

# URGENT ACTION

## COVID-19 THREATENS INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' LIVES

In August, the Ecuador government published a national [protocol](#) to respond to COVID-19 among Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous and human rights organizations in the Amazon said this protocol was not adequately consulted and does not reflect their demands. They also said they have been excluded from the Emergency Operations Committees in charge of implementing it. We call on the President to ensure that the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon participate in the decision-making structure in charge of the COVID-19 response in the Amazon, and guarantee that this response is sufficiently funded and respects their rights and needs.

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

**President Lenín Moreno**

Presidencia de la República del Ecuador  
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Dear President Lenín Moreno,

I write to you regarding the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Amazon. Indigenous and human rights organizations say that the [Protocol for the prevention and care of COVID-19 in Indigenous Peoples](#), published in August, was not adequately consulted with them and does not reflect their demands. They also say they have been excluded from the Emergency Operations Committees in charge of implementing it.

**I ask you to ensure that the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon participate, through their own representative institutions, in the national and provincial decision-making structure in charge of the COVID-19 response in the Amazon and guarantee that this response respects their rights and needs and is sufficiently funded. Any policy or action affecting Indigenous Peoples should comply with human rights standards, including the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).**

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Indigenous peoples in the Ecuadorian Amazon face a higher risk situation in the context of the pandemic due to lack of access to drinking water, food sources, medical supplies, health services and COVID-19 tests, caused by prolonged conditions of inequality, exclusion and discrimination.

In August (unspecified date), the Government published the [Protocol with intercultural relevance for the prevention and care of COVID-19 in Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio peoples and nationalities in Ecuador](#), with the objective of "Establishing procedures for inter-institutional, inter-sectoral coordination and among social actors present in the territories of the peoples and nationalities of Ecuador, to provide a coordinated response and with intercultural relevance to the health emergency by COVID-19".

According to the document, it was prepared by various government officials, with the support of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and "validated" by members of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) and Confederation of Peoples of the Kichwa Nationality of Ecuador (ECUARUNARI). The "Emission with contributions and recommendations from delegates of Communities, Peoples and Nationalities" is dated 24 July 2020.

Indigenous and human rights organizations in the Amazon said this protocol was not adequately consulted with Indigenous communities in the Amazon, does not reflect their demands, and that they have been excluded from the Emergency Operations Committees in charge of implementing it.

After an insufficient response by the state, organizations like the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon (CONFENIAE), Amazon Watch, Amazon Frontlines, Fundación ALDEA and Universidad San Francisco de Quito have led efforts to prevent, identify and treat COVID-19 cases of Indigenous peoples in the Ecuadorian Amazon through providing tests, culturally-appropriate information, personal protective equipment, hygiene products, basic medicines and creating a website to monitor the pandemic and identify contagion hotspots.

On 19 August, these organizations [reported](#) 3,303 infections (2,301 confirmed and 1,002 suspected) and 80 deaths (35 confirmed and 45 suspected) related to COVID-19 among the Indigenous population in the Ecuadorian Amazon, which is 290,000. According to them, all Indigenous nationalities (ethnicities) in the Ecuadorian Amazon have cases of COVID-19. Due to scarcity of tests, the real numbers are expected to be much higher.

On 18 June, Judicial authorities granted precautionary measures to the Waorani People in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including testing suspicious infection cases, providing medical personnel and supplies, providing humanitarian aid, and limiting company operations near their territory. Nevertheless, Indigenous and human rights organizations told Amnesty that authorities have not fully complied with them.

In addition to the pandemic, on 7 April, an oil spill in the Amazon polluted the Coca and Napo rivers, affecting the environment, water, food and livelihoods of nearly 120,000 people of which 27,000 are Indigenous, mainly belonging to the Kichwa and Shuar nationalities.

On 29 April, a group of Indigenous and human rights organizations filed a constitutional protection proceeding and requested precautionary measures on behalf of the nearly 120,000 people affected by the oil spill. The petition holds responsible the Ministry of Energy and Natural and Non-Renewable Resources, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Public Health, the state oil company Petroecuador, and the private company OCP. The petitioners [reported](#) that the judge in charge of the case endangered guarantees to due process through procedural irregularities.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Spanish.

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 8 October

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

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon facing COVID-19 (They, them, theirs)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr28/2643/2020/en/>