

Ecuadorian Indigenous protesters pay homage to leader killed by police



Quito, October 10 (RHC)-- The body of indigenous leader Inocencio Tucumbi who was killed during demonstrations against government austerity measures, was carried through the streets of Quito, Ecuador on Thursday to a cultural center where indigenous groups amassed for a ceremony to honor the victim.

Gustavo Tucumbi, the victim's son, said while fighting back tears: "The indigenous people are here, a fighting people, a firm people. My father was one of them, fighting until his last. He left a tremendous story that the people must listen to, the nation must listen to."

Confirming the death on Wednesday, the ombudsman, a state office that monitors conflicts, said a man died of brain trauma, possibly from a tear gas canister to the head. In addition to Tucumbi, the Ombudsman also confirmed the deaths of at least four additional protesters so far: Raúl Chilpe, Marco Otto, José Daniel Chaluiza and José Rodrigo Chaluiza across the national territory, and condemned the "excessive use of force" by authorities.

There were also attacks on Wednesday night against a humanitarian center near Salesiana University. The area provided refuge and shelter for Indigenous marchers, which police attacked during the night with tear gas. Ecuador's Interior Minister Maria Paula Romo has since apologized for the attack.

Protests show little sign of abating as Indigenous groups deny government claims that there are negotiations to bring the uprising to an end. Protesters maintain their opposition to the government's austerity package that followed a multi-billion dollar loan from the IMF.

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