

COMMENTARY: Human Rights Groups Condemn Criminal Repression Of Indigenous Community In Peru

by Rebecca Sommer
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The government of Peruvian President Alan Garc a P rez has its hands full of blood, again.

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The massacre at Bagua on June 5, 2009 that resulted in international outrage was not an isolated case, but part of an ongoing, systematic campaign to criminalize social and indigenous peoples human rights movements. (Link: <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article1697>)

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Indigenous Organization CAOI reported that on Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2009, at 4 p.m, the indigenous community of Segunda was severely attacked by police forces, leaving two dead, nine wounded and four arrested.

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The murdered peasants, the ex-governor of the community Castro Correa Huayama, and Vicente Ram rez Mart nez, a 50 year-old father, have been outspoken opponents against a mining project , Rio Blanco.

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"We are really concerned about the situation that hundreds of indigenous peoples and peasants in Peru are being criminalized and murdered just for defending their land and the environment and their right to their own development model.

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Not only the president is pursuing an on-going militarization of the whole county, specially outside the capital, but also continues to give lands to corporations even though the communities have organized to do their own popular consultations and are struggling against mining companies for years," said human rights advocate Joanna Cabello, from the Transnational Institute.

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More than 90 percent of the population voted against the Rio Blanco mining project at a citizen consultation, which was organized by the local municipalities in September 2007.

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But despite the strong opposition from civil society, the Garcia Perez government intensified police and judicial persecution, leaving countless citizens arrested or penalized.

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"We condemn the criminal repression against the people of Peru, and want to see this investigated and the responsible sanctioned.

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We demand an end of the criminalization of indigenous peoples, who do nothing wrong by demanding their rights," said Miguel Palac n Quispe, the Andean Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations (CAOI), " the Garc a P rez government of Peru must stop this right now." he added.

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source: <http://www.huntingtonnews.net/columns/091210-sommer-columnsperu.html>  

