

COLOMBIA

Leader Killed, Community Expelled

A leader of the Indian community of San Andrés de Sotavento in Sucre was kidnapped, tortured, and killed and the entire community was expelled from its ancestral land in early November. According to Amnesty International, the community was invaded October 30, 1986 by about 20 local police led by a mestizo landowner who is making a claim on the Indian land. All community crops and houses were destroyed and 11 people were arrested. The next day Pedro Hernandez, a member of the community council, was seized by four policemen and the same mestizo landowner. His body was found with signs of burning and torture on November 2. On November 7 the entire community was evicted from its land, which was held communally.



ECUADOR

First Congress of Indian Nations Meets

The First Congress of Indian Nations, organized by the Confederation of Indian Nations of Ecuador (CONACNIE, Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador), was held November 13-16, 1986. Over 600 delegates representing the Siona, Quichua, Huaorani, Shuar, Cofan, Chachi, Tsachila, Secoya, Achuara, and Awa nations attended the congress. The opening session was held in the Senate chambers of the national legislature in Quito "in recognition by the national congress that the majority of the population of Ecuador is Indian." Later sessions were held at the Campamento Nueva Vida in Pichincha province.

The main topics discussed at the congress were Indian rights to land, self-determination, education, and a distinct culture. Manuel Imbaquingo, president of CONACNIE, stated at the opening of the event that, "This congress is being held at a historic moment when Indian people are facing anti-Indian policies by a government which neglects the most basic rights of our people, including land and life." He said, "The people of Ecuador must decide between freedom and oppression, between life and death, as a result of the dictatorial and anti-popular policies of President León Febres Cordero."

When I get old I'll die. All of us old people will die. But I want my son's child, with the Creator's help, to also make canoes like this and pull them like we are today. These trees will all be gone if this company they call Plywood comes. We can't allow that to happen. If some people sign away our rights, then we will be thrown out like others down the river, and it will be the beginning of the end. We want the right to live now like we lived before.

—Runa hunter in Ecuadorian rainforest