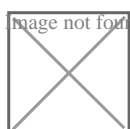


Peruvian Rights Ombudsman Calls Out Government on Indigenous Rights



Lima, May 27 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Peru's Ombudsman criticized the government of President Ollanta Humala on Tuesday for failing to enforce legislation that protects indigenous people.

Known as the 2011 Prior Consultation Law and Agreement 169 of the International Labor Organization, this law gives indigenous communities the right to voice their opinions on developments related to the land they have inhabited for centuries.

Also known as the 'People's Defender', the Peruvian Ombudsman is a state institution, independent of political parties and branches of government. Its responsibilities include overseeing the protection of human rights for all citizens and ensuring they receive state services as outlined in the constitution.

According to the Prior Consultation Law and Agreement 169 of the ILO, the Peruvian government has the responsibility to negotiate with indigenous communities prior to permitting development projects in their territories. However, the Ombudsman claims the government has only consulted indigenous communities on 10 project proposals – a small fraction of ongoing projects – and has failed to meet any of the demands that resulted.

Sedequias Ancón Chávez, National Director of the Inter-Ethnic Association of Development of the Peruvian Amazon (AIDSEAP), blames authorities for the current situation. According to Chávez, officials "are not making their employees follow through [with the laws]. They are not collecting information as they should."

The Ombudsman also stated that the situation is worse with mining projects in the Andes, where a great number of Quechua indigenous people have been denied their right to prior consultation by the government.

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