



4 April 2023
Joint Statement

We reject the U.S. Ambassador's regrettable public endorsement of the company Ocho Sur's operations in the Peruvian Amazon

In solidarity with the [response](#) of indigenous organizations in the Amazon, the afore-signed organizations strongly reject the recent Tweet¹ by the U.S. Ambassador in Peru, Lisa Kenna, that was propaganda for the controversial palm oil company Ocho Sur, which operates with US investments. Our main reasons for doing so are the following:

- 1. Ocho Sur operates over illegally deforested Amazon primary forest in Ucayali:** As of 2012 plantations belonging to the firm Plantaciones de Pucallpa, began operating on land claimed as ancestral by the indigenous community of Santa Clara de Uchunya. The total area the company deforested in and around this ancestral territory was around 7 thousand hectares, resulting in irreparable environmental damage, as well as affecting the cultural identity, food security and life of the community. These lands were then transferred in 2016 to Ocho Sur P, which has continued to operate illegally since then. Investigative journalists have made public the links between the two companies. It is worth noting that the Comptroller General's Office, the Public Prosecutor's Office and other specialized prosecutors in Peru are only some of the national authorities that have investigated the irregularities committed by this firm. The InterAmerican Commission for Human Rights is also evaluating a petition presented by the community asking for its lands, which they claim were violently taken, to be given back.
- 2. Ocho Sur operates illegally:** The company does not have the legally required environmental or forest related permits, as demonstrated by the General Regional Resolution 090-2021- GRU-GGR of 28/04/2021, which declares null the RG No 250-2020-GRU-GGR and unfounded the appeal of Ocho Sur against the General Regional Resolution 233-2019-GRU-GGR-GERFFS, concluding the administrative means available to the firm to seek the mentioned permits. Additionally, the [National Comptroller's Office](#)³ has found Ocho Sur has no basis to legalize the deforestation on the lands of its plantations, given its soil was found apt for forests, which thus prohibit the authorization of any land use change for agriculture.
- 3. Ocho Sur has been linked to campaigns against environmental defenders:** Radio and television programs in Pucallpa financed by Ocho Sur have defamed indigenous leaders like Carlos Hoyos Soria, head of the community of Santa Clara de Uchunya as well as the Federation of Indigenous Communities of the Ucayali River and its Affluents (FECONAU), the Institute for Legal Defense (IDL) and Forest Peoples Programme (FPP).⁴
- 4. Ocho Sur uses divide and rule tactics against indigenous peoples:** In the Ambassador's Tweet a meeting is shown involving Wilson Barbarán, who is not the legal representative of Santa Clara de Uchunya, having been officially suspended on the 20th of September 2022, which was then ratified on the 17th of March of 2023, for irregularities concerning his election. The legal representative of the community is currently Carlos Hoyos.

The Board of Directors of the community is the official body that can obtain their consent and represent them before national and international authorities.

Ambassador Kenna has directly heard of these complaints from the indigenous organizations AIDSESEP, ORAU and FECONAU. Nonetheless, she has once again shown no commitment to the human rights of indigenous peoples. It is regrettable she has made this visit to the firm, abandoning an official delegation of four Ambassadors and various Ministers precisely when discussions had begun about environmental defenders and forest conservation, with the presence of indigenous leaders. The mere existence of this plantation represents a mockery of all the efforts being made by the national and international community for the conservation and sustainable development of the Amazon and respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, such as the Declaración Conjunta de Intención (DCI - Joint Declaration of Intent), the Trade Promotion Agreement between Peru and the United States and international commitments such as the Paris Agreement, also signed by both countries.

For all these reasons, we **suggest** that the U.S. government evaluate the relevance of keeping Ambassador Kenna in her post, as she has overridden the decisions of the Peruvian authorities and has been advertising a company widely questioned for violations of human rights and Peruvian laws, as well as the possibility of investigating and reporting this U.S. company to the relevant authorities in the U.S., and we **demand**:

- 1. The immediate deletion of Ambassador Kenna's unfortunate tweet.**
- 2. A public apology by the Ambassador and by the U.S. government to the affected indigenous organizations, as well as to the general public and the overridden Peruvian authorities.**

Signees

1. Comunidad Nativa Santa Clara de Uchunya
2. Federación de Comunidades Nativas de Ucayali y Afluentes - FECONAU
3. Organización Regional Aidesep Ucayali - ORAU
4. Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Selva Peruana - AIDSESEP
5. Environmental Investigation Agency - EIA
6. Amazon Watch
7. Asociación ProPurús
8. Center for Climate Crime Analysis - CCCA
9. Center for International Environmental Law - CIEL
10. Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz - J&P
11. Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos
12. Cuencas, Red de Asuntos Amazónicos
13. Federación por la Autodeterminación de los Pueblos Indígenas - FAPI
14. Forest Peoples Programme - FPP
15. Instituto de Defensa Legal - IDL
16. Kené Instituto de Estudios Forestales y Ambientales
17. Paz y Esperanza
18. Red Anticorrupción Forestal - Ucayali
19. Red de jóvenes periodistas de Radio Red Rural
20. Sociedad Peruana de Ecodesarrollo - SPDE

1. Ambassador's Kenna tweet, published on her official account as U.S. ambassador to Peru on the afternoon of Wednesday March 29 (original in Spanish): "Did you know that the largest company in Ucayali is from the U.S.? Ocho Sur is leading the way in offering jobs in the region with sustainable agricultural practices and without deforestation. I am proud of these links between (U.S. flag) and (Peru flag) that benefit our peoples."
2. Convoca. 2020. 30 March 2023. <https://convoca.pe/investigacion/caso-melka-los-financistas-detras-del-negocio-de-la-palma-aceitera-en-zonas>
3. Contraloría General de la República. 14 de diciembre 2022. Informe de auditoría N°30311-2022-CG/AGR-AC. Auditoría de Cumplimiento. Gobierno Regional de Ucayali. "Legalidad de los actos administrativos para la autorización de cambio de uso de suelo de las empresas Ocho Sur P S.A.C. y Ocho Sur U S.A.C." Período: 1 de octubre de 2016 al 31 de octubre de 2021. 30 de marzo de 2023. https://s3.amazonaws.com/spic-informes-publicados/informes/2023/01/2022CPOL33200131_ADJUNTO.pdf
4. <https://www.facebook.com/riberenapucallpa/videos/5652649961448949/>, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?extid=NS-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GK0T-GK1C&ref=watch_permalink&v=549181270350077, <https://www.facebook.com/riberenapucallpa/videos/451275670328622/> y <https://www.facebook.com/riberenapucallpa/videos/1403887033353711/>