



CABILDO DEL RESGUARDO KOGI-MALAYO-ARHUACO
RESOLUCION N° 0109/08 OCT. /80 INCORA
NIT 819.005.279-1



Santa Marta May 15, 2020

SUBJECT: COMPLAINT AGAINST THE DESTRUCTION OF A SACRED SITE OF THE KOGI ANCESTRAL TERRITORY.

Hereby, we denounce and bring to your attention, for the implementation of appropriate protection measures, a serious situation of damage caused to several of the main sacred spaces of the Black Line in the Ancestral Territory of the four indigenous peoples of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

These are large-scale interventions with heavy machinery carried out in the mangroves and other areas around the mouth of the Rio Ancho river, in the department of Guajira, municipality of Dibulla, apparently undertaken in order to build establishments for tourism. The authorities of the indigenous peoples of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta express great dismay at the scale of the works and their impacts on both the environmental and ancestral function of these sites, effects that were clear to us on a visit to perform our traditional practices there.

These sacred spaces at the mouth of Rio Ancho had never been interfered with in this way and should not be. We believe this activity is illegal and no permission has been granted to carry out the work which, by its very nature, is not allowed.

The damage was evidenced in the sacred spaces of the Black Line associated with the main space of this estuary: *Jaba Alduweiuman* — The Mother of Knowledge of Nature and Water. It is identified in the Decree 1500 of August 06, 2018, issued by the Colombian Ministry of Interior, as # "167. Jaba Alduweiuman: Mouth of the Rio Ancho." This space is where the spirit and soul of knowledge were organized, spiritually and physically. It is connected to all mountain lakes, snowy peaks, major ezwas and river mouths and watersheds of the Sierra Nevada. This sacred space is also included in Resolution 837 of 1995 as "landmark 16 at the mouth of the Rio Ancho" river, though incorrectly identified in the Resolution with the name *Jukulwa*.

Associated with *Jaba Alduweiuman*, there are at least 4 additional sacred spaces on the Black Line which are part of the mouth of Rio Ancho, detailed in Decree 1500, which are:
164. *Shibuluwan*: Mouth of the Rio Ancho. The space of the beginning of knowledge where everything we know today originated.
165 *Kashkuamakaka*: Mouth of the Rio Ancho. It is the space where people's negative burdens are healed.

La Sierra Nevada es el Corazón del Universo (Madre). Nuestros padres Espirituales en sus hombros sostienen el equilibrio del Mundo.

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166 *Jaba Tabalaldiwe* Mouth of the Rio Ancho. It is the space of knowledge about the way to live. From here emanates knowledge about how we should lead life and fulfill tasks and/or responsibilities related to the household.

168. *Niuzheisan*: Rural estate “Las Gaviotas”, mouth of the Rio Ancho. *Niuzheisan* is the space where Father *Mokuakukuwi* or Father Sun lives. Spiritually, it is where drought is prevented and summer is controlled.

The locations of these places are part of the mapping for Decree 1500, which is located in the archives of the Ministry of Interior, and was jointly prepared in advance by the four peoples of the Sierra Nevada and the Ministry of Interior for this purpose.

These sacred spaces are of incalculable importance to the ancestral authorities of the four peoples to maintain the balance of every aspect of nature in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. They are the basis and support of the main lakes of the paramo, and of the senior sacred ezuamas of the mamos in the Sierra, among which are Makotama, Takina, Ablienzhi, Guamaka, and Sugulu. Since ancient times we have been taking care of these spaces and working there to protect the entire Sierra Nevada. Considering the Law of Origin, at the environmental level the intervention of these spaces generates incalculable consequences for the ecological and social stability of the whole territory.

Both the ancestral territory of the four peoples of the Sierra Nevada, and the sacred spaces mentioned here, are protected by Resolution 837 of 1995, issued by the Ministry of the Interior, and now by Decree 1500. The protection of ancestral territories is a fundamental constitutional right and is recognized in various instances of national and international law. To cite only one example, Judgment T-849 of 2014 delivered by the Colombian Constitutional Court regarding the ancestral territory of the Black Line and its sacred spaces.

Environmentally speaking, these sacred spaces form the very mouth of Rio Ancho and its system of mangroves and wetlands. They are of great importance for different species of animals such as the sea turtle, the alligator and the capybara, and constitute unique ecosystems and natural communities that form fundamental links in the structure and interconnected ecology of the Sierra Nevada. As priority ecosystems they are protected by various pieces of environmental regulation and territorial planning, and are subject to conservation.

Our ancestral territory is the Mother of Life and sustains all humanity, and likewise the wetlands and estuaries are mothers and sacred spaces of nature. We indigenous peoples have a duty to ensure the environmental and spiritual integrity of our territory, for the good of all who live and depend on it.

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We call on public authorities to take urgent action to protect these sacred spaces and the environmental ecosystems that are of so much value to life. A visit to these sites should be made with the environmental authorities, the public ministry, the environmental police and other qualified public authorities to identify the severity of the damage, and to establish relevant actions to suspend such activities and protect those spaces.



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