

## **CONAIE National Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador**

**Ecuador March 20, 2006**

The National Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador speaks to national and international public opinion to say the following:

The Nationalities and Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador have been mobilized since the 13<sup>th</sup> of March in the three regions of the country. We have suffered repression from the government and dozens of our compañeros have been injured some of them very seriously. This violence is completely unjustified, because our compañeros have been acting in a peaceful manner, exercising their constitutional rights.

Our task is clear. We will not permit the government of Alfredo Palacios to sign, behind the backs of the people a "Free Trade Agreement" with the United States. This FTA will bring only misery to our country; therefore it is something which needs to be consulted with all Ecuadorians, not just a small group of business owners. The negotiations have been carried out in the most absolute secrecy, demanding that the negotiators sign statements of confidentiality, which demonstrates the total anti-democratic nature of this process.

Why have they declared the expiration of the contract with Occidental Petroleum Company Occidental, and why is the company not leaving the country? It has violated the law, have tricked the state of Ecuador. This is not just a coincidence. We are tired of the rich and powerful in our country; they violate the law, swindle, steal and in the end have total impunity. The government needs to complete the dictate given by the Attorney General and Petro-ecuador which demands immediate cancellation of the contract with Occidental and thus their immediate expulsion.

We demand that a Constituent National Assembly be convened, where we can establish the political and judicial bases to create a new Pluri-national and Democratic State for all Ecuadorians. We want an assembly where all of the people, Indigenous Nationalities, workers, students and professionals can participate directly. We are not going to permit that the same politicians and powerful economic groups to continue dividing up the riches of the country in order to keep doing their business and impacting all Ecuadorians.

The people of Ecuador and of CONAIE watch with indignation as Alfredo Palacio, the President of the transitional government of the Republic, has betrayed the mandate of April, and is attempting to carry forward policies which are against the national interest.

Because it is impossible for him to respond politically to the Ecuadorian people, he responds by wronging them and attempting to de-legitimize indigenous leaders, with impeccable backgrounds, who by their actions have always demonstrated their rejection of policies which negatively impact the public welfare, political, cultural and economic rights, the sovereignty and self-determination of the people and Indigenous Nationalities; of the leaders and Indigenous leaders in the entire country. However, the government,

certain reporters and intellectuals, because of their racism or for other interests, have tried to make people in the cities believe that the struggle is the action of one person.

We need to begin a process of bringing the Ministers of Defense and of the Government to account for the violation of human rights and the brutal repression which the mobilized people have suffered.

We demand that the Minister of Finance resign, because of the direct conflict of interest which exists because the economist Diego Borja represents the interests of the flower exporters who are interested in the signing of the TLC.

We hold the President of the Republic responsible for anything which might happen relative to the safety and the life of the Indigenous leaders, the campesinos, students and all of those who, in a dignified way, are carrying out this historic struggle.

Shuk shunkulla, only one heart;  
shuk makilla, only one point,  
shuk shimilla, only one voice

**CONAIE- Leadership Body of the National Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador**