

One year on from the murder of indigenous leader Quinto Inuma, his family and allied organisations demand full justice

The murder of a renowned indigenous leader has done little to spur the Peruvian government into effective action to protect human rights defenders and secure collective land rights for his community.

Today, 29 November 2024, marks one year since the [killing of Quinto Inuma Alvarado](#) in response to his work as an environmental human rights defender, both in his community of Santa Rosillo de Yanayacu as well as internationally. He was a Peruvian indigenous leader and Steering Group member of the Zero Tolerance Initiative (ZTI), a global coalition that works to stop threats and killings in global supply chains.

Of the seven people allegedly implicated in Quinto's murder, four are in pre-trial detention, including the illegal logger alleged to have paid the hitmen who murdered Quinto. Although a step forward in the pursuit of justice, two of the suspects who were initially arrested in connection with Quinto's murder have been released and prosecutors have failed to undertake further investigations that definitively rule out their involvement.

Even more troubling, the man identified by one of the suspects as the person who pulled the trigger on the shot that killed Quinto, remains at large. Community members have reported that he has returned to their territory and has continued threatening them, as have the relatives of the suspects currently in pre-trial detention. Despite this, the authorities have failed to issue a warrant for his arrest.

Until every person involved in the murder of Quinto Inuma and the ongoing threats being made against community members—not just the hired guns who pulled the trigger—are identified and brought to trial, the community, the local Indigenous federation FEPIKECHA, and Quinto's family will remain at risk of further violence.

The arrested suspects are [reportedly linked to illegal logging](#), and local criminal networks and include individuals who had previously been denounced by Quinto for illegal activities. Amongst those detained are allegedly hired hitmen who confessed to being paid just [1000 soles \(\\$260 USD\)](#) to carry out the assassination.

Latin America is the deadliest region for land and human rights defenders, with 70% of all killings globally, according to a report by [Global Witness published in 2024](#). The violence perpetrated against these defenders continues unabated, with impunity for perpetrators remaining a common occurrence. Recommendations from the report include the below:

“As long as reprisals against defenders remain unpunished, they are likely to continue. That is why it is essential that defenders have access to an impartial and non-discriminatory justice system and that their fundamental rights are upheld.”

“Defenders should be able to freely exercise their roles without fearing for their lives. Existing laws and mechanisms that protect and recognise defenders – while tackling the causes of attacks against them – need to be prioritised and enforced.”

Global Witness Annual Defenders Report 2023/2024, published September 10, 2024.

Despite these recommendations, a year on, Quinto’s death has had little effect on the Peruvian government’s actions to protect human rights defenders. His life was dedicated to seeing his community with legal titling of their land, but a few months after his death, the regional forestry authority granted rights to third parties over the territory claimed by the community, placing the community in a situation of even greater vulnerability.

On March 25th this year, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) granted precautionary (protection) measures to the Santa Rosillo de Yanayacu community and indicated to the Peruvian state that the lack of legal protection for the territory was directly linked to the causes of the threats. However, this has not fostered the political will to unblock obstacles and advance towards the definitive titling of community’s lands.

The community of Santa Rosillo de Yanayacu, the indigenous movement and the technical team that accompanies them, are demanding that the Peruvian state take concrete actions to protect indigenous defenders. Their demands are (see in more detail below):

- 1) **Access to justice for Quinto’s family and community.** All those responsible must be held accountable in order to set a precedent for access to justice for indigenous human rights defenders in Peru who continue to lose their lives in order to save the Amazon and our planet.
- 2) **Land titling for Santa Rosillo de Yanayacu.** This would help to address the structural cause of threats and violence towards community members.
- 3) **The establishment of a Police Rapid Aid Post in the community, as the nearest police station is 10.5 hours away (according to the latest police report).**
- 4) **Respect for the community's self-determined ancestral authority figures, chosen according to their own traditions.** This includes the removal of two government-appointed positions within the community that have been undermining these communal authorities.
- 5) **Reparation for Quinto's family and the community**
- 6) **Effective protection of indigenous defenders, not just on paper.**

As the international community remembers Quinto and his work, the Peruvian government is not showing the required commitment to protect human rights defenders.

Despite the seriousness of the situation for Indigenous leaders and environmental human rights defenders in Peru, the country is yet to ratify the Escazú agreement while simultaneously adopting laws and public policies that backtrack on key indigenous rights and environmental protections. The Escazú agreement is a legally binding mechanism that requires participating governments in Latin America to guarantee access to information,

public participation and justice in environmental matters (including environmental and land rights defenders).

The assassination of Quinto is an emblematic case that highlights the situation of vulnerability of human rights defenders in Peru more broadly, as well as the urgent need for effective protection of those who are risking their lives to defend their lands, lives and communities.

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More information

[“The Jackals of Santa Rosillo” and the murder of Apu Quinto Inuma: A death that could have been prevented](#)

[Talador ilegal pagó S/ 1000 para que asesinen al apu Quinto Inuma / Illegal logger paid 1000 Peruvian soles to have apu Quinto Inuma assassinated.](#)

[Murder of Indigenous Land and Human Rights defender casts a shadow over the opening of COP28](#)

[Zero Tolerance Initiative](#)