



COORDINADORA DE LAS ORGANIZACIONES
INDÍGENAS DE LA CUENCA AMAZÓNICA

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GLASGOW DECLARATION ON GOALS TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS FROM COICA AT COP26

In the context of the hybrid celebration of the Conference of the Parties to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement in Glasgow, Scotland, the Indigenous Defenders Defense Program (PDDD, by its acronym in Spanish) of the Coordinating Body of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA) calls on decision-makers of the national governments of the Amazon Basin to commit to 5 key goals to protect indigenous defenders as vital agents for climate action.

The Amazon is the largest tropical forest globally and has been home to indigenous peoples for more than 10,000 years, where more than 10% of the world's plant and animal species live together¹. In just two hectares of the Amazon, there is more variety of trees compared to North America. More than 2,300 fish species can be found in the Amazon basin, more than in the Atlantic². Approximately one-sixth of the freshwater of the Earth is found in its rivers and streams.

The Amazon as an Amazon biome is positioned as one of the leading providers of environmental services globally and of cultural importance from the ancestral knowledge of indigenous peoples, who are vital agents to address the impacts of climate change. It stores about 130 billion tons of carbon, which is the amount of carbon dioxide emitted globally during a decade³. Thus, it is responsible for regulating climate and rainfall across the planet. Its protection is necessary to keep temperatures below 1.5°C and to maintain regions such as the Amazon basin in habitable conditions, as well as to regulate pests and diseases, sustain food subsistence, and the cultural importance of past, present, and future generations.

This protection is driven from the territories by indigenous defenders in the nine countries of the Amazon basin; however, they are persecuted, prosecuted and even killed for defending their human rights as indigenous peoples. In the last four years, from 2017 to 2020, 1,268 murders have been recorded globally. 2020 recorded the highest number of murders with 331 cases. In other words, 26% of the cases occurred in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic in these four years despite general mobilization restrictions.

Of these 331 cases globally, 263 murders were against human rights defenders in Latin America, of which 202 of them happened in countries of the Amazon basin (Colombia, Brazil, Peru, and Bolivia)⁴. This represents 77% of the murders of human rights defenders in 2020. This means that every two days, on average, an indigenous defender dies in the Amazon. We have been warning about this since April 14, 2021, with the launch of COICA's Emergency Declaration of Human Rights for Indigenous Defenders of the Amazon⁵.

¹ Scientific Panel for the Amazon. Available at:

<https://www.lamazoniaquequeremos.org/?fbclid=IwAR0KQMkArAN0kAa9SQazk3fUjLWgHN2Pno1hP0YoRsUMXMCa62Dj9fUbiWI>

² Idem

³ Idem

⁴ Front Line Defenders, 2020. Available at: https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/flid_global_analysis_2020.pdf

⁵ <https://coicamazonia.org/declaratoria-de-emergencia-de-derechos-humanos-para-defensoras-y-defensores-indigenas-de-la-amazonia>

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Therefore, the Amazon is the region with the highest rate of violence. 69% of murders that occurred in 2020 were against leaders who worked in defense of territory, environment, and the rights of indigenous.⁶

In this sense, considering the importance and key role of indigenous defenders to protect the Amazon and the maintenance of global temperatures below 1.5°C, they are vital agents committed to contributing to the reduction of emissions from deforestation and degradation promoted by illegal agents and by agents with authorizations or concessions granted by governments but without due respect for indigenous rights. Their protection as agents of climate action must be prioritized in the global climate solution agreements to be defined by decision-makers in the official sessions of COP26.

In this regard, the COICA's Indigenous Defenders Defense Program (PDDD) publicly requests the national governments of the Amazon Basin, as well as the United Nations Secretariat of COP26, to commit to the following five action-oriented goals to adopt urgent measures by 2025 to promote the protection of the rights of indigenous defenders in the Amazon Basin:

Action targets on indigenous defenders by 2025

GOAL 1: Climate finance directed to the countries of the Amazon Basin should be channeled directly to indigenous peoples as key actors in defense of the Amazon and their contribution to keeping temperatures below 1.5°C globally. This funding should be through their representative organizations and prioritizing initiatives to protect indigenous defenders, such as COICA's Indigenous Defenders Defense Program.

GOAL 2: To reduce threats to the Amazon, as a biodiverse and culturally important biome, through respect for the right to the territory of indigenous peoples, such as delimitation, demarcation, titling, and regulation with practical effectiveness. It means that governments must ensure that there is no external interference on our territories in compliance with the exercise of the right to property and that titling must be accompanied by actions of investigation and eradication of illegal activities by third parties in indigenous territories. This must always be done with the coordination and consent of the indigenous authorities of affected communities.

GOAL 3: To ensure that the goals set by governments consider zero tolerance of violence against indigenous defenders and prioritize measures to implement a safe environment according to their own worldview.

GOAL 4: To ensure that the goals include commitments for the ratification or adherence and the implementation of the Escazú Agreement with culturally relevant channels and procedures for the effective participation of indigenous organizations in these actions. As well as guaranteeing this participation by designing and negotiating the first COP of this Agreement as a tool for climate action.

GOAL 5: To include women defenders of the Amazon Basin in international decision-making spaces linked to policies, plans, programs, and projects related to the prevention and mitigation of climate change in the region, as well as the other proposals made at the Summit of Indigenous Women of the Amazon Basin⁷. Thus, we ask to prioritize the

⁶ Idem

⁷ Letter to COP 26 https://mujeres.coicamazonia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Carta-COP_Mujeres.pdf





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request of the women leaders of this Summit to initiate a space for dialogue between the Executive Secretariat of the UNFCCC and the COICA Women's Council, in person and/or virtually, in November 2021.

