



Canadian Ecumenical
Justice Initiatives /
Initiatives œcuméniques
canadiennes pour
la justice

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Canadian Catholic Organization for
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Canadian Conference of
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L'Église Unie du Canada

Le fonds du Primate pour le secours
et le développement mondial

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December 11, 2013

Rafael Correa
President
Republic of Ecuador
García Moreno N10-43
Quito, Ecuador

Dear Mr President,

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives is an organization of eleven Canadian churches and church organizations working for human rights and ecological justice. We are writing to express grave concern about your government's recent decision to dissolve *Fundación Pachamama*, as well as the impact this decision will have on other environmental and Indigenous organizations whose work will make them vulnerable to criminalization and repression.

KAIROS understands that on the morning of 4 December 2013, the Quito-based offices of *Fundación Pachamama* were raided and closed down by police officers carrying a resolution from Ecuador's Ministry of Environment with orders to dissolve the organization for "interference in public policy".

KAIROS is concerned that this arbitrary act is intended to repress the organization's legitimate right to disagree with the national government policy, and to discourage other organizations from taking similar positions. *Fundación Pachamama* had challenged the government's decision to grant concessions to oil companies on Indigenous territory in the Amazon, arguing that the Indigenous peoples' constitutional rights, in particular their right to free, prior, and informed consent, were not being respected.

Fundación Pachamama's position has always been based on the defense of human rights and the rights of nature. For sixteen years they have offered solidarity and assistance to the Indigenous organizations that legitimately represent the ancestral peoples of the Amazon.

KAIROS has a long history of accompanying and collaborating with partners in Ecuador, including Indigenous peoples and environmental organizations, who are working to defend Indigenous rights and the rights of nature. KAIROS is concerned that the dissolution of *Fundación Pachamama* is another example of growing intolerance and of the criminalization of dissent, and that the important work of human rights defenders, particularly Indigenous and environmental organizations, is at risk.

Numerous Ecuadorean organizations are in the process of convening a popular consultation or referendum on the decision to exploit petroleum in the Yasuni. We urge the Ecuadorean government to guarantee the democratic right to carry out this process.

Like many human rights and environmental organizations around the world, KAIROS celebrated the adoption of Ecuador's constitution which for the first time recognized the rights of nature and to *buen vivir*. The dissolution of *Fundación Pachamama* contradicts the principles enshrined in this constitution and will further damage Ecuador's international reputation.

KAIROS joins churches, environmental and human rights groups in Canada, Ecuador and throughout the world in calling on the Ecuadorean government to re-instate and re-open the offices of *Fundación Pachamama* and to end further repression of civil society and Indigenous groups in Ecuador.

We anxiously await your response, which we will share with our members.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Warden', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Rachel Warden

Program coordinator
Gender Justice programming/Latin America partnerships

Cc Dr. Andres Teran- Parral, Ambassador, Ecuadorean Embassy in Canada
Basil Haylock, Honorary Consul, Embassy of Canadá in Quito, Ecuador