

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **PERU: AUTHORITIES MUST REDESIGN AND CONSULT ON ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS HEALTH CRISIS CAUSED BY TOXIC SUBSTANCES IN ESPINAR**

Faced with the health crisis caused by toxic substances that is affecting Indigenous communities in the mining area of Espinar, Cusco, the Cusco Regional Health Authority (Geresa Cusco) must comprehensively redesign the Action Plan for Espinar in genuine consultation with the communities impacted, respecting international standards, including Indigenous peoples' right to free, prior and informed consent.

On 16 July 2021, Geresa Cusco shared their document, "Comprehensive Health Action Plan for the Population at Risk from Exposure to Heavy Metals and Metalloids - Espinar Province 2021-2023", with Amnesty International and environmental health specialist Fernando Serrano (Jesuit University of Saint Louis, Missouri) for analysis and comment. Dr Serrano prepared [a report](#) in which he identified six main areas of concern that made the comprehensive redesign of the Action Plan for Espinar necessary:

1. The Action Plan is not based on an in-depth and specific analysis of the risks to human health and the environment linked to exposure to toxic metals in Espinar.
2. The Action Plan does not contain a comprehensive environmental monitoring strategy or a programme to ensure communities are supplied with safe water.
3. The Action Plan is not participatory because it has not been prepared with input from the people directly affected by the contamination with toxic metals or from civil society organizations working to reduce and end the threat to health and the environment posed by toxic metals.
4. The Action Plan is not designed to reduce and eliminate the risks and impact on health linked to toxic metals, which should be the main objective, and it does not contain a clear definition of comprehensive health care for communities at risk of exposure to toxic metals.
5. The Action Plan does not contain a clear definition of the scope and communities for intervention or of the vulnerability of the target communities.
6. The Action Plan lacks the fundamental components of evaluation, accountability and social and fiscal responsibility.

Dr Serrano's report was presented by the communities and organizations that lodged the complaint in the framework of the compliance process relating to the 30 December 2020 Cusco Superior Court of Justice judgment ordering the Ministry of Health to implement a Public Health Strategy for the Health Emergency in Espinar. The judicial authorities must shortly issue a ruling on compliance with this judgment. In addition, the report was sent to Geresa Cusco.

In the report, *Failed State of Health: Health Emergency in Indigenous Peoples of Espinar, Peru*, published in May 2021, Amnesty International, Derechos Humanos Sin Fronteras and Dr Serrano gathered together scientific evidence of a health crisis among the Indigenous communities of Espinar caused by the presence of toxic substances such as lead, mercury, arsenic, cadmium and manganese.

Amnesty International urges Geresa Cusco to comprehensively redesign the Action Plan and implement the recommendations contained in this report.

Read more:

*Peru: Failed State of Health: Health Emergency in Indigenous Peoples of Espinar, Peru, 17 May 2021,*  
[amnesty.org/en/documents/amr46/3829/2021/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr46/3829/2021/en/)