

URGENT ACTION

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY ATTACKED BY ARMED MEN

The Ysati indigenous community in the district of Itakyry, department of Alto Paraná, southeast of Paraguay, had their crops and six houses burned down and 55 people, of which 38 children, were displaced because of the violence. Community members are afraid that new attacks could take place and they are forced to flee. We urge the Attorney General to launch an immediate investigation on the attacks against the Ysati Indigenous community and to bring those responsible to justice.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

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Dear General Attorney,

I write to you in relation of the aggression against the Ysati Indigenous community in the district of Itakyry, department of Alto Paraná, where community members reported that on 3 March a group of around 50 people, composed of landowners accompanied by armed individuals, entered their ancestral lands and burned crops and six homes with all their belongings inside. 55 people, of which 38 children, were affected and are all sheltered precariously in a nearby community.

According to community members, 15 of the 50 attackers, are still in place with firearms and according to recent reports, they shoot in the air. The community fears that new attacks could take place and considers their life and integrity are at risk.

I urge you to launch an immediate investigation on the attacks against the Ysati Indigenous community and to bring those responsible to justice.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Indigenous community of Ysati called "3 de Julio" is one of the communities of the Indigenous Avá Guaraní People living in the district of Itakyry in the department of Alto Paraná, southeast of Paraguay. In this area there are overlapping land titles between the National Institute on Indigenous People (INDI) lands, those of individual owners and of the Paraguayan Industry of Alcohols (INPASA - Industria Paraguaya de Alcoholes SA).

On 19 September 2016, seven leaders of the Indigenous community signed a notarial agreement with three individuals who claim to be the owners of the land occupied by the communities. The witnesses to the agreement were the former President of INDI and the Municipal Mayor of the district of Itakyry. Under the agreement, the complainants requested the suspension and termination of all criminal proceedings they currently have against the members of the communities, while the members of the communities pledged to definitively and peacefully withdraw from the agricultural property. Following the signing of this agreement, they undertook and obliged all community members to abide by this agreement which they voluntarily entered.

On 7 May, when one of the community leaders left the area along with several families, in compliance with the agreement, the families that decided to stay in the Indigenous community of Ysati "3 de Julio" were attacked by about a dozen armed civilians accompanied by a lawyer. The men burned houses, dismantled the community school and fired at people in the community. Many members of the community were forced to flee.

On 11 May, the Ombudsman filed a complaint with the Prosecutor's Office. For its part, the Prosecutor's Office charged four people with the crimes of serious coercion and creating a public danger. According to civil society organizations, one of the accused appeared as a lawyer for INPASA prior to the attack, but the Prosecutor's Office determined that it had not been possible to prove such a link. Another of the accused has been identified as an INPASA employee.

Both the community and the property owners submitted to the necessary jurisdictional and administrative procedures to resolve differences and conflicts over boundaries between the properties of the owners and the lands of the Indigenous parties that also hold title to property. A settlement is pending, and the proceedings would continue in the Itakyry Civil Court, while the competent body defines to which party or parties each property, or part of the property, in question belongs.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 5 June 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Ysati Indigenous Community (they/them)