

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGO: Tuesday 23 February 2010 00:01Hs GMT.

Indigenous Peoples in Colombia – Facts and Figures

AI Index: PRE 01/055/2010

Indigenous Peoples in Colombia

There are nearly 1.4 million Indigenous people living in Colombia, making up around 3.4 per cent of the country's population. (Census, 2005).

Colombia's Indigenous population is divided into 85 distinct Indigenous groups (Census, 2005). The National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) puts the number at 102.

Most Indigenous Peoples live in areas rich in natural resources.

In the departments of Guainía, Vaupés, La Guajira, Amazonas and Vichada, Indigenous Peoples make up about half the population. (ONIC, 2009).

Indigenous representatives have said much of the land allocated to them is unsuitable. For example, less than 8 per cent of reservation land is suitable for agriculture.

Some 445,000 Indigenous people live outside the reservations and do not have official recognition of their collective rights over the land on which they live. (Colombian Statistics Ministry, 2007).

Human rights abuses against Indigenous Peoples

The survival of 32 Indigenous groups is at grave risk as a result of the armed conflict, large-scale economic projects and a lack of state support (ONIC, 2009).

More than 1,400 Indigenous men, women and children were killed as a result of the conflict between 2002 and 2009 (ONIC, 2009).

Between 2002 and 2009, 90 Indigenous People were also kidnapped, 195 were victims of enforced disappearances, while there were 4,700 collective threats (ONIC, 2009).

At least 114 Indigenous women, men and children were killed and thousands forcibly displaced in 2009 alone (ONIC, 2009).

Although Indigenous Peoples only make up around 3.4 per cent of the population, they account for 7 per cent of Colombia's total displaced population (Director of the Office in Colombia of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights).

Large disparities exist between the general population and Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendant communities in terms of health. Nationally 73 women die of pregnancy-related complications for every 100,000 live births. But in departments with a high percentage of Indigenous and Afro-descendant inhabitants, such as Guianía, the figure rises to 386 per 100,000 (Director of the Office in Colombia of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights).

END/