



REPÚBLICA DEL ECUADOR
PUEBLO SHUAR “ARUTAM”
ACUERDO MINISTERIAL N° 255 DE 7 DE SEPTIEMBRE DEL 2006
Maikiuants-Morona Santiago



August 26, 2021

Her Excellency Sylvie Bédard
Ambassador of Canada to Ecuador

Re: Threats and violence against Josefina Tunki, President of the Shuar Arutam People, and human rights and environmental defenders on Canadian mining concessions in Ecuador.

Dear Ambassador:

Please accept warm greetings from the Governing Council of the Shuar Arutam People (PSHA in Spanish) and the 137 organizations listed as signatories below. We are concerned about an escalation of conflict between Canadian-owned mining companies operating in our collective territory of the Shuar Arutam People in the Cordillera del Cóndor. We call on the Canadian embassy and government to take immediate action, as outlined below.

The Shuar Arutam People is composed of 47 communities (12,000 inhabitants), whose territory covers an area of 230,000 hectares. [Most of our territory has been concessioned to mining companies](#) without respecting our right to free, prior, and informed consent. Some of these companies include: Solaris Resources (Canada), SolGold (Australia), ExplorCobres S.A., EXSA (a subsidiary of Chinese-owned, Canada-based Corriente Resources) and Aurania Resources (Canada).

Currently, we are concerned about threats and attacks against land and forests defenders on our territory due to the presence of Canadian mining companies that systematically violate our collective rights. We especially want to express our concern about the corporate abuses by Solaris Resources Inc., which has promoted community division, intimidation, and death threats against our President, Josefina Tunki, and her collaborators.

Solaris Resources Inc. is the Vancouver-based owner of the Warintza Project, which is located in our ancestral territory, despite our strong community opposition to the project for more than 13 years.

In this context, we urge the Canadian Embassy in Ecuador, which, as the representative of the Canadian State, and in compliance with its extraterritorial human rights obligations, to take the necessary measures to immediately address the corporate abuses of Canadian-based companies in our territory.



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Specifics of recent threats against Josefina Tunki, President of PSHA

Josefina Tunki is the first female president of PSHA. In her role as a land defender and representative of the Governing Council, Josefina received a telephone death threat from Federico Velasquez, Vice President of operations for Solaris Resources Inc, on November 6, 2020.

As a result of the aforementioned threat to the personal integrity of our president, [we filed a complaint with the Sucúa Criminal Prosecutor's Office](#) against Solaris and its vice president of operations, Federico Velásquez, for threats and intimidation on December 21, 2020. It should be noted that this threat occurred in a context of growing community division instigated by Solaris Resources Inc; the company ignoring the Shuar Arutam People's systems of government; and the systemic violation of our collective rights to self-determination, territory, and free, prior, and informed consent.

According to our president, the objective of this threat was “to intimidate PSHA and pressure us not to bring the case before the International Labour Organization (ILO). According to Josefina, the threatening words were ["If we continue to bother him with national and international complaints, they will have to take off one of our heads."](#) Despite this, she remains firm in her leadership position: [“I am the first woman leading the PSHA government. Solaris and Federico Velásquez will be held directly responsible If there is an accident”](#). At the time of this writing, Josefina had not received a response regarding the investigation. As a result of this death threat, the president of PSHA has felt intimidated and fears for herself, her family, and her community.

An example of the violence our territory and livelihoods have been subjected to since the arrival of Solaris was the attempt to militarize our territory in order to advance this project. As noted in [Ecuador's Alliance for Human Rights' most recent report](#) on the critical situation of rights defenders in the country: On November 21, 2020, two trucks of the Armed Forces entered our territory while women from the village were in a workshop. The ex-governor of Morona Santiago, Juan León Pilco, said that the militarization was in response to complaints from Solaris, which requested protection from unspecified alleged threats. This happened days after our Assembly announced that we would bring the case to the ILO.

Also, Josefina Tunki and our Communications Manager, Eddy Nawech's Facebook accounts were hacked, [releasing personal content to discredit our organizational process](#).

Solaris divides our communities and does not respect our rights

The Canadian company Solaris Resources Inc. arrived in our territory in 2019, after acquiring the Warintza Project through its subsidiary in Ecuador, Lowell Mineral Exploration. This is a copper and molybdenum mining project. In light of the reactivation of the project, which was suspended in 2006 after we expelled Lowell Mineral Exploration and [demonstrated against mining in our territory](#), we reiterated our right to



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self-determination in a collective consultation in 2019 with our communities. As a result of this, PSHA declared itself as “a territory of life” (TICCA)” and launched an international campaign: “[PSHA Have Decided: No to Mining. We Do Not Want to Be Consulted.](#)”

Due to all the violations to our tangible and intangible rights, on January 29, 2021, PSHA’s Governing Council, together with the Public Services International (PSI), [filed a complaint with the ILO against the Ecuadorian State](#) for violation of ILO Convention 169 and for violating our collective rights and not consulting us on projects being carried out on our territory.

As we stated in an open letter to the UN Global Compact in February 2021, [Solaris is provoking internal conflicts and does not respect our rights](#). Although the project is at an advanced stage of exploration, our communities are already witnessing the impacts of the work being carried out in our territories, including [loss of primary forests and contamination of watershed systems and micro-watersheds](#) — an irreversible environmental deterioration that contributes to the [loss of ancestral knowledge in our communities](#) and threatens our ways of live. But perhaps the most serious impact is the co-optation of our communities and isolated communities in order to advance the project. This has caused family, community, and organizational divisions which are difficult to repair. They divert us from the directives of our Life Plan and hinder our right to exercise our ways of life.

Solaris undermines our internal process and collective decisions

In addition to the death threat against Josefina Tunki, Solaris is accused of creating what the company calls a “[Strategic Alliance](#)” with two of our 47 Shuar communities, Warints and Yawi, [undermining PSHA’s organizational structure](#).

Furthermore, it is worrisome that the company, in an attempt to discredit our organizational process, is generating strategies to stigmatize our struggle and our allies, claiming that our leaders are being manipulated by external actors and foreign NGOs. This type of campaign reveals a racist and colonial position embodied by international companies, including Canadian companies, by ignoring our assembly decisions over the past 20 years, where we have consistently opposed large-scale transnational mining in our territory based on the ancestral wisdom of our people and the strengths of our own systems of self-government. Similarly, this type of defamatory campaign is contrary to the spirit of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and violates the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, as well as our right to free association and participation as Indigenous peoples, and the rights of the civil society organizations that support our struggle. Furthermore, it is unacceptable and irresponsible that we have to fight this type of corporate abuse when the country has signed and ratified the Escazú Agreement, which came into effect on April 22, 2021.



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In the context of escalating threats and violations of our collective rights by mining companies, including Solaris Resources, we urge the Canadian Embassy in Ecuador take the following actions:

- In accordance with the actions defined in the *Voices at Risk Guidelines*, issue a formal public statement: 1) condemning Solaris Resources Inc.’s death threat against the president of PSHA, Josefina Tunki, and 2) in support of PSHA to protect our organizational integrity; and provide security measures to Josefina Tunki;
- Use diplomatic channels and set a precedent that fosters judiciary independence to urge a full and impartial investigation by the Criminal Prosecutor’s Office of Sucúa into these death threats and acts of intimidation;
- Detail what steps will be taken to prevent threats and incidents of intimidation against Josefina Tunki, the Shuar Arutam People, and our communities;
- Refrain from using social media to post messages [in support of Canadian mining companies in Ecuador](#), including [Solaris Resources Inc.](#)
- Inform and raise concerns to Solaris Resources Inc. regarding the death threat against Josefina Tunki, and demand accountability. Echo the demands of the Shuar Arutam People that Solaris Resources respect our decision: “No to large-scale mining in our territory.”
- In accordance with Canada’s feminist foreign policy and the [commitment of the Canadian Embassy in Ecuador to Canadian feminist foreign policy in Ecuador](#), [the defence of women’s rights](#), [women’s empowerment](#), [political participation of women in decision-making processes](#), and [Indigenous Peoples](#) release a formal public statement on social media in support of all the Indigenous women of PSHA and Indigenous woman leader and president of PSHA, Josefina Tunki, and our right to say NO to mining in our territory.
- Create spaces for dialogue between embassy staff and PSHA’s Governing Council in order to hear directly, from our leaders and the representatives of allied organizations, the reasons for which we oppose large-scale mining in our territory and the threats we receive for exercising our right to protect and defend it.
- Issue a formal public statement in support of the Escazú Agreement, which has been signed and ratified by Ecuador, and which requires states to take measures to protect environmental defenders, including Indigenous People, rural leaders and activists.



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Josefina Tunki, President of PSHA, Marcelo Unkuch and Galo Chup, PSHA external management, Marco Martínez, leader in the territory, as well as members of allied organizations would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss this urgent matter. Please contact Marcelo Unkuch (marcelounkuchp@hotmail.com) and Vivian Idrovo (alianzaddhh.ecuador@gmail.com) to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Marcelo Unkuch,
Shuar Arutam People - external management

CC:

The Honorable Marc Garneau
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Canada

The Honorable Mary Ng
Minister of International Trade and Small Business and Export Promotion, Government of Canada

His Excellency Hugh Adsett
Ambassador of Canada to the Organization of American States

Mr. Eric Bertram
Deputy Director, Democracy Policy and Indigenous Affairs at Global Affairs Canada

Ms. Catherine Godin
Director General for Global Affairs Canada

Signed,
Bolivia

1. Ayllus Urbanos
2. Centro de Documentación e Información Bolivia (CEDIB)
3. Asociación para la Conservación de la Biodiversidad y el Desarrollo Sustentable (Savia)
4. TerraJusta



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Brazil

5. Assembleia Mundial pela Amazônia
6. Instituto Maíra
7. International Accountability Project
8. International Rivers

Canada

9. Centre for Indigenous Conservation and Development Alternatives (CICADA)
10. Committee for Human Rights in Latin America (CDHAL)
11. Cooperation Canada
12. Christian Peacemaker Teams-Canada
13. Friends of the Earth Canada
14. Horizons of Friendship
15. Human Rights Clinic at the the Human Rights Research and Education Centre (HRREC) - University of Ottawa
16. KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
17. Mining Injustice Solidarity Network (MISN)
18. Mining Justice Action Committee (MJAC)
19. Mining Justice Alliance (MJA) Vancouver
20. MiningWatch Canada
21. Paroisse Notre-Dame-du-Mont-Carmel en Estrie
22. Public Service Alliance of Canada
23. Servicio Internacional Cristiano de Solidaridad con los Pueblos de América Latina, Oscar Arnulfo Romero (SICSAL)
24. Students for Mining Justice (UBC)

Chile

25. Observatorio Ciudadano
26. Sustentarse

Colombia

27. Asociación Cambium Clima Ambiente e Investigación Acción Uniendo Mundos (CAMBIUM)
28. Asociación MINGA
29. Corporación Geoambiental Terrae
30. Grupo Kanaka

Ecuador

31. Acción Ecológica



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32. Activismo Global
33. Aldeas infantiles sos Ecuador
34. Alianza de Organizaciones por los Derechos Humanos en el Ecuador
35. Amazon Watch
36. APT Norte
37. ARTIS
38. Asociación de Derechos Humanos
39. CDES - Fundación Centro de Derechos Económicos Sociales Y Culturales del Ecuador
40. Centro agrícola Zapotillo
41. Centro de Desarrollo Etnico (CEDET)
42. Centro de Desarrollo Social Aplicado (CEDESA)
43. Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos “Segundo Montes Mozo S.J.” (CSMM)
44. Centro Ecuatoriano para la promoción y acción de la Mujer (CEPAM) Guayaquil
45. CNBRPE-Red de Bosques
46. Colectivo Ana de Peralta
47. Colectiva de Antropólogas del Ecuador
48. Colectivo de Geografía Crítica del Ecuador
49. Colectivo Pro Derechos Humanos (PRODH)
50. Colectiva Sordas Feministas Ecuador
51. Colectivo YO JOVEN
52. Colectivo Warmi Muyu
53. Consejo Defensorial Provincia de el Oro
54. Consorcio TICCA
55. Comisión Ecuménica de Derechos Humanos (CEDHU)
56. Coordinadora Ecuatoriana de organizaciones para la Defensa de la Naturaleza y el Medio Ambiente (CEDENMA)
57. Coordinadora Nacional Campesina Eloy Alfaro
58. DECOIN
59. Extinction Rebellion Ecuador
60. FIAN Ecuador
61. Fundación ALDEA
62. Fundación Alejandro Labaka
63. Fundación Cerro Verde
64. Fundación de Mujeres Luna Creciente
65. Fundación Desafío
66. Fundación Dignidad
67. Fundación Regional de Asesoría en Derechos Humanos (INREDH)
68. Fundación Tiam
69. Koncha Batukada lesbianofeminista



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- 70. Iniciativa Cuencas Sagradas
- 71. Instituto de Estudios Ecologistas del Tercer Mundo
- 72. Luna Creciente Ecuador
- 73. Lluviacomunicación
- 74. Mashcas líderes verdes en acción
- 75. Movimiento de Mujeres de El Oro
- 76. Movimiento Nacional Mujeres Sectores Populares Luna Creciente
- 77. Mujeres en Acción Loja
- 78. #QuitoSinMinería
- 79. OMASNE
- 80. Parlamento Plurinacional de organizaciones de mujeres y feministas del Ecuador
- 81. Proyecto Justicia Indígena
- 82. Red de Antropólogos de Ecuador
- 83. Red de Líderes Angel Shingre y Frente de Defensa de la Amazonia
- 84. Red de Medios de Comunicación Comunitaria y Alternativa del Ecuador Infórmate Pueblo
- 85. Runas feministas
- 86. SURCO COMÚN
- 87. Surkuna
- 88. WITNESS

El Salvador

- 89. Foro Indígena Abya Yala (FIAY)

England

- 90. YAKUM

France

- 91. Programme de Volontariat Junin Intag

Germany

- 92. Rettet den Regenwald/ Rainforest Rescue

Guatemala

- 93. Asociacion Oxlajuj Ajpop

Mexico

- 94. Asociación por la Protección y del Tierra y el Bienestar de Epazoyucan A.C. (APTyBE)
- 95. Bios Iguana



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- 96. Coordinadora de Pueblos y Organizaciones del Oriente del Estado de México en Defensa de la Tierra, el Agua y su Cultura (CPOOEM)
- 97. GeoComunes
- 98. Movimiento Morelense Contra las Concesiones de Minería por Metales
- 99. Otros Mundos Chiapas
- 100. Periódico El Zenzontle Casa de los Pueblos
- 101. Procesos Integrales para la Autogestión de los Pueblos (PIAP)
- 102. Red Mexicana de Afectado/as por la Minería (REMA)

Panamá

- 103. Congreso Indígenas Maje Embera Drua Panamá. Consorcio icca Panamá.

Paraguay

- 104. Federación por la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos Indígenas (FAPI)

Perú

- 105. Gobierno Territorial Autónomo de la Nación Wampis- (GGTANW)
- 106. Asociación de Desarrollo y Crecimiento Personal (ADECEP)
- 107. Asociación Nacional de Familiares de Secuestrados, Detenidos y Desaparecido del Perú

ANFASEP

- 108. Asociación por la Vida de la Dignidad Humana (Aporvidha)
- 109. Centro Eori de Investigación y Promoción Regional
- 110. Centro Loyola Ayacucho
- 111. Colectiva Purisag Warmikuna
- 112. Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Pucallpa
- 113. Comisión de Justicia Social de la Diócesis de Chimbote
- 114. Comisión de Solidaridad Desarrollo y Justicia (COSDEJ)
- 115. Comité de derechos humanos de Ilo
- 116. CooperAcción
- 117. CPM Micaela Bastidas
- 118. Defensoras de la vida y de la Pachamama
- 119. Forum Solidaridad Perú
- 120. Grupo de Formación e Intervención para el Desarrollo Sostenible (GRUFIDES)
- 121. Instituto para el desarrollo y la paz amazónica
- 122. Instituto de Promoción Social Amazónica - IPSA
- 123. Instituto Peruano de Educación en Derechos Humanos y la Paz
- 124. Instituto Regional Para la Paz
- 125. Instituto Runa de Desarrollo y Estudios sobre Género
- 126. Instituto Sur Andino de Derechos Humanos (ISADH) PUNO



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- 127. Lesbianas Independientes Feministas Socialista (LIFS)
- 128. Movimiento JATARISHUN
- 129. Movimiento Manuela Ramos
- 130. Paz y Esperanza
- 131. Servicio Educativo para el Desarrollo y la Solidaridad - SEDYS Trujillo

Spain

- 132. Salva la Selva

United States

- 133. Amazon Frontlines
- 134. Earthworks
- 135. Institute for Policy Studies - Global Economy Program

Venezuela

- 136. Colectivo Soberanía Rural
- 137. Organización de Mujeres Indígenas Amazónicas Amazonas (Wanaaleru)