

[By Friends of the Earth](#)

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[Acción Ecológica](#) under immediate threat

On Tuesday, Ecuador's Ministry of Environment announced [plans to shut down](#) one of the country's leading environmental groups,

[Acción Ecológica](#)

, for their work to protect the rights of the environment and Indigenous Peoples in the Ecuadorean Amazon. The Ecuadorean government stated that the closure was in direct response to the group's ongoing efforts to raise awareness about the Mirador

[mega-copper mine](#)

, located on ancestral lands belonging to the Shuar Indigenous Peoples. Friends of the Earth US stands in solidarity with

[Acción Ecológica](#)

in their fight to protect the rights of nature and Indigenous Peoples in La Cordillera del Condor, where the mining company, Corriente Resources, has sought to develop the country's first large scale mining project in one of the most biodiverse regions in the world.

When the original Canadian owners sold Corriente Resources to a Chinese consortium of state owned enterprises in 2010, the new [Chinese investors inherited](#) a host of environmental,

indigenous, and human rights violations, which they appear to have no capacity or expertise to deal with. Since then, a Shuar indigenous leader has been [murdered](#)

[Forced evictions](#)

of Shuar communities this summer have led to even more violence. When the Shuar attempted to return to their native lands in November, they were confronted by military police and even [air assaults](#)

Dogged pursuit of justice confronted by Chinese shut-out

For years, Acción Ecológica and indigenous groups have sought to engage in dialogue with the Chinese companies and banks investing in the project, but to no avail. In 2012, Acción Ecológica and other activists were [shut out](#) from meeting the Chinese Ambassador in Quito to convey their concerns about the project, and just this year, they were again unable to deliver letters to the Chinese Embassy. In an effort to alert Chinese banks that have given loans to the Chinese companies involved in the project, Acción Ecológica sent letters to those institutions in [2014](#) and again in 2016, but with no response.

When [Chinese President Xi Jinping](#) visited Ecuador this fall, Acción Ecológica called out the role Chinese banks are having on the country's environment and Indigenous Peoples:

"Chinese banks have played a key role in ensuring the operations of Chinese companies in Ecuador, so it can be said that they are equally responsible for the violations of human rights and nature that they have generated by their activities in the oil sector, mining, construction of infrastructure, among others."

The enduring silence from Chinese banks led Acción Ecológica to get creative and try to raise concerns with Lang Lang, the world famous pianist sponsored by two Chinese banks backing the copper mine. Yet Lang Lang, the [cultural ambassador](#) to Latin America this year, [refused](#) them. Chinese Embassy staff in Munich even reacted to Acción Ecológica's attempts to deliver letters with resistance and distrust.

You can take action to help!

Acción Ecológica is sending out an SOS, and you can help by telling the Ecuadorean government to protect the indigenous rights of the Shuar and stop the witch hunt against environmental defenders like Acción Ecológica.

Join the fight. Send the letter below directly to the Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa. The international community must make clear that oppression of environmental defenders and Indigenous Peoples will not be tolerated.

#SOSAcciónEcológica, #SOSPuebloShuar