

July 12, 2012

STATEMENT ADDRESSED TO PRESIDENT OLLANTA HUMALA

**BY HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNING
GRAVE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN PERU**

For more than six months communities, organizations and social movements in the Department of Cajamarca have conducted peaceful protests in defense of water rights that are threatened by the installation of the Conga mining project by Minera Yanacocha/Newmont Mining Co. This gold mining project, that has a high social and environmental impact, was imposed on the local people without adequate consultation that might have led to their free, prior and informed consent [Cf. The UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, ILO Convention 169 and *la ley de consulta* nr. 169]. The allegation that the government's approval of the Conga mining project involved corruption aggravates tensions.

On July 3, 2012 the violent repressive action of state forces against the protestors killed three men (i.e., César Medina Aguilar 17, Eleuterio García Rojas 40, and José Silva Sánchez 35). On July 4, 2012 the environmentalist, Fr. Marco Arana, was sitting on a bench in the Plaza de Armas in Cajamarca when he was beaten, arrested and arbitrarily detained by the National Police of Peru. On July 5, two more deaths were confirmed (i.e., Jambo Joselito Vásquez 28, and José Antonio Sánchez Huamán 29).

On July 6, 2012, the Peruvian government declared a state of emergency in the Department of Cajamarca. The measure restricts the rights of assembly and of the free movements of persons. However, the population is still determined, through peaceful protest, to express their right and commitment to defend life and nature.

We acknowledge that Peru needs to tap its natural resources in order to fund national development, and that mining activities generate jobs and government income. However, the government of Peru also has an obligation to protect the lives and livelihood of its people. Mining projects must be carried out in a way that safeguards the environment, especially the quality and quantity of water. The concerns of the local people are valid and their right to engage in peaceful political activity must be respected. Indigenous peoples have the right to be consulted; projects that affect their land are not to be undertaken without their free, prior and informed consent.

We, the undersigned organizations associated/accredited to the United Nations, express our grave concern over the Government of Peru's disturbing escalation of human rights violations, acts of police brutality, especially the taking of human life, and the suppression of free speech. We express our solidarity with the people of Cajamarca and their repudiation of violent actions by the Government of Peru. Instead of criminalizing the defenders of life and nature, the Peruvian state must protect them and defend their rights. Our organizations support the right of

communities to engage in peaceful and non-violent protest. We denounce every form of violence.

We, therefore, respectfully call on President Ollanta Humala and the agents of the Peruvian Government to:

- Immediately lift the state of emergency in the Department of Cajamarca;
- Immediately release all detainees associated with this protest;
- Conduct an open and transparent investigation into the deaths, injuries, and other crimes that may have been committed;
- Immediately take action to ensure that agents of the state do not engage in repressive violence;
- Put an immediate end to any and all harassment of those who protest the Conga mining project, including acts of the police and judicial officials.
- Initiate a process of dialogue with the population of the conflicted area and with other stakeholders to achieve a peaceful resolution of the tense situation.

We will continue to closely monitor this situation in Peru and support the affected communities, organizations and families of the victims.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter,

1. AEFJN – Africa Faith and Justice Network
2. Augustinians International
3. Carmelite NGO
4. Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
5. Congregation of the Mission
6. International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation
7. International JPIC Secretariat of the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Assumption
8. Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary
9. Loretto Community
10. Marianists International

11. Mercy International Association at the UN
12. Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
13. Passionists International
14. Pax Christi International
15. Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary NGO
16. Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
17. UNANIMA International
18. VIVAT International