

URGENT ACTION

SETBACK TO COMMUNITY'S LAND CLAIM

The claim of Paraguay's Yakye Axa Indigenous community to the land which they have inhabited for generations has been rejected by a key commission in the country's Congress. On 25 June, a majority of the members of the Agrarian Reform Commission voted to reject a bill to return the contested land to the Yakye Axa. This vote undermines a binding decision made by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the highest inter-governmental body in the region.



This decision on the Yakye Axa case by a Congressional committee, although not binding, represents a serious setback that could deal a fatal blow to the community's battle to win back their land. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights had stated that the Paraguayan state should return the land to the Yakye Axa community before July 2008. It has been a year since this deadline passed and now with this latest vote there are added concerns that economic interests are further endangering the rights and welfare of Indigenous Peoples across Paraguay.

Three other commissions charged with studying the bill – the Treasury, Budgets and Accounts Commission; the Human Rights Commission; and the Energy and Natural Resources Commission – failed to give their recommendation on the bill before the end of the parliamentary session in June. The

composition of the parliamentary commissions will change in the next session, which begins in July. This is likely to considerably delay the passage of the bill.

Amnesty International is reassessing its strategy on the Paraguayan state as a whole and awaiting the new composition of the three commissions that still have to vote on the bill. To continue taking action on the case, please go to the 'Take action!' section of the campaign digest *'We're only asking for what is ours – Indigenous Peoples in Paraguay – Yakye Axa and Sawhoyamaxa'* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR45/005/2009/en>)

Many thanks to those who took action. At present no further action is required from the UA network.

This is the first update of UA 147/09 (AMR 45/011/2009, 12 June 2009).

Further information:
www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR45/011/2009/en

UA Number: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Index



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Further Information on UA: 47/09, Index: AMR 45/012/2009, Issue Date: 03 July 2009

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