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Yesterday's Dissolution of Fundación Pachamama was Arbitrary and Illegal

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 5, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Ecuadorian government should immediately reverse their illegal and arbitrary effort to dissolve Fundación Pachamama, the organization's San Francisco based sister group said today. Yesterday, December 4th, plain-clothes police officers in Quito, Ecuador, appeared at the offices of Fundación Pachamama and proceeded to shut down their facilities. The action was backed up by a resolution from the Ministry of Environment ordering the dissolution of the organization for "interference in public policy" and "threatening the internal security and peace" of the country.

The government's action comes on the heels of indigenous protests last week against Ecuador's plans to open some 2.6 million hectares of rainforest to new oil drilling. The oil auction only received three offers, and was widely deemed a failure. President Correa lashed out in a weekend television address, falsely accusing Fundación Pachamama of fomenting violence during a demonstration in front of the Ministry of Hydrocarbons, though no members of the organization were involved. Fundación Pachamama plans to appeal the government's decision before the Ministry of the Environment.

"The real reason the government has targeted Fundación Pachamama is because of the effectiveness of their work," said Bill Twist, CEO and co-founder of The Pachamama Alliance, their sister organization based in San Francisco. "This is an attempt to keep them from doing their work, and chill their rights to free speech and assembly," he continued.

This dissolution is considered an arbitrary act that seeks to repress Fundación Pachamama's legitimate right to disagree with the government's policies, such as the decision to turn over Amazonian indigenous people's land to oil companies, in direct violation of their constitutional rights.

For 16 years, Fundación Pachamama has worked in solidarity with indigenous organizations of Ecuador's Amazon to defend their rights and their homelands. It played a fundamental role in the establishing of the Rights of Nature in Ecuador's constitution. It also works to present a new, sustainable vision for development in Ecuador's Amazon and the country as a whole. The foundation also established the first solar boat transportation system for indigenous peoples in

Ecuador's Amazon, and is working with healthcare professionals to train women and communities in safe birth practices.

Nonprofit organizations throughout the world are calling for the reopening of Fundación Pachamama, denouncing efforts of the Ecuadorian government to repress civil liberties, and but also for the good of all social organizations, indigenous and educational, that are at risk in Ecuador.

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SOURCE The Pachamama Alliance