

Information on the current state of affairs

(June 2014)

In August 2013, the Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa announced that the “Yasuní-ITT Initiative” to leave the oil under Yasuní National Park in the ground had failed. The reason he gave was that the international community would only have come up with a small fraction of the 3.6 billion US dollars which were necessary according to the initiative for Ecuador to be suitably compensated for its innovative proposal. Since then, indigenous populations and environmental and human rights activists have joined forces in a broad alliance called YASunidos to bring about a referendum on oil production in Yasuní. The Ecuadorian constitution, signed by the president himself, expressly provides for such a referendum. However, Ecuador’s electoral commission rejected a petition by YASunidos in May 2014 on the grounds that the majority of the votes submitted for the preservation of Yasuní were invalid. Also in May, Ecuador’s environment ministry granted a license to the state-owned oil company Petroamazonas to exploit the oil fields in the Yasuní area. Wherever oil is extracted, violence is never far behind: proponents of the Yasuní initiative have been persecuted and denounced. In spite of this, YASunidos continues to mobilise resistance against the plans, accusing the electoral commission of fraud and a lack of transparency.

Activists fear that the oil production will lead to violations of the rights of nature and cause massive health damage to local populations. In addition, according to YASunidos the rights of indigenous populations living in voluntary isolation to preserve their self-determination are under threat. The idea continues to attract attention on the international stage. Groups, organisations and individuals in many countries have declared solidarity with YASunidos and the idea of taking a concrete step towards a post-fossil world by leaving the oil in the ground. The Yasuní idea is “too big to fail”.

Sources:

<http://sitio.yasunidos.org/en/>

<http://amerika21.de/2014/05/100638/referendum-yasuni>

<https://amerika21.de/2014/04/99283/unterschriften-yasuni>

<http://www.taz.de/!139092/>

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