



Mayangna Indigenous People in Bosawas are attacked with Uzi submachine guns and shotguns

On January 22, 2021, the Center for Legal Assistance to Indigenous Peoples (CALPI) received information on attacks on indigenous forest rangers in the vicinity of the Wilu, Tuybangkana, Musawas and Alal communities in the Mayangna territory of Sauni As in the heart of Bosawás. The rangers Donald Castillo Felipe, 60 years old; Presino Samuel, 47 years old; and Corino Simeón, 44 years old, were injured. The latter is in a delicate condition and was transferred to hospital in Bonanza. However, the Mayangna people fear what happened with the attack on January 29, 2020 in Alal: the settlers entered the Bonanza hospital and threatened those being treated there.

Indigenous authorities report that since June 2020, a group of approximately 70 non-Indigenous settlers have entered the Sauni As territory armed with Uzi submachine guns and shotguns—weapons of war—and using flares to communicate with each other in order to take the lands in which the Mayangna Indigenous people have traditionally lived, these being productive lands where beans and other crops are grown. In order to avoid confrontations, the Mayangna have reported the settlers to the competent authorities; however, up to today, the authorities have not done anything about it. This has left the Mayangna people totally vulnerable and defenseless.

Likewise, the community of Wilu, one of the attacked communities, was forcibly displaced to Musawas in December 2017 due to the attack and harassment of these armed gangs that have invaded their agricultural plots, forests, and sacred places, and community members had only recently returned.

Indigenous leaders also report that the usurpers have a track record of crimes in other Indigenous territories, where they plant marijuana, shelter fugitives, and carry weapons of war. Likewise, in the last municipal elections, settlers from the south, center and north of Nicaragua appeared with identity cards from Bonanza.

Regional and municipal politicians and public officials have supported the invasion with the creation of settlements in Indigenous territories where the settlers are immediately named as authorities; their local sports teams are sponsored with uniforms and equipment; they receive visits from the Ministry of Education (MINED), Ministry of Health (MINSa) and municipal specialists who attend to them. The settlers have shown documents signed by authorities that supposedly name them as owners of the lands, threatening and violating the rights of the Mayangna Indigenous people. Mayangna authorities have denounced this in writing on multiple occasions and have even captured and handed over the settlers to the police, who have subsequently released them.

The Mayangna authorities indicate on the attached map the area that the settlers intend to usurp—virgin areas that they have indiscriminately deforested while threatening loss of life and

the forced displacement of Indigenous families who are increasingly impoverished due to this threat to their sources of water for livestock and human consumption. The leaders state that since June 2020, the settlers have continued passing the Pispis River, the Middle Waspuk and crossing the Upper Waspuk River. The armed invasion and land grabbing is out of control in the Bosawás Biosphere Reserve, increasing by 100% in recent months, while the Mayangna authorities have not had any assistance or accompaniment from state entities in the patrols and surveillance activities carried out by the Indigenous forest rangers, nor have they seen any environmental protection activities carried out by the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (MARENA) despite the importance that Bosawás has for the RACCN, the natural heritage of all Nicaraguans, and for Mesoamerica.

Also, despite the commitment that the State of Nicaragua recently acquired from the United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), and other green funds, sponsored by the World Bank through the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI).

"We, Mayangna leaders and intellectuals, assume our responsibility to defend ourselves from these attacks and thus preserve the life of our population. As Indigenous peoples, we act as guardians of our ancestral territories, of the Bosawás reserve, and in defense of Mother Earth, and we believe that this is the beginning of more serious events," they stated.

Therefore, CALPI asks the Nicaraguan authorities and the international community to exercise their duty to protect this people on the brink of extermination or genocide, since this situation has now been occurring for several years without the State of Nicaragua complying with their national and international responsibility to protect the Mayangna Indigenous people's rights to physical and psychological wellbeing and to the integrity of their ancestral territory, titled by the Nicaraguan state in 2006.