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## **Paraguay: the authorities must address crucial human rights issues**

The Paraguayan authorities must take concrete steps to address the concerns facing the country with regard to human rights, Amnesty International said in a briefing prepared ahead of the review of the Paraguayan State being undertaken today and tomorrow in Geneva by the UN Human Rights Committee. Of particular concern is the state of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Amnesty International deplores the fact that there is no effective mechanism for dealing with Indigenous land claims and that judgments handed down by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights calling for the restitution of their ancestral lands to three Indigenous communities have not been fully complied with. Without access to their land, the very survival of the communities is at risk.

“We acknowledge the progress made recently in the case of the Yakye Axa community to ensure that they can return to their land. However, the Sawhoyamaxa and Xákmok Kásek families are still living in deplorable conditions and with limited access to basic rights because the State has still not fully complied with the requirements of the Court”, said María José Eva, Researcher at Amnesty International.

Amnesty International is also still concerned about the current progress of the judicial proceedings launched to clarify the killing of 11 peasants and six police officers in the context of a violent eviction in Curuguaty, in the north-east of the country, in June 2012.

So far several peasants have been accused of killing the police officers. However, the court authorities have dismissed, without adequate explanation, complaints that the police used disproportionate force and firearms during the eviction.

“Nine months on from the incident and there are still aspects of the judicial proceedings that cast doubt on whether the investigations are sufficiently independent and impartial to ensure that those responsible for all the killings – police and peasants – are brought to justice with all due process guarantees”, María José Eva said.

The Amnesty International briefing also refers to the absence of specific legislation to prevent and punish all forms of discrimination. It also describes the obstacles women and girls face in seeking to have their sexual and reproductive rights fully respected.

### Additional information

An Amnesty International delegation is in Geneva to attend the review of Paraguay being undertaken by the UN Human Rights Committee.

A summary of Amnesty International’s human rights concerns in Paraguay can be found in [\*Paraguay: Submission to the United Nations Human Rights Committee for the 107th Session of the Human Rights Committee \(11-28 March 2013\)\*](#).

The situation of the Sawhoyamaxa community is an illustration of the hard living conditions and rights abuses being endured by Indigenous communities in Paraguay. For more than 20 years, over 90 families from that community, who belong to the Exnet ethnic group, have been forced to live in a settlement along the side of a very busy road while they fight for the restitution of their ancestral lands. Last December Amnesty International produced a [video](#) in which the Sawhoyamaxa explain their struggle and how they live.