

**Media Advisory: CALL TO ACTION FOR GREATER HUMAN RIGHTS AND LAND
TENURE PROTECTIONS IN UK/EU BUSINESS AND TRADE**

**Opportunity to interview a delegation of indigenous and community leaders
Brussels February 20th ; London February 22nd**

To schedule interviews or obtain press materials, please contact:

Jak Wagnon at jak@forestpeoples.org; +44 7976 039 214 (*Brussels tour*)
Suzanne Dhaliwal at suzannedhaliwal@gmail.com; +44 7772 694 327 (*London tour*)

Seeking to expose the stark difference between the numerous commitments of governments and businesses –to respect human rights and halt deforestation– with realities on the ground, a delegation of indigenous leaders and human rights defenders –from Colombia, Peru, Indonesia, Paraguay, Argentina and Malaysia– will draw to a close their 9-day tour to Europe with interviews in Brussels and London.

Joined by allies from the UK-based Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) and Dutch stichting Both ENDS, indigenous and community leaders will be presenting and discussing [new evidence](#) highlighting the human rights violations linked with rapid expansion of the agri-business sector into their tropical forest territories, and putting forward their own proven, rights-based solutions for tackling deforestation.

The delegation arrives after taking part in a major international forum on human rights, deforestation and supply chains held last week in Amsterdam with participants from 11 countries across Asia, Africa, and South America. This event concluded with a [Call for Action](#) and a set of policy recommendations demanding that importer countries in Europe, including the UK, require their own companies, financial institutions, investors and traders to conduct rigorous human rights due diligence when operating overseas or investing in land-hungry agribusinesses (see [background note](#)).

Directly after the international forum, delegates met with Dutch government officials to deliver testimonies on the impact of European demand for agro-commodities on the human rights of traditional peoples and their forests, including illegal land grabs, displacement and in some cases, killings and other atrocities.

The delegation has now split, and concludes the tour simultaneously in:

Brussels, 19-22 Feb– where a group of delegates (from Malaysia, Indonesia, Paraguay, Peru, Argentina) will meet with European parliamentarians and representatives of the European Commission who deal with human rights, sustainable trade, development cooperation and the environment.

London, 19-22 Feb– where a group of delegates (from Peru, Colombia, Indonesia) will be meeting with companies, industry certification bodies, UK parliamentarians and UK civil society to reiterate their message: we need now, in Europe, to better regulate corporate activity overseas and to invest in rights-based solutions to deforestation – a global threat that needs a rights-based and global response.

WHERE/WHEN:

- **BRUSSELS:** 10:30am – 12:30pm, Tuesday 20th of February 2018
European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium

Who: Ms. Lanash Thanda (Malaysia); Mr. Edisutrisno (Indonesia); Ms. Mirta Pereira (Paraguay); Mr. Jamer López Agustín (Peru); Mr. Franco Segesso (Argentina); Mr. Andrew Whitmore (FPP); Mr. Paul Wolvekamp (Both ENDS)

- **LONDON:** 2:30pm – 4:30pm, Thursday 22nd of February 2018
The Wesley, 81-103 Euston Street, London, NW1 2EZ

Who: Mr. Franky Samperante (Indonesia); Mr. Hernando Castro Suárez (Colombia); Mr. Shapiom Noningo Sesén (Peru); Tom Griffiths (FPP)

ISSUES AT STAKE:

- Despite a large number of pledges –to protect forests, uphold community land rights, and respect human rights– made by Governments and companies, a massive and growing gap exists between these promises and the realities on the ground in forest nations.
- UK and EU trade and supply chains –linked to commodities found, inter alia, in shoes, handbags, chocolates, beef, dog food, livestock feed– continues to drive deforestation and related human rights abuses.
- Rather than addressing deforestation and conflict, trade agreements and investments in agricultural commodities often drive the expansion of agro-industrial operations into the rainforests and spur a rise in violent land conflicts, intimidation of community leaders and the murders of local human rights and forest defenders.
- Despite a growing body of evidence showing that empowering communities and recognising their land rights is highly effective in slowing deforestation, indigenous and local peoples continue to be marginalised, abused, pushed off their land and left out of vital decision-making processes.
- Indigenous peoples and forest communities have positive proposals and examples to share with government and companies on workable solutions for combatting forest loss grounded in respect for human rights, grassroots initiatives and traditional forest-related knowledge.

DELEGATE BIOS:

BRUSSELS TOUR

- **MALAYSIA: Dr. Lanash Thanda**

Lanash specialises in Environmental and Planning laws and Human Rights, having worked on social and environmental issues for the last 17 years. She is currently serving her third term as the President of SEPA, a locally based volunteer-run NGO working with communities, groups and individuals affected by unsustainable development. She also sits on the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) panel under the State Environmental Department in a technical capacity, and is a member of the BHCV working group and Complaints Panel of the RSPO, among other specialised working groups.

- **INDONESIA: Mr. Edisutrino**

Mr. Edisutrino is the deputy director of TuK INDONESIA, supports communities affected by corporate crimes, linked to commodities such as oil palm plantation, tree plantation (HTI), and other exploitative businesses. His primary focus is on policy and advocacy on natural resources and their management inequalities, and works with TuK for the fulfilment of the constitutional rights of the Indonesian people for the realisation of justice, well-being and human integrity.

- **PARAGUAY: Ms. Mirta Pereira**

Mirta is a lawyer with more than 25 years' experience working with indigenous peoples to secure social safeguards in national and international investment projects affecting indigenous peoples. She works to obtain legal recognition of indigenous territories, lands and forests and to defend prominent leaders against agribusiness companies. She has engaged in legal actions against soybean and cattle ranching companies, and suffered intimidation and threats as a result of her work. She works as legal advisor to the Federation for the Self Determination of Indigenous Peoples (FAPI), where she has helped formulate public policies which have been presented to the Paraguayan State from the perspective of indigenous peoples.

- **PERU: Mr. Jamer López Agustín**

Jamer is a youth leader of the Shipibo-Konibo people and a member of Federation of Native Communities of Ucayali (FECONAU) in the Peruvian Amazon. He is the former president of the Ucayali Indigenous Youth Organisation (OJIRU), and currently works alongside communities affected by large-scale monoculture oil palm plantations, cattle ranching, extractive companies and mega infrastructure programmes (roads, railways, ports), to enable them to defend their rights and map and monitor their forest territories to prevent illegal encroachment and the dispossession of community land.

- **ARGENTINA: Mr. Franco Segesso**

Franco is the Campaign Coordinator at the Land Workers Union (UTT) and a seasoned campaigner and legal advocate around agricultural, environmental and land rights. He has worked with social movements and on public policy development, including advocating with Greenpeace International and Greenpeace Argentina on land-use and forest laws. His work tackles the impacts of land grabbing for industrial soy, maize and cattle production on indigenous and peasants communities, as well as the environment.

LONDON TOUR

- **COLOMBIA: Mr. Hernando Castro Suárez**

Hernando is a Uitoto (Muina+) leader, speaker of the N+pode dialect and member of the Guacamayo Community of Aduche Indigenous Reserve located in the Colombian Amazon. He currently works as the environmental and natural resource coordinator for the Indigenous Council of Middle Amazonas (CRIMA), campaigning for the legal recognition and protection of the fundamental rights of the 'People of the Centre' and for the preservation and care of their 'Green Territory of Life'. He works alongside other leaders to challenge threats posed by illegal mining and drug-trafficking, the timber trade, and forest conversion for large-scale commercial farming and cattle ranching.

- **PERU: Mr. Shapiom Noningo Sesén**

Shapiom belongs to the Wampis Nation, and has been a prominent leader within the Amazonian indigenous movement for many years, providing technical support to many different indigenous peoples and organisations, while occupying positions ranging from the community-level to Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Interethnic Association for Development in the Peruvian Amazon (AIDSESP). He has played a key role in defending territorial, social and cultural rights, and currently serves as Technical Secretary within the Autonomous Territorial Government of the Wampis Nation and is advisor to the Awajun Wampis Council.

- **INDONESIA: Mr. Franky Samperante**

Mr. Franky Samperante is an indigenous representative from Sulawesi, and is the founder director of the indigenous peoples' organisation Pusaka, which provides support to indigenous communities in Central Kalimantan, Indonesia. In 2014, Pusaka published an atlas detailing extensive palm oil land grabs on indigenous peoples' lands in Papua and West Papua.