

Mapuche People in Chile Want Stop to Pulp Mill on Their Lands



Santiago de Chile, April 15 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Five indigenous *Mapuche* communities from the Bio-Bio region in Southern Chile are seeking to invalidate an approval granted to the *Celulosa Horcones* company to expand their factory, saying the community was not properly consulted.

Representatives from the affected *Mapuche* communities approached federal officials from the Environmental Evaluation Service to rescind the environmental impact study approved in February by the Environmental Evaluation Commission of the Bio-Bio region.

The Mapuche representatives argue that the wood pulp mill project violates Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO), which stipulates that indigenous peoples must be consulted on issues that affect them.

On their website, the ILO states that this convention "requires that these peoples are able to engage in free, prior and informed participation in policy and development processes that affect them." Chile ratified Convention 169 in 2008.

The representatives from the affected communities stated that they were not consulted about this project, therefore its approval should be annulled. The Environmental Evaluation Service has given the company, *Celulosa Horcones*, up to April 24 to respond.

Indigenous Mapuche communities have a long history of resisting unwelcome development projects in their lands. Several Mapuche communities will be gathering in the city of *Valdivia*, in the south of Chile, on Wednesday for a gathering to organize further resistance strategies.

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