

SOLIDARITY WITH THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF LATIN AMERICA

With deep dismay, we, members of the Cooperation Circles of the United Religions Initiative (URI) of Latin America and the Caribbean that have indigenous representation, in the face of the shameful and very serious situation that the original societies are experiencing today in this unfortunate moment of our Region, ethically challenged by our conscience and beliefs, declare the following:

- In URI we promote dialogue, respect and cooperation among human beings to end religiously motivated violence and create cultures of peace, justice and healing for Earth.
- We believe that since historical times humanity has been and still continues to be trapped in the paradigm of good and evil that unfortunately influence religions and within which we continue to be shipwrecked.
- If we recognize and accept that we are diverse, and if Love guides us, we can respect that we think and act differently and we can live together, because the question is Life, and Life embraces all people and all living beings.
- There have been many years of resistance to the persecution and massacre of indigenous peoples, who have suffered indiscriminate actions of spilling red blood in violent clashes, and green blood for the depredation of the resources of Mother Earth.
- The valuable natural resources existing in the lands inhabited ancestrally by the original peoples have caused their continuous exposure to greed and unscrupulous exploitation with the consequent damage to the environment and to the indigenous communities that live there.
- It is unacceptable – in the context of affirming essential human values – that these outrages in the face of incomprehensible inaction of the human rights bodies both national and international, with the complacency of governments, the executive hand of armies and law enforcement agencies, the approval of some religious representatives and the indifference of the international community.
- The lack of knowledge and ignorance that exists around these excesses fuels the violence being perpetuated to the Indigenous peoples of Latin America because of their worldview, their spirituality and their relationship with Mother Earth.

Consequent with this declaration:

- 1) We request the recognition and respect for the sacred character of life both human and of all living beings, which is being continually and systematically violated.
- 2) We repudiate categorically the violence in all genres, the brutal repression and genocide of Indigenous people because of their custody of natural resources, and the experience of spirituality practiced daily in close connection with Mother Earth.
- 3) We demand respect to the self determination of Indigenous peoples to defend their territories and the safeguarding of natural resources present in their ecosystems. We also repudiate that the lives of Indigenous peoples are reaped and torn from the Earth when they are the direct descendants of our ancestors and guardians of our natural heritage.
- 4) We condemn the practice of racism, discrimination and xenophobia, as well as the act of relying on faith to vex, imprison, kill and violate the human rights of Indigenous peoples, and we demand respect for their original cultures, to their right to practice their religiosity and to raise the sacred symbols and emblems that represent and identify them.
- 5) We remind the states that there are international instruments that protect the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN, OAS and ILO) and also that murders motivated by ethnicity constitute crimes against humanity.
- 6) We request that international organizations thoroughly investigate these unfortunate events, and that those responsible be brought to justice, and may the corresponding protection measures be granted, as well as pertinent compensation and restitution to the victims.
- 7) We appeal to the commitment of related institutions such as the Parliament of the World's Religions, Religions for Peace, the Global Indigenous Initiative, Defense of Forests, and the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, among others, and also to the pronouncement of the religious authorities or their expression through a voice message.
- 8) From the cultural heritage of our traditions, spiritualities and creeds, we are committed to justice as the foundation of peace, and to that love that fills our hearts as we accompany the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America who are being victims of multiple abuses and we stand in solidarity and assist in lifting up their voices so that in the different countries of the Region and the world their cries can be heard and responded to accordingly.

May Peace Prevail on Earth!