

## PRESS RELEASE

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Climate Alliance

Joint press release by Climate Alliance, Climate Alliance Austria, the Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA) and the Alianza Global de Comunidades Territoriales (AGCT).

# Indigenous leaders link rights violations with Amazon deforestation

## Videos published ahead of Indigenous Peoples Day decry murders of indigenous leaders and call for the ratification of ILO Convention 169 on indigenous rights

**Frankfurt am Main/Vienna/Quito, 7 August 2019.** Two indigenous leaders have spoken out on the connections between mega-projects in the Amazon basin and indigenous rights abuses, climate degradation and the assassination of indigenous activists. "Years have passed since the creation of Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, yet indigenous peoples and local communities are still being systematically eliminated as a result of large-scale natural resource extraction in the form of oil drilling, mining, agro-industry, hydroelectricity and deforestation," explains Tuntiak Katan, vice president of COICA and coordinator of the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities. Katan has appeared in a video message denouncing the killings of indigenous leaders along with a related message from Robinson López Descanse, vice president of the Climate Alliance's city network, calling for the protection of indigenous territories and the ratification of the ILO Convention 169 on indigenous rights.

"The protection of indigenous territories in the Amazon translates directly to rainforest protection and thus climate protection," explains López, who himself has been the subject of death threats along with several of his colleagues. Especially in Brazil, President Bolsonaro's plans to massively develop the Amazon rainforest including indigenous lands have triggered further encroachment and deforestation. In June 2019 alone, 769km<sup>2</sup> of rainforest was cleared in Brazil, an increase of 60 percent on June 2018. The July murder of indigenous leader Emyra Wajãpi in connection with Brazilian mining interests is the latest incident in what has proven to be a rising trend. In his video message, Katan describes how more than 80 indigenous leaders and environmental activists were killed in 2018 in Latin America alone. Both videos come just before the publication of an IPCC report on climate change and land, widely expected to highlight the role of forests in the fight against climate change.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- [Video on ILO 169 ratification](#), Robinson López Descanse
- [Video on murders](#), Tuntiak Katan by AGCT

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- [Further videos of indigenous leaders supporting ILO 169 ratification](#)
- [IWGIA condemns killing of indigenous leader in Brazil](#)
- ILO 169 Coordination Group (Germany) [website](#) | [Facebook page](#) (in German)
- [COICA declaration in defence of indigenous activists](#) (in Spanish)
- [Climate Alliance Austria Article on Amazonian deforestation](#) (in German)
- [IPCC report on Climate Change and Land](#)

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### THE CLIMATE ALLIANCE

For more than 25 years, Climate Alliance member municipalities have been acting in partnership with indigenous rainforest peoples for the benefit of the global climate. With some 1,700 members spread across 26 European countries, Climate Alliance is the world's largest city network dedicated to climate action and the only one to set tangible targets: each member city, town and district has committed itself to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 10 percent every 5 years. Recognising the impact our lifestyles can have on the world's most vulnerable people and places, Climate Alliance pairs local action with global responsibility. [climatealliance.org](http://climatealliance.org)

### COICA

COICA (Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica) was founded in the Peruvian capital Lima in 1984 and is the umbrella organisation of the indigenous organisations of the Amazon Basin. Since its founding it has been advocating for indigenous peoples' rights. [coica.org.ec](http://coica.org.ec)

### ALIANZA GLOBAL DE COMUNIDADES TERRITORIALES

The Global Alliance of Territorial Communities represents the guardians of 400 million hectares of forest. The alliance consists of four territorial organisations: Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN), the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB), the Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil (APIB) and the Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazonica (COICA).