

Panamanian Indigenous peoples agree to open Pan-American Highway



People protesting against the Cortizo administration, Panama, July 2022. | Photo: Twitter/
@AmadaZurda

Panama City, July 18 (RHC)-- Panamanian President Laurentizo Cortizo's administration and the Indigenous organizations of the Ngäbe Buglé region in the province of Chiriqui reached an agreement to set the price of a gallon of gasoline at \$3.30 USD and thus end the closure of the Pan-American highway.

The fuel price freeze will last for three months and may be extended for a similar period. During the last nine days, Indigenous organizations have blocked the Pan-American highway, through which more than

80 percent of the country's agricultural production circulates.

Previously, the Cortizo administration had extended the subsidized fuel to \$3.95 U\$D for private vehicles for public carriers and cargo carriers. In the process of dialogue between the government and the indigenous peoples, however, the approval of a monthly support of US \$100 in fuel coupons for land and sea carriers that supply the Ngäbe Bugle region is pending.

In another dialogue process taking place in the province of Veraguas, Panamanian Vice Presiden Jose Gabriel Carrizo and the National Alliance for the Rights of Peoples (ANADEPO) agreed to set the price of a gallon of fuel at \$3.32 U\$D. However, issues related to the prices of medicines and food were not resolved.

ANADEPO leaders questioned this agreement, alleging that they did not know if it was a "mockery" or a "political move" by a government that is negotiating with social organizations at two different tables.

They emphasized the strike and the road closures in Veraguas will continue if there is no real agreement on the prices of drugs and food.

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