

# *Indigenous movement accuses Ecuadorian government of breaking agreements*

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**The communities of Fierro Urco are trying to protect the water reserves of Fierro Urco, given the danger of their disappearance due to mining activity. | Photo: La Hora Newspaper??**

Quito, February 25 (RHC)-- The president of the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples and Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), Leonidas Iza, said that President Guillermo Lasso broke the agreements of the dialogue tables on the development of mining activities and denounced that the public force used violence against community members who oppose mining projects that damage the environment and their communities.

During a press conference, Iza recalled that social movements and the national government signed an agreement to guarantee the right to prior, free and informed consultation at all stages of mining development.

He urged that any process for mining concessions where this principle has been violated be stopped. Based on this, he held the president responsible for the acts of violence that have occurred in protected territories and for militarizing them in order to impose mining projects on the communities.

The indigenous leader asserted that the use of public force to supposedly protect these activities turns it into a private guard of transnational interests. He denounced that the Lasso Executive is using illegal mining as a strategy to install legal mining in these territories. In this regard, he warned national and foreign investors that they could lose their capital because the concessions would be delivered with serious regressions of what was agreed with respect to the rights of communities.

"We are going to defend the territory and if for not understanding the people, they will have to lose their capitals. We are willing to go to the ultimate consequences," he expressed.

The statements of the leader of the Conaie took place after violent disturbances in the Fierro Urco hill, in Loja (south), where police and military clashed with community members who oppose mining projects and defend the water resources of the parish.

In spite of the consensus on the imperiousness of consulting the communities to make way for mining projects, last December Lasso declared 11 of them as security zones.

According to Conaie, there are no substantial advances in the implementation of the agreements adopted during the dialogue tables installed after the national strike of June 2022, whose repression caused the death of nine people.

According to the Ministry of Government, as of February 16, 48 commitments were put on paper and 153 are in the compliance phase.

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