

Increased suspicion that Shuar leader in Zamora was assassinated

Press Release

December 4, 2014



José Tendetza

On December 3, the body of anti-mining activist José Isidro Tendetza Antún was identified. José Isidro was a member of the Shuar community of de Yanúa, the district of El Pangui, province of Zamora. He had disappeared on November 28 on his way to an Assembly convened by the Shuar Association of Bomboíza, where they were to discuss themes related to mining exploitation in the province. José never arrived at the meeting.

On December 2, a group of miners found the body of this Indigenous leader in the Zamora River and brought it by boat to Yanzata where it was buried by the Prosecutor's office. According to his son, Jorge Tendetza, who identified his body in photographs taken by the police, José Tendetza had been tied up with a blue rope, suggesting that he was assassinated.

The death of this leader occurred in the context of increasing violence related to the presence of mining operations in the area. To date, three Indigenous leaders, members of the Shuar nationality, have lost their lives defending their territory. Before this terrible incident, Bosco Wisum was assassinated in September 2009 during a mobilization in defense of water. Later, in November 2013, Fredy Taish was assassinated during the military incursion of Piuns while with his family on the Zamora River.

The mining company Ecuacorriente filed a complaint against Indigenous leader José Tendetza on November 2013 in an effort to displace him from his land. Together with other members of his community, he had refused to leave his land and to renounce his ancestral rights. Ecuacorriente, controlled by the China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC) and Tongling Nonferrous Metals, is currently operating the Mirador project which is located on Shuar territory.

Subsequently, there have been a string of systematic harassments and threats by those supporting the mine towards others in the regions, according to family members.

José Tendetza was an active defender of his territory:

- He was one of the plaintiffs in the case of violations of the rights of nature against the Ecuadorian state which was brought before national authorities in January 2013.
- He was one of the plaintiffs in a case brought before the InterAmericann Commission on Human Rights in January 2014.
- He was one of the signatories to an investigation into the conduct of six Chinese banks financing the Mirador Project in February 2014
- He was planning to present a complaint against the company Ecuacorriente at the Tribunal on the Rights of Nature at the Peoples' Summit in Lima, Peru on December 5.

Saramantas Warmiuna

Mujeres Amazónicas y Andinas afectadas por proyectos petroleros y mineros

Domingo Ankuash Miembro de la Asociación Bomboiza Pueblo Shuar