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The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) and YASunidos are appealing the European Parliament to consider with the utmost attention the Ecuadorian President's recent decision to exploit one of the world's most biodiverse areas for its natural resources (oil in particular). Despite the country's initial pledge and leading role in the preservation of the region, President Correa's latest decision is to proceed with the exploitation of the area, putting the most biodiverse environment's survival at risk - and with it, the existence of indigenous peoples who rely on it.

Brussels, 29 October 2013 - The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) and the coalition YASunidos in Ecuador call on the European Parliament to denounce the decision of Ecuador's President to exploit one of the world's most biodiverse areas that hosts indigenous peoples, despite the country's initial pledge and leading role in the preservation of the region.

Ecuador is one of the few countries in the world that still has indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation: the Tagaeri and Taromenane. In order to protect these vulnerable indigenous peoples, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights imposed precautionary measures in 2006, which were reinforced by the United Nations Guidelines of Protection for Isolated Indigenous Peoples (2012), the National Policy of the Peoples in voluntary isolation of Ecuador and the ILO-convention 169 ratified by Ecuador in 1998.

In 2010, Ecuador gave an example to the world with the so-called Yasuni-ITT Initiative that prevented the exploitation of the oil reserves of the Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputini oil field in the Yasuni National Park, one of the world's most biodiverse areas. The landmark proposal, that was seeking to fight climate change and protect the indigenous people and biodiversity of the region, was welcomed by all major governments and institutions, amongst them the European Parliament. The international community pledged to provide Ecuador with at least 50% of the value of the oil reserves (equaling 3.6 billion USD) by the end of 2011, under the supervision of the UN.

However, on 15 August 2013, President Rafael Correa's commission designated to implement the project concluded that the economic turnout was insufficient, after which the president issued an executive decree that put an end to Yasuni-ITT. The United Nations Permanent Forum of Indigenous Peoples has expressed its concern about this decision, and the President reportedly received numerous letters requesting him to implement Yasuni-ITT. Over the course of the past few months, many instances of violence have been reported between indigenous

peoples and loggers and oil workers, now the territory and livelihoods of the Tagaeri and Taromenane come under significant pressure.

In light of this negative prospect, a popular consultation has been set up to allow the Ecuadorian people to express their opinion on the matter. However, the attempts of civil society groups to speak up are being undermined by the government, a fact that reduces the chances of seeing a free and democratic process resolve the issue.

UNPO and the coalition YASunidos denounce the rejection of the Yasuni-ITT Initiative by the government of Ecuador, and calls for the immediate halt of extractive industries in the Yasuni National Park. UNPO and YASunidos furthermore call upon the European Parliament to hold a hearing to assess the current situation and to place necessary political pressure to the government of Ecuador.