

June 15, 2022

ECUADOR

Urgent call to the Ecuadorian State to stop criminalization and to respect the rights of indigenous peoples and their defenders

Indigenous Peoples Rights International ([Indigenous Peoples Rights International](https://www.iprights.org) - IPRI) has received with deep concern the reactions of the Ecuadorian State to the peaceful protest carried out by indigenous organizations in Ecuador since June 13.

Although in the early hours of June 15, 2022, the president of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), Segundo Leonidas Iza Salazar, was released under alternative measures to imprisonment, we express our deep concern about this arbitrary arrest, the subjection to criminal proceedings and the doubts about the legality of other arrests that are happening during the days of protest. The arrest of Mr. Salazar is a clear demonstration of the criminalization of the indigenous struggle and its leaders. Illegal and arbitrary arrests and detentions, such as that of Leonidas Iza Salazar, contravene international human rights standards and send a worrying message about the responses of a democratic state to the heartfelt demands of historically vulnerable sectors.

From IPRI we recall that peaceful protest is a form of exercising the right to freedom of expression and the right of assembly recognized, among others, in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights, to which the Ecuadorian State is a signatory.

We also remind the Ecuadorian State that it has an obligation to protect and respect the rights of human rights defenders, including indigenous human rights defenders. Therefore, the criminalization, harassment, violence, detentions and arrests against them must be stopped immediately.

We vehemently call on the Ecuadorian State, within the framework of the peaceful protest carried out by the indigenous peoples of Ecuador, to establish channels and instances of dialogue to address and discuss the concerns and substantive issues identified by the indigenous peoples and expressed in their list of demands.

Finally, we extend our solidarity and support to the indigenous peoples in Ecuador, their leaders and organizations. We will be watching the developments of the mobilization and will be monitoring that their rights are respected and protected.

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Note: Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI) is a global Indigenous Peoples' organization working to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and to unite and amplify the call for justice for victims of criminalization and impunity. Visit IPRI's website for more information: <https://iprights.org/>

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