

# *Ecuador's indigenous movement in permanent mobilization*

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## **Indigenous movement in Ecuador**

By María Josefina Arce

The indigenous movement in Ecuador is keeping President Guillermo Lasso in check. Since this weekend it has declared a permanent mobilization against the neoliberal policies implemented by the government and that affect all Ecuadorians.

CONAIE, Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, demanded the resignation of the president for lack of legitimacy and non-compliance with the 2022 agreements, after the historic national

strike of almost two weeks.

In June of last year, the native peoples, joined by social organizations, staged a series of mobilizations in a large part of the national territory, in protest against the neoliberal measures adopted by the executive, which they accused of blindly complying with the agenda of the IMF, the International Monetary Fund, as a dogma, systematically hitting the population.

They also demanded a response to a 10-point agenda previously presented to the authorities. The demands included, among others, the freezing of fuel prices, improvement of employment and labor rights, and integral reparation for the socio-environmental impacts of extractive mining.

Now CONAIE and other groups such as FENOCIN, the National Confederation of Peasant, Indigenous and Black Organizations, have decided to withdraw from the dialogue with the government because, they say, it has so far shown no political will to respond to their demands.

On the contrary, they emphasized, the Lasso government has continued to advance with its neoliberal policies, which violate territorial and community rights and the national economy.

Ecuador today is a nation of great inequalities, the cost of living continues to rise, drastic cuts have been made to basic social services such as health and education, there are high levels of insecurity, while under the pretext of alleviating the crisis Lasso has intensified the neoliberal economic model, which affects indigenous territories.

Difficult days lie ahead for Lasso. The indigenous movement has demonstrated its strength and power of convocation and organization of social protests in the country. They claim not only the rights of indigenous communities, but of all popular sectors.

In October 2019, the indigenous people also led mobilizations against the government of then President Lenín Moreno for the economic measures put in place, at the behest of the agreement with the International Monetary Fund. The huge protest led to the authorities leaving without effect Decree 883 that eliminated the fuel subsidy, the main trigger of the popular movement.

Eleven people were killed and close to one hundred suffered eye injuries from the impact of pellets and tear gas bombs thrown by police and military forces against the demonstrators.

Lasso also repressed the participants in the 2022 mobilizations, even arresting the president of CONAIE, Leonidas Iza, but such was the intensification of the protest that he was forced to release him 24 hours later.

But long before that, Ecuador's native peoples had made clear their strength and drive. The intense protests in 1997 against President Abdalá Bucaram led to his downfall. A situation that would be repeated three years later with the then president Jamil Mahuad.

The outlook is not at all favorable for Lasso. Ecuador is immersed in a generalized crisis. The political and social environment is very tense, and the demand for his resignation is gaining more and more strength throughout the country.

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