

CHILEAN GOVERNMENT OBSTRUCTS MAPUCHE PARTICIPATION IN DECEMBER ELECTIONS

Mapuche leader Aucan Huilcaman's bid to run for Congress on behalf of Aukin Wallmapu Ngullam (All Lands Council), was denied by the Qualifying Electoral Tribunal. His alleged ineligibility is due to a pending case in which he is accused of unlawful association and "illegal" land take-over.

The case in question was initiated in 1991, after 144 Mapuches occupied lands that are currently claimed by private owners and the Chilean state. The group, under the auspices of Aukin Wallmapu Ngullam, had legal documents that proved their rights to the lands.

The Mapuches have initiated a strong movement throughout the country to protest the decision, which they consider a clear indication of the government's attempts to impede their participation in the next elections. "Because of the clearly



oppressive action taken by the Chilean government, 144 Mapuches find ourselves condemned for reclaiming our legal rights. This is one of many ways that the fundamental rights of the Mapuche are violated, especially where their participation in making decisions that concern the country's future is concerned," stated Huilcaman after learning of the Tribunal's nullification of his campaign.

If the Mapuches are found guilty, the defendants plan to appeal to the Supreme Court, the highest court in Chile's judicial system. If not acquitted, they will take the case to the Inter-American Justice Court in San Jose, Costa Rica.

It is vital that the case be resolved before the presidential elections in December because the new administration could prove to be even less favorable to the Mapuche's struggle.

AYMARA ELECTED AS VICE-PRESIDENT OF BOLIVIA

On June 7, 1993, Victor Hugo Cardenas, Aymara linguist of the Tupac Catari Revolutionary Movement, was elected to the vice-presidency of Bolivia. Hundreds of people from different Indigenous communities gathered in La Paz to support him on the day of his inauguration. Cardenas's speech, pronounced in Spanish, Aymara, Guarani, and Quechua asserted that the current government would be guided by the four fundamental principles of

the Original Andean peoples: "Ama sua, ama llulla, ama khella, and ama llunk'u" (do not steal, do not be lazy, do not lie, and do not give false praise).

His election has generated great expectations for Indigenous peoples of the Americas who hope Cardenas will further the cause of Bolivia's Indigenous population.

VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT BLAMES TRANSNATIONALS OF YANOMAMI MASSACRE

During the last days of August, the massacre of 16 Yanomami at the hands of Brazilian miners, was confirmed to have taken place on Venezuelan territory. The international community accused the Venezuelan government of violating the Rio declaration under which policies of economic development must be sensible and respectful of the ecosystems and communities they affect. However, in recent years, violence against the environment and Indigenous peoples has intensified.

A month after the massacre, Fernando Ochoa Antich, Venezuela's Minister of Foreign Affairs, affirmed during a session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, that the protection of Indigenous peoples was out of the government's control. He went on to directly

accuse the gold and diamond multinational corporations that work in the area of promoting deforestation and the acts of violence against Indigenous communities. According to Ochoa Antich, these corporations build landing strips and supply the miners with machinery and weapons.

The Minister stated that only an open dialogue among the countries of the Amazon region can put an end to this critical situation. He appealed to the mining transnationals to understand that development did not mean destruction and pointed out that as long as poverty and ignorance persisted among large segments of the population in Latin America, violence and environmental destruction would continue.