Justice for Quinto Inuma: International organisations call for an end to violence and impunity against Indigenous human rights defenders in Peru

20 January 2026

Today marks the start of the trial in the criminal case for the murder of Apu Quinto Inuma Alvarado, a respected Kichwa indigenous leader and defender of environmental human rights in the community of Santa Rosillo de Yanayacu, in the Peruvian Amazon. Quinto Inuma was killed on 29 November 2023, while returning to his community, when shots fired at his boat killed him and wounded fellow community member Axeldina Barbarán. His murder came after years of threats related to his work defending indigenous land rights and the environment. With the start of the oral hearings on 20 January 2026, which will continue on 21 and 22 January, the undersigned international organisations express our solidarity with the family and community of Quinto Inuma and call for justice to be done. We affirm that we will closely monitor this process and emphasise that its outcome is important not only for this case, but also for the protection of indigenous and environmental human rights defenders around the world, and for the future of the Amazon, a region of vital importance for the global climate.

Apu Quinto was a central figure in efforts to secure the collective land titling of Santa Rosillo de Yanayacu, a process essential to protecting the Indigenous territory from land trafficking, illegal logging and illicit narcotics production. He spent years denouncing threats against his community's lands and working through institutional channels to demand protection.

From 2017 onwards, Quinto repeatedly reported threats against his life and sought preventative action from Peruvian state authorities, including the Ombudsman's Office, relevant ministries, and international human rights bodies such as the United Nations and the Inter-American human rights system. Despite these efforts, and despite having been formally recognised by the Peruvian State as a threatened human rights defender and having all the guarantees for State protection, he was murdered.

Quinto was also a founding member and Steering Group member of the Zero Tolerance Initiative, which seeks to address the root causes of killings and violence against human rights defenders linked to global

supply chains. In this role, he spoke openly about the risks faced by Indigenous leaders who defend their territories and rights.

The murder of Quinto Inuma is emblematic of the broader crisis facing Indigenous defenders protecting the Amazon, one of the world's most important carbon sinks and a critical safeguard against global climate change. Over the past decade, at least 35 Indigenous leaders have been murdered in the Peruvian Amazon, according to national Indigenous organisations. The vast majority of these cases remain in impunity.

What makes this case particularly significant is that, unlike most killings of Indigenous defenders, the investigation has identified both the material perpetrators and the alleged intellectual authors of the crime, and criminal charges have been brought against them. The defendants face charges of contract killing, attempted murder, and personal concealment, with varying degrees of involvement. This advances the possibility of accountability in a context where justice is too often denied. Justice in this case would send a clear message that violence against defenders will not be tolerated.

In this regard, this is the first case in Peru where all those accused of murdering an Indigenous defender are being held in preventive detention and where life imprisonment is even being sought, sending a message of zero tolerance for threats and murders against indigenous defenders who defend their territories.[i]

This case carries importance far beyond Santa Rosillo de Yanayacu. The attack on Apu Quinto was intended to intimidate and silence Indigenous communities resisting territorial dispossession and environmental destruction. Justice in this case is therefore essential not only for the Inuma family, but to counter the wider silencing effect such violence has across Peru, the Amazon and globally.

We, the undersigned organisations from the international community, express our deep solidarity with Quinto Inuma's family and community and we join in their demands for civil redress both for Quinto's family and for Axeldina Barbarán. We also affirm our close attention to these proceedings which will be closely accompanied by the international human rights community, in recognition of their importance for accountability, justice and the protection of Indigenous and environmental defenders.

Delivering justice in this case would represent a critical step towards ending impunity for crimes against Indigenous and environmental defenders, and towards honouring Apu Quinto Inuma's legacy of defending the forests and waters of the Amazon, a legacy that remains vital not only for Indigenous peoples, but for global climate protection.

In solidarity:

1. Acción Ecológica, Ecuador
2. African Law Foundation (AFRILAW), Nigeria
3. Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on Extractive Industries and Energy (AIPNEE), Philippines
4. Asociación Arbio Amazonía, Peru
5. Asociación de mujeres indígenas Artesanas Sinchi Warmikuna, Peru
6. Asociación Paz y Esperanza
7. Asociación ProPurús, Peru
8. Asociación Tchon Tchomano (defensores de la tierra y pueblos indígenas), Guinea Bissau
9. Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum (BIPF)
10. Bangladesh Indigenous Women's Network, Bangladesh
11. Centro Loyola Ayacucho, Peru
12. Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz, Colombia
13. Community Empowerment and Social Justice Network (CEMSOJ), Nepal
14. Comunidad Nativa Santa Rosillo de Yanayacu, Peru
15. Consejo de Mujeres Awajún Wampis Umukai Yawi, Peru
16. Consejo Étnico de los Pueblos Kichwa de la Amazonía (CEPKA), Peru
17. FAPI - Federacion por la Autodeterminacion de los Pueblos Indígena, Paraguay

18. Federación de Comunidades Nativas de Ucayali y Afluentes (FECONAU), Peru
19. Federación de pueblos Indígenas kechwa Chazuta Amazonía (FEPIKECHA), Peru
20. Federación de Pueblos Indígenas Kechwas del Bajo Huallaga San Martín (FEPIKBHSAM), Peru
21. Fondo Socioambiental del Peru
22. Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), UK
23. Forum Solidaridad Peru
24. Front Line Defenders - Internacional
25. Grupo Impulsor de Mujeres y Cambio Climático GIMCC Peru
26. Instituto de Defensa Legal (IDL), Peru
27. International Service for Human Rights, Internacional
28. Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples (LAHURNIP), Nepal
29. Munay Pukara, Casa Amawtica de fortalecimiento y revitalización del pensamiento quechumara, Cochabamba, Bolivia
30. Not1More (N1M), International
31. Pastoralists Alliance for Resilience and Adaptation Across Nations (PARAAN), Kenya
32. POINT - Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together, Myanmar
33. Proceso de Comunidades Negras de Colombia (PCN), Colombia
34. Programme Intégré pour le Développement du Peuple Pygmée (PIDP), DRC
35. Protection International Mesoamérica
36. Proyecto sobre Organización, Desarrollo, Educación e Investigación (PODER), Mexico
37. Red Agua Desarrollo y Democracia (REDAD) - Peru
38. Red de Mujeres defensoras de la vida "Tejiendo Resistencia", Peru
39. Resguardo Indigena Cañamomo y Lomaprieta, Colombia
40. Sorong Research and Resource Centre, Bangladesh

[i] One of the alleged perpetrators of Quinto Inuma's murder, Belustiano Saboya Pisco, was on the run despite having a preventive detention order and arrest warrant in force. Unfortunately, he will not be brought to justice as he died during the police operation to capture him.