

**Serious racist statements have been repeatedly made
against the indigenous peoples by public figures,
journalists and the mass media, which have been
encouraged or tolerated by the Government**

The recent general context of direct violence against the indigenous peoples has been accompanied by racist statements repeatedly made by government authorities and different means of communication, which strengthen and consolidate the already existing racist perception in Peruvian society against indigenous inhabitants. After the events, which took place on June 5 in Bagua, the government insisted on specifically criminalizing on the basis of ethnic origin, converting all visibly indigenous citizens into terrorist suspects.

Peruvian society is extremely racist, which is a publicly notorious fact. This was once again recently verified in a “Study on the Perception of Indigenous Peoples in Sectors of Urban Public Opinion”, carried out in urban environments of the cities of Lima, Chiclayo, Cusco and Pucallpa, among men and women, between 20 and 50 years old, belonging to different socio-economic levels¹. This study showed that the Peruvian population believes that cultural diversity is a limitation for national development, that racial discrimination is natural and unavoidable and that specific races and customs are intrinsically better than others.

In this context, it is particularly serious that government figures systematically make racist statements and also refrain from applying criminal law when racist statements, encouraging genocide and violence against indigenous peoples, are expressed. Hereunder, you shall find the most serious and most recent examples of such statements (***see Exhibit 5***):

Recent racist statements and images in highly reputed means of communication found in the capital:

- Article entitled, “*Poor Chunchos² and other Foolish Acts*” (“Correo” Gazette, November 8, 2008) in which the columnist insults Peruvian indigenous inhabitants and their cultural symbols.
- Title page, “*What level! A ‘Coquito’ Literacy Book needed for Congresswoman Supa*” (“Correo” Gazette, April 22, 2009) in which an Andean indigenous congresswoman is insulted, due to her spelling mistakes when writing in Spanish, as her native language is Quechua.

¹ At: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x96myk_informe-oxfam_news (consulted on July 29, 2009).

² “Chunchos” is an offensive term referring to the native ethnic groups of Peru.

- Article entitled, *“Tacnopunoqueguanos and other Peruanazas³”* (“Correo” Gazette, November 8, 2008) in which a columnist insults the indigenous inhabitants from the Peruvian High Plateau region.
- Title page, *“Chunchos Bamba⁴”* (“Caretas” Magazine, August 21, 2008) in which the derogatory term “chuncho” is used to insult the indigenous protest in the Amazon Region.

Recent racist statements and images involving highly reputed government figures:

- President Alan García (October 28, 2007): *“And against oil, they have created the image of the ‘isolated’ native jungle dweller; that is, unknown but presumed, reason for which millions of hectares cannot be explored and Peru’s oil must remain underground, while the world is paying US\$90 per barrel. They would prefer it if Peru continued importing its oil and becoming more impoverished.”⁵*
- President Alan García (November 25, 2007): *“Every year, by shrinking the rivers of the jungle, beaches and sandbars appear, no man’s land, but with humidity and fertilizers carried by the rivers from the Andes. There are approximately two million hectares that the State should grant, either by sale or lease, in large blocks for the cultivation of rice, which is salinating the land along the coast.”⁶*
- President Alan García (March 25, 2009): *“A [Peruvian] society that has psychological elements of defeatism, somewhat more pronounced than those of the Brazilians, who have more sun, more of a black component and more happiness than us, the Andean people.” “We are an Andean country, in other words, an essentially sad country;” “We are not like the Colombians, who are hyperactive. They are a mix of Spanish from the Northern Basque region and Catalan, with more of a black component and a little bit of primitive anthropophagite;” “We are sad and, here, everything is always bad.”⁷*
- President Alan García (June 5, 2009): *“These people [the indigenous inhabitants of the Amazon Region in protest] do not wear a crown; they are not first class citizens who can tell us, 400,000 natives to 28 million Peruvians, ‘You do not have the right to come here at all.’ This is a serious mistake and anyone who thinks in such a manner, wants to lead us into irrationality and primitive retreat”.⁸*

³ “Tacnopunoqueguano” refers to the people from Tacna, Puno and Moquegua; “Peruanazas” makes reference to something very Peruvian, in a negative light.

⁴ “Bamba” implies that something or someone is fake.

⁵ Article entitled, “The Dog in the Manger Syndrome”, El Comercio Gazette, October 28, 2007.

⁶ Article entitled, “Recipe to end the Dog in the Manger”, El Comercio Gazette, November 25, 2007.

⁷ At: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56Ea1qjiB0s> (consulted on July 29, 2009).

⁸ At: <http://www.peru.com/noticias/portada20090605/37781/Presidente-Alan-Garcia-advierte-a-nativos-Ya-esta-bueno-de-protestas> (consulted on July 29, 2009).

After the events in Bagua, the government prepared a highly racist and offensive television commercial that even criminalized the characteristic of being indigenous, associating this ethnic quality with being savage, terrorist and extremist. The commercial had to be removed and led to the resignation of the Minister of State, since its content was considered to be intensely racist, polarizing and offensive.