



## Open Letter to President of Ecuador Rafael Correa and governments of the Americas

June, 2012

The **Permanent Secretariat of Latin American and Caribbean Network for Democracy (Redlad)**, integrated platform for more than 450 organizations and leaders of the Americas express its concern about the systematic and repeated actions, with aimed at weakening the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ( IACHR) by various governments who want to minimize the work of the Inter-American System of Human Rights, delete the voice of civil society and human rights organizations in the region.

In several meetings at the Organization of American States (OAS) has been treated to set limits and controls to the Commission. Unfortunately, the recent Assembly of the OAS in Cochabamba, Bolivia, has taken the final step through the creation of specific actions proposed by several foreign ministers to control the funds of the Commission and put up barriers to its work. They are also driving strategies through the Permanent Council by in 6 months, to limit the voice of the Commission. A negative interventions by various governments, joined the presence and intervention, the sole purpose of attacking the Commission, the President of Ecuador Rafael Correa on June 4, 2012, In particular, President Correa referred to the Commission, the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression, civil society organizations and media, calling them to be representative of vested interests, undemocratic and a biased vision. The Ecuadorean president also questioned the role of the Comptroller of civil society organizations, the idea of



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international cooperation and the validity of international human rights standards such as the decriminalization of opinion.

We believe that both the tone and content of the statements of President Correa, and his activism against the Commission, not in keeping with the spirit of democratic dialogue that should prevail at meetings of this nature, nor with the mandate must prevail by a president. The President used the forum of the OAS General Assembly to make value judgments, discredit and attack institutions and individuals, to whose attacks the offended organizations had not opportunity to reply to your comments.

We believe that the democratic exercise of power from one president involves listening, promote dialogue, participation and propose solutions to problems facing society. Unfortunately, President Correa traveled to Cochabamba trying to destroy the Commission, he doesnt opened the possibility of discussion or dialogue, or offer proposed solutions to problems that, in his opinion, there are American system, the OAS and organizations civil society. The only solution provided is the complete disappearance of the American system.

Equally unfortunate is the sad role played by the diplomatic missions of various countries who have joined the smear campaign against the Commission or simply have not done anything about it. Moreover, just as sad is the role that has been playing the OAS Secretary General, who is not fulfilling its duty to protect the OAS as an institution, or democracy as north.

The Permanent Secretariat of Latin American and Caribbean Network for Democracy, also believes that the participation of President Correa is problematic and calls for the OAS to review this type of intervention. First, it isnt customary for presidents to participate in General Assemblies, as these are ministerial meetings. It is not clear what criteria to invite the President of Ecuador, and not to other presidents. President Correa, as he himself said, he had much longer to talk than the assigned to representatives of other countries and did so as a keynote



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speaker, that is, that even he did during the time allocated to Ecuador. In this privileged platform, the President made a speech that reflected the particular position of his government, but unlike regular audits of countries, there was no possibility for those who dissent from this position to respond, to debate and dialogue.

Finally, we wish to remind the President Correa that civil society organizations do not exist to compete with governments. We agree with the President of Ecuador in which governments are elected and thus represent the citizens who elected them, but that democracy means more than free elections. NGOs do not intend to question the representation, nor seek to be representatives of the citizenry. The organizations of civil society works in reason to another principle, that of participation in public affairs, to which all citizens have a right in a democratic society. According to their statements in the General Assembly, President Correa supports the work of NGOs to assist people in need, assistance in natural disasters and the like, but criticizes and insults to those, like ours, works on the monitoring of government actions. We not conceive of a democratic society without the comptroller function of citizens who individually or organized in associations, that demand the governments live up to its proposals, to promote transparency in government and work towards legislation and to create policies and practices that respect the rights of individuals.

We recall that if a president is elected, is not sufficient to be able to speak that there is a democracy, if free election is one more of the elements necessary for a democratic government, including free press / speech, respect for human rights, the right to dissent and be respected, the right of association, independence of institutions, accountability, and finally a series of requirements that currently many of the governments of the region clearly violate, especially Ecuador.

We believe that Ecuador has other problems that deserve more attention from a president who are leading a campaign destrucción and elimination of inter-American system.



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We hope with this, the democratic governments in the region help to stop this campaign orchestrated and intensive against the Inter-American System of Human Rights System.

Leave the future of the IACHR in the hands of the OAS Permanent Council in "closed door" is not the best option

The Redlad will support the American system, this is the power of governments and public funds against the will of civil society in the end we know the reason and freedom is stronger than authoritarianism.

President Correa, from the Secretariat of the Redlad we are ready for the challenge, we are accompanied by freedom, democracy and human rights. You unfortunately seem to be guided by the search of power. History always takes care to be the judge.

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