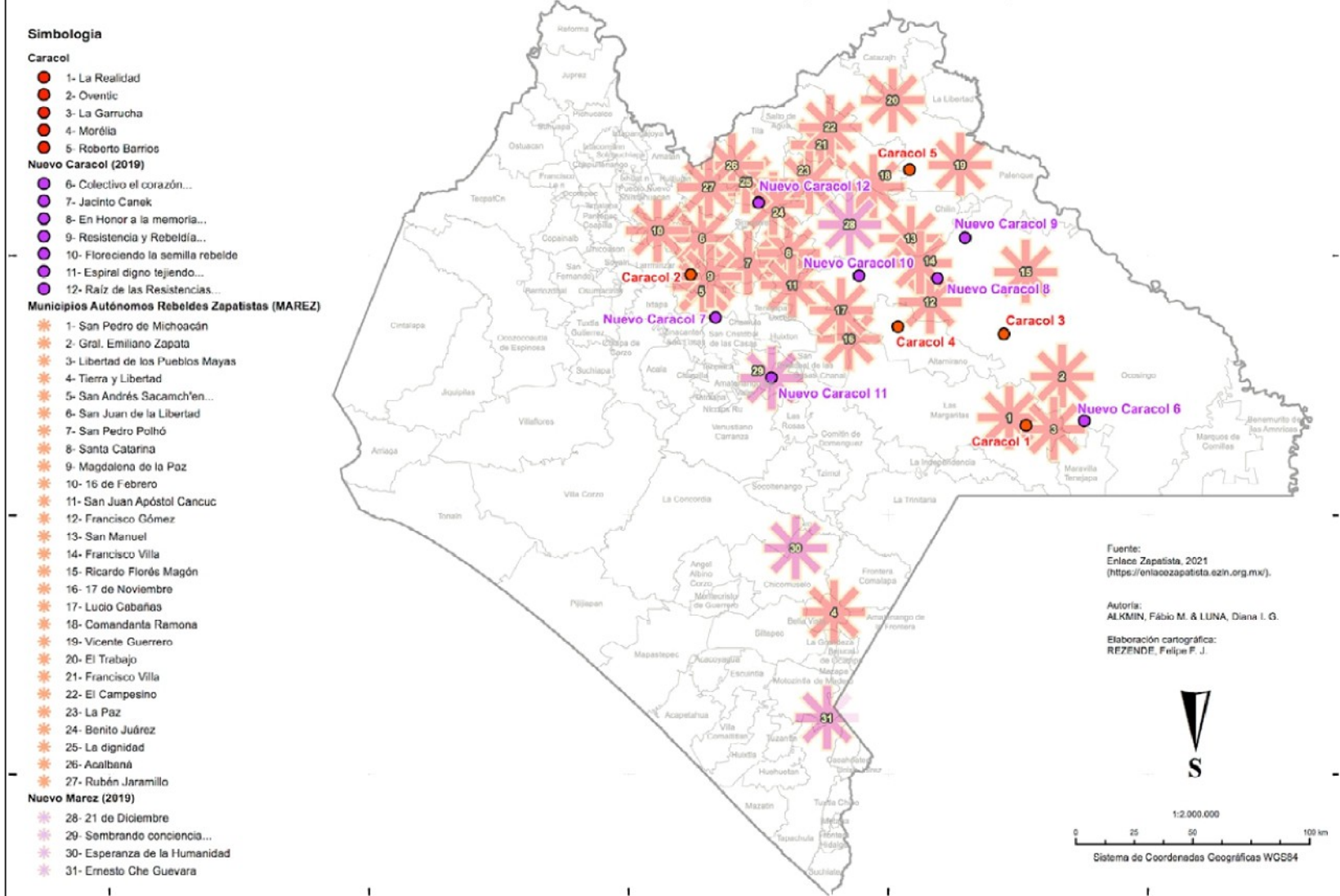


Photo essay The case of the Zapatista community of Nuevo San Gregorio in the fabric of life and in the quantum spiral of autonomies.

Text: Diana Itzu

Photographs: AJMAQ Network of Resistances and
Rebellions.

We take as a reference the Zapatista community of Nuevo San Gregorio, to place it in the quantum spiral of autonomies and in the fabric of life. The community is located in the Rebel Municipality of Lucio Cabañas, which is part of Caracol 10, *Floreciendo la Semi-lla Rebelde*; Junta de Buen Gobierno, *Nuevo Amanecer en Resistencia and Rebeldía por la Vida y la Humanidad*, Zona de Patria Nueva. Territory recovered in 1994 by the EZLN.

* Mexican defender and activist, with experience in contexts of military and paramilitary harassment, forced displacement, torture and political imprisonment. Member of the Red de Resistencias y Rebeldías

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Caracol 10, Flourishing the Rebel Seed.

The Tzeltal-Tsotsil Zapatista Community of Nuevo San Gregorio is planted on 155 hectares of recovered land. There are six Zapatista families, approximately 58 people who protect, with a recognized respect, the *recovered land*. They assume themselves as guardians of Mother Earth and not as owners.

Since November 2019, the families have been intimidated and harassed by "40 invaders", represented by six leaders: *Nicolás Pérez Pérez Pérez, Roberto Pérez Huet and Alejandro Pérez Huet, Nicolás Mosan Huet, Alonso Bolom Ara and Nicolás Gómez Pérez*, who are leading the harassment, intimidation and provocation of girls, women, young people, men and the elderly.¹²

Since 2019, these families resist to accept the rules of the patriarchal world that is offered to them: to have as their only destiny the death of the collective, communal and loving relationship with Mother Earth. They escape

¹ III Report of the Caravan of Solidarity and Documentation. More information at: <https://redajmaq.org/es/iii-report-of-the-caravan-of-solidarity-and-documentation-with-the-autonomous-community-zapatista-de>

to be captured by the only sense of "life" that the bad government offers them. But, it will be their indigenous-peasant-Maya-Zapatista conviction, the sensitive matter, to express the autonomous organization, and thus, to break the limits/fences of the dialectic of Power and Money. While the objective of the criminal actions of the "40 invaders" is to break the veins that constitute the fundamental basis of autonomy in this community:

1. Production for food self-support (material and spiritual);
2. The autonomous education system;
3. The autonomous integral health system.

The Zapatista families put dignity into practice every day: they have made pain and love the sensitive material to organize themselves from the common work: collective of women weavers "weaving life and resistance", carpentry of "the compañeros in resistance", collective work of vegetables, collective work of chickens in "resistance for life", collective work of the farería, Collective Store, autonomous little school for children in resistance, House of Health for life.

It is from each quota of energy that is delivered in these works, from where the acts of no war happen in the middle of the war. Today, of 155 hectares that the community protected, only half a hectare remains in their hands, from where they rebuild the basics to sustain integral autonomy:

- a) *Not to give up*. Through rebuilding and sustaining the collective work of the loom and handicraft cooperative, pottery, carpentry and the collective store. At the same time they rebuild the autonomous school and health clinic;
- b) *Not to give up*. To sustain the attachment and care of Mother Earth to continue sowing wheat, corn, peas, beans and planting coffee, bananas, cassava, oranges, guava;
- c) *Not to sell out*. Maintain the link with its Board of Good Governance, encourage political-community and collective participation from the

women, boys and girls, young people. And from the horizontal - like the mountains and not like the sea - to celebrate differences and go in the direction of freedom.

The Zapatista families of the community continue to leap the limits and linearity of the fences to build like the fractal: from the small/micro and deep, they empower the greatness of collective work; from the will to create and build what they destroy, to reactivate the cycles of life. And from here the "quantum spiral", in only half a hectare, acquires the power of the living force of the macro from each person, family and collective. Basically they keep alive the metaphors of the *P'uy* (Snail), of the *Ot'an* (Heart), and do not allow their transformation into allegories: that which Power proposes. In spite of the Integral War of Attrition, the Autonomies represent a "containment womb" to safeguard freedom, that is to say, Life itself.



Of the original 155 hectares, the families are now enclosed in only half a hectare. The community continues to insist on building resistance through collective work for autonomy.



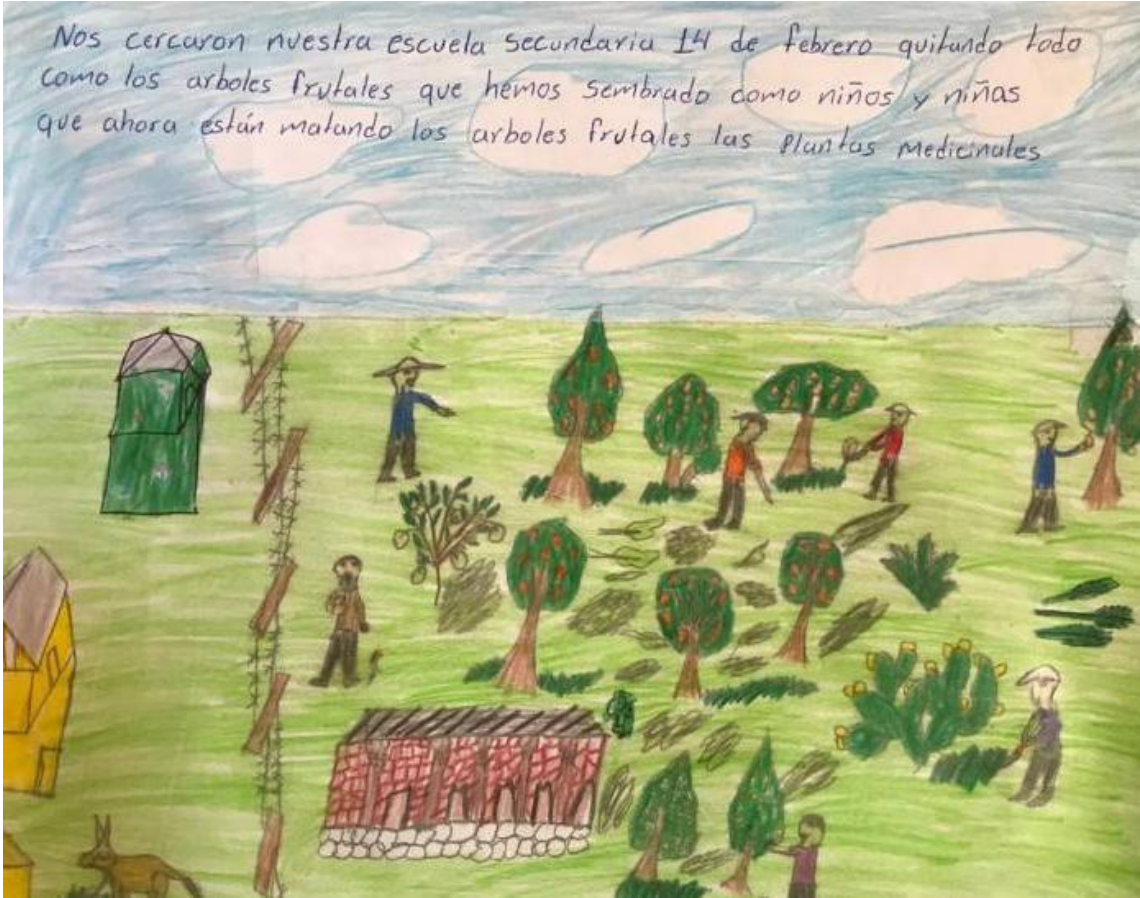
Zapatista Women.



Encroachment and enclosure. Women have to crawl to access water and firewood.



Zapatista girls



Drawings made by the Zapatista children of the community.

Gracias a la organización estamos resistencia de como sobre
Vivir creando colectivos de producción. Educación y salud
Tenemos carpintería, Artesanía de Bordados, colectivos de pollos,
colectivos de Hortalisa colectivo de plantas medicinales,
colectivos de alfaleja.
Estamos muy alegres de seguir luchado con el colectivo somos
niños y niñas, guardianes y guardianas de la madre tierra. no somos
Provocadores. Estamos luchado por la vida de la humanidad.



Drawings made by the Zapatista children of the community.



Pottery Collective



Community Health Clinic

DENUNCIAMOS LAS AGRESIONES, AMENAZAS Y HOSTIGAMIENTOS perpetrados por el grupo de "Los 40 invasores" en contra de niñas, niños, hombres y mujeres de la comunidad autónoma zapatista Nuevo San Gregorio.

NUESTRA LUCHA ES POR LA VIDA

SOLIDARIDAD CON LOS PUEBLOS ZAPATISTAS
ALTO A LA GUERRA EN NUEVO SAN GREGORIO

Las comunidades zapatistas se encuentran en un peligro constante ante la escalada de violencia e impunidad con que operan los agresores.

Sin embargo, las comunidades zapatistas siguen luchando día a día, sembrando sus territorios y creando proyectos colectivos para defender a la Madre Tierra.

Su lucha, nuestra lucha, es entonces por la vida.

¡EXIGIMOS EL ALTO A LA GUERRA EN LA COMUNIDAD NUEVO SAN GREGORIO Y NOS SOLIDARIZAMOS CON TODAS LAS COMUNIDADES EN RESISTENCIA Y REBELDÍA!

#PAZENNUEVOSANGREGORIO #SOMOSGUARDIANXSDELATIERRA
#LAAUTONOMIAESLAVIDA #PORLAVIDA #EZLN

SÚMATE A LA CAMPAÑA EN REDAJMAQ.ORG

Interview with Pøsr Waira Velasco Tumiña

General Youth Coordinator of
the Movimiento Autoridades
Indígenas del
Southwest, Misak, Cauca -
Colombia.

Waldo Lao*
Fabio Alkmin**

Dear Pøsr Waira. Thank you very much for your time. To begin with, we would like to ask you, how is the work and the importance of this as General Youth Coordinator of the Southwest Authorities Movement - AISO?

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Source: Kory Guaman (2021)

The indigenous peoples and the dynamics that revolve around them, in this case from the youth who have been contributing and accompanying the different processes within and outside the communities, are aimed at the integral protection of life. Through mingas de pensamien- tion we work hand in hand with the Taitas (elders) in the transmission of knowledge and collective territorial memory, consolidating knowledge from the word and from the manual weaving that strengthens the cultural, cosmogonic, political and organizational part. All this is focused on the youth of the Misak people, since they are the generational relay not only of our community but also of the other native peoples, peasants, Afro and in general of the nation.

After the signing of the so-called "Peace Accords", what has the situation been like for the indigenous peoples of Colombia?

Since the final agreement for the termination of the conflict and the construction of a stable and lasting peace was signed in 2016, the presence and actions of armed groups in the framework of the conflict and other forms of violence still remain. The homicides of the signatories of the Peace Agreement between 2016 and 2021 have totaled 267 people killed. Displacements due to land issues continue to occur and the government is increasingly absent. Of the 102 indigenous peoples, with their 64 different languages, 32 are at high risk of disappearing physically and culturally; 18 of these indigenous peoples are in extreme conditions of vulnerability, threat, risk, forced displacement and the constant violation of ethnic human rights in ancestral territories. Despite this, the government of President Iván Duque has not complied with its obligation to implement what was agreed in the Peace Accord. Following social discontent, massive mobilizations have taken place since April 28th of this year in rejection of a tax reform bill; this triggered the uprising of different sectors that have been historically silenced: Indians, peasants, Afro, students, workers and all those who defend their rights with dignity, demanding compliance with the provisions of the peace agreement such as the defense of the land and respect for the lives of social leaders who are being murdered by the Colombian State in recent years.

And in particular, for the indigenous peoples of Cauca?

Colombia is the third most dangerous country in the world to defend land; for indigenous peoples in Cauca it has been a great risk to defend territorial rights, demand the restitution of land taken by armed groups and express opposition to illicit activities or the substitution of illicit crops, which have led to the murder of leaders in ancestral territories.

Women and men were silenced during and after the protests against this bad government in the framework of the national strike; likewise, the indigenous, peasant and Afro communities rebelled against the ferocious multinational in the Cajibío lands of SMURFIT KAPPA Carton de

Colombia S.A., a company that has taken away ancestral lands in the Pubenza valley and has sown death, inequality, hunger and poverty in its path. "Cauca is one of the departments with more murders of social leaders" (Indepaz, 2020). Due to this situation, different Human Rights Collectives have made public a series of facts that constitute a scenario of violation of rights against the peasant, Afro and indigenous communities that inhabit this territory.

Therefore, we demand systematic non-violence at the hands of the State and the multinationals that have arrived in the country.

Going back in time. Colombia's constitutional reform (1991) provided a breakthrough in the recognition of indigenous rights. Three decades after this moment, what has been the importance and what [do you consider] to be the limitations of this Constitution?

For us, the 1991 Constitution, as Taita Lorenzo Muelas says, "was expected for centuries". The Constitution is very important for all the indigenous peoples of Colombia, since it was a historic and transcendental moment, a breakthrough in safeguarding the people, culture and land of the peoples; as well as to recognize and protect the social, cultural, spiritual and institutional values and practices. Since then Colombia has been recognized as a multiethnic and multicultural territory. For us it is very important to know what has been legislated, to remember that past, since, after 30 years of the constitution, much remains to be developed. Not all the people who are part of the indigenous peoples and those who are not part of them know the Constitution, and that is a great limitation to continue advancing in the defense of indigenous rights.

In this regard, what has been [briefly] the importance of organizations such as the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca - CRIC, the Movement of Authorities of the Southwest - AISO and the

Indigenous Organization of Colombia - ONIC, for the struggle of the peoples and the autonomy of the indigenous peoples of the country?

Historically, indigenous communities have resisted colonization, rape, extermination, invisibilization, displacement from their ancestral territories, among others, and have therefore decided to organize themselves as CRIC, AISO and ONIC in Colombia, and have fought for the vindication of the rights of native peoples. These, as collective actors, have marched throughout the country, setting a precedent to make it known to non-indigenous people that there are diverse peoples with their worldviews, uses, customs and language, who are engaged in a common struggle: the recovery of ancestral territories, as mentioned by the Taitas and Mamas of the Misak people "to recover the land and the memory to recover everything". The consolidation of these processes opens a new scenario of political participation in which Colombia is recognized as a multiethnic and multicultural nation, and the land is recognized as a subject of rights.

The struggle for the autonomy of indigenous peoples has been promoted from the decolonization of thought, education, economy, health, justice and self-administration. As a result, indigenous peoples have organized themselves for the survival of life and memory in time and space.

What is the meaning and importance of the Minga for the people?

The Minga is a community work, a meeting of diverse actors and knowledge with a common goal. The minga is the union of the community and between communities. Here the word is the heart of the processes to build a way of life, struggle and resistance.

What was the work of the Internal Minga during this pandemic?

In the midst of the circumstances of the internal armed conflict and political violence, aggravated by the quarantine and the health crisis caused by the

The covid-19 pandemic, community work was carried out in the planting of food, which was shared with the family and the whole community, thus strengthening food sovereignty. Internal mingas of thought were carried out, aimed at the uprising as the Movement of Indigenous Authorities of the Southwest - AISO, demanding the State to guarantee fundamental rights, the cessation of violence and compliance with the peace agreements, through actions in the exercise of memory, reparation and commitment to rewrite the history of Colombia. The Mingas in the indigenous territories have not stopped during the pandemic.



Source: Julián Naranjo. Location: Barter Misak people. Resguardo de Guambia (2021).

Could you tell us a little bit about how and why the Guardia Campesina came about? And what has been its effect on the rest of the people in the country?

The peasant guard has arisen due to the different types of violence exercised in the territories by armed, state, paramilitary and state-owned actors.

insurgents. "The peasant guard was organized (GC) as an expression of resistance of the peasant communities with the function of protecting people in the territory, to defend human rights, to contribute to the promotion of social mobilization and organization" (CNA, 2018). The State does not guarantee security to the community; it is the community itself that decides to organize and defend itself against violence (theft of livestock, crops, among others).

The guard helps to protect life: rivers, forests, animals, etc., in the country. In the case of Cauca, violence and insecurity led the inhabitants of the municipalities of Sotar and La Sierra to form a peasant guard. In the specific case of Cajibo, the inhabitants of Pubenenses are peasants and indigenous people seeking protection and recovery of the land from the multinational Smurfit Kappa Carton de Colombia S.A., which has seized the land and caused the loss of biodiversity of flora and fauna and brought poverty, hunger and destruction to the territory.

Broadly speaking, how could you define indigenous autonomy for the Misak people?

Autonomy is the power that indigenous peoples have to construct and direct under their own forms of organization with the different lives that inhabit the territory. Indigenous autonomy is a legitimate practice understood as a form of internal manifestation of self-determination and a process that feeds on experiences. For the Misak people, autonomy implies their own education as a tool to decolonize thought; traditional medicine for the survival of the peoples; the economy based on barter, which is the exchange of agricultural products from different regions; agriculture to strengthen food sovereignty from the planting of native seeds; justice to guarantee community order, among others.

What do you consider to be the community elements that strengthen and hinder the autonomous processes in the villages of Cauca?

The community elements that strengthen the peoples of Cauca are cultural practices, language, world vision, values and the geographic place they inhabit. What hinders the autonomous processes as peoples is the failure to maintain these elements that are fundamental to our own forms of organization for life as peoples.

Thinking about the mobilizations that have been taking place since the end of April in Colombia, what has the participation of indigenous peoples been like during this long strike?

The indigenous movement has participated massively in mobilizations throughout the length and breadth of the country. In this scenario, there has been a discussion on the historical memory in Colombia, the food that is happening in the territories has been shared in the cities, and the people of the cities have also been called to continue mobilizing in order to achieve the changes they want. From the southwest we continue to fight as Misak people for the re-signification of memory and the recovery of the land so that a comprehensive agrarian reform can be implemented.

Tribute to Albeiro Camayo Güetio

Former regional coordinator
of the indigenous guard,
killed on January 24, 2022.



Source: CRIC.

Human Rights Bulletin Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas del Norte del Cauca.

MOBILE COLUMN JAIME MARTINEZ MURDERED ALBEIRO CAMAYO

(January 24, 2022)

The Network for the Defense of Life and Human Rights informs the community in general and the national and international public opinion about the most recent territorial disharmonies in the resguardo of Las Delicias, municipality of Buenos Aires.

In an armed attack perpetrated by the group calling itself "Columna Móvil Jaime Martínez," in the sector known as La Primavera in the ancestral territory of Las Delicias, comrade Al-Beiro Camayo Güetio, former regional coordinator of the indigenous guard, was murdered.

At around 3:15 pm, the presence of a group of armed men belonging to the self-styled "Jaime Martínez Mobile Column" was reported, who were moving through the sectors of El Cabuyo and La Primavera. These armed men forced the community to participate in meetings. When they were in La Primavera, the authority Neeh We'sx of Las Delicias arrived at the place to demand respect for the civilian population. In this way, together with the community and the Kiwe Thegnas (indigenous guard), they proceeded to expel the armed men from the territory.

In response, the armed men made accusations against the authorities, the guard and the community, directly threatening the community members and intimidating them with firearms. Among the armed men was alias "El Paisan", the man responsible for the murders of Breiner Cucuñame and Guillermo Chicame, just ten days ago.

Then, around 5:30 pm, members of the group began to shoot at the assembled community. The armed attack was also recorded in the "El Mandarina" sector. This is the third Kiwe Thegnas

who is murdered in this territory and by the same perpetrators in less than two weeks.

A maximum alert is made to all the indigenous territories of Cauca and sister organizations, to accompany the Camayo Güetio family and the community of Las Delicias in these moments of horror and death.

Facts in development...

Defense of Life and Human Rights Network

Cxhab Wala Kiwe - ACIN

Available:

<https://www.cric-colombia.org/portal/boletin-ddhh-columna-mo-vil-jaime-martinez-murder-a-albeiro-camayo-excoordinator-guar-dia-indigena/>

