

News Release

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY: Human Rights, Environmental, Trade Justice, Peruvian Community Activists Protest Killing of Environmentalists in Peru at NY Peruvian Consulate

*** Demonstration Coincides with Climate Summit and March Today in Lima, Peru
* Activists Also Decry Peru's Participation in TPP Free Trade Talks in Washington, DC This Week**

Photos, Video, and additional information available at <http://gjae.org/peru>

New York – On Wednesday, December 10th, 2014, environmental, trade justice, and human rights activists braved a snowstorm to protest the Consulate General of Peru in New York at 241 East 49th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues in Manhattan, calling on the Peruvian government to end violence against environmentalists, recognize indigenous land claims and recognize vital contribution indigenous land stewardship makes to protecting habitats and reducing Peru's carbon footprint, stop opening Peruvian lands and waters to exploitation by corporate polluters, end Peru's participation in negotiations for anti-environmental trade agreements including the Trans-Pacific Partnership, to cease the legal persecution of indigenous land defenders including the Bagua 53, and to compensate the families of people murdered for their activism against polluting and habitat destroying industries.

From 3-4PM, protesters read the names of some of the 57 Peruvian environmentalists who have been killed since 2002 and chanted slogans including “Agua si, oro no” (water yes, gold no), Poet Lorena Ambrosio of Mahina Moement performed a tribute piece to the to Peru's environmental martyrs. The rally at the consulate concluded with speeches. Ceci Pineda explained some of the demands being made by Peruvian communities. Peruvian immigrant Mariano Muñoz, who expressed his feeling of betrayal by President Humala, charging him with offering false hope to Peruvians demanding an administration that would respect human rights and the environment. Rainforest Relief's Tim Keating displayed samples of Peruvian rainforest wood and explained how illegal logged Peruvian hardwoods tied to human rights abuses are being used by NYC agencies and public benefit corporations for projects like the Coney Island boardwalk. Adam Weissman of Global Justice for Animals and the Environment spoke about the US-Peru Free Trade Agreement's consequences for human rights and the environment and expressed his frustration and disappointment that President Humal is now even bigger and potentially more devastating trade agreements, TPP and TISA. At 4PM the protesters marched to Dag Hammarskjold Park, where they joined a rally calling for a strong climate treaty to be developed at the Lima summit and asserted that climate justice is a human right.

While Peru hosts this year's U.N. Climate Change Conference, it faces international scrutiny as it was ranked as the fourth most dangerous nation for environmental activists according to a new report by Global Witness. From 2002-2013, at least 57 environmental activists were assassinated in Peru, notably including several indigenous leaders who live in the forests and work to protect it from deforestation.

Despite the threat of violent repression, communities in Peru continue to fight ecologically devastating extraction projects like the infamous Conga gold mine in Cajamarca, the Camisea gas pipeline, the Pluspetrol oil field in Loreto, Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold's Cerro Verde mine in Arequipa, Barrick Gold's Pierina mine in the Ancash region and many others. But instead of supporting communities fighting to defend their lands, the Peruvian government has recently passed legislation that rolls back forest protections in order to attract new investment and development. President Humala has also announced his intention to expand Peru's role and a regional energy producer through expanded gas extraction and a massive expansion of the Camisea gas pipeline that threatens the survival of uncontacted indigenous communities.

According to Peruvian immigrant Mariano Muñoz, “President Humala has broken faith with communities who believed his promises – that he would diverge from the policies of his predecessor, Alan Garcia, who facilitated the corporate plunder and ecological destruction of Peru through free trade/investor rights agreements and legislative decrees and encouraged the violent repression of indigenous communities and other environmental defenders. Peru now ranks as the fourth most dangerous country in the world to be an environmentalist, with a dramatic increase in the killing of environmental and land defenders in the last four years.”

Protesters also accuse the Peruvian government of duplicity in the fact that at the same time Lima is hosting the global climate summit, Peruvian negotiators are participating in Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations in Washington, DC that will encourage further exploitation of Peru's lands and people by the industries most responsible for driving climate change. TPP will grant foreign corporation new rights to attack Peru's environmental laws in international tribunals outside the jurisdiction of the nation's court system, allowing to escape accountability for pollution and to strongarm Peru into allowing environmentally devastating projects and other activities. The Humala administration is also negotiating the similarly destructive Trade in Services Agreement.