

ECUADOR



CONFENIAE PRESSES FOR HUAORANI LAND DELIMITATION



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The Confederation of Indian Nations of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE) is supporting the Huaorani Indians in an attempt to delimit and protect their territory from the encroachment of colonists and from the adverse effects of oil development. Together, they are cutting a survey line and making the boundaries of the approximately 7,722 square miles of traditional Huaorani territory, an area about the size of New Jersey. The Huaorani have been trying to secure rights to these lands, vital for the continued physical and cultural survival of their people.

Huaorani territorial integrity is threatened from two directions—first by the building of state roads bisecting their territory, and secondly by the building of oil roads into the more remote eastern part of their land.

The first incursion into the heart of Huaorani territory has been the building of roads which have brought the Huaorani into conflict with colonists seeking to establish land claims within the area with the support of the government's land titling institute (IERAC).

The most immediate threat comes from colonization along the Coca-Curaray road, which is being constructed as part of the national transportation system. The Coca-Curaray road has already nearly bisected a corridor of Huaorani territory—a stretch of land approximately 60 km. long that connects the already titled Huaorani Reserve (only one-third of traditional Huaorani territory) with a larger part of their land now located within the boundaries of Yasuni National Park.

The second danger to Huaorani territorial integrity is linked to the development of oil reserves on a lease granted to Conoco, an American oil company. Conoco has already drilled ten wells on Huaorani territory within Yasuni Park, and is considering putting four of these wells into production. They insist that they must build a road to install and service the pipeline needed to pump out the oil, and have already surveyed and marked most of the extension of the road. Once the route is known, colonists will inevitably follow the road to claim land the Huaorani say is theirs. CONFENIAE and numerous national and international environmental groups have vigorously protested the construction of a road for oil exploration within Huaorani territory.

In light of these developments, CONFENIAE is calling for:

- topographic measurements of the Huaorani area with the participation of the regional federations of CONFENIAE;
- the new government of Dr. Rodrigo Borja Cevallos to proceed with the urgent legalization of the Huaorani territory;

- paralización of all oil activities within the Huaorani territory and Yasuni Park, examination of the terms of the oil contracts, and a new policy on oil extraction in the Amazon to be formulated with the participation of CONFENIAE;

- immediate action on the part of IERAC to prevent further invasions of Huaorani land by *colonos*;
- the suspension of all roadbuilding in Huaorani territory by the Ecuadorian Army Corps of Engineers until the lands are legally recognized, and until the problems with *colonos* and oil companies are resolved;

- the government to work with CONFENIAE on proposals for the integrated development of the Huaorani nation;

- the government to take responsibility for any serious problems that are caused within Huaorani territory;

- the National Board of Tourism to prohibit tourism in the Huaorani area, or else they will have to be responsible for any unfortunate circumstances that take place.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Send letters or telegrams to Pres. Rodrigo Borja Cevallos, Presidencia de la República, García Moreno 1043, Quito, Ecuador. Send a copy to CONFENIAE, Aptdo. 4180, Quito Ecuador.

