
Venezuela: victory at the Court

In previous issues of our Bulletin (Nr. 2 of 10/7/97 and Nr. 4 of 8/9/97) we included information about the conflict at Imataca Rainforest Reserve, where concerned Venezuelan NGOs and citizens have been playing an important role.

On November 11 Cecilia Sosa Gomez -President of the Court of Justice- informed that Presidential Decree 1,850 was voided, as a consequence of the legal action initiated by Alexander Luxardo (Union of Sociologists and Anthropologists of Venezuela), Alicia Garcia and Maria Eugenia Bustamante (AMIGRANSA), Jose Moya (FORJA), Frank Bracho (OilWatch) and Juan Sans Uranga. The controversial Decree opens up this vast tropical forest to mineral exploitation.

The previous week, the Ministry of Energy & Mines (MEM) had decided to suspend the handing out of more concessions in the Imataca Rainforest Reserve until the Supreme Court of Justice had ruled on a plea to void controversial Presidential Decree 1,850. As a matter of fact there remains plenty of doubt about the actual number of rights and concessions that have been awarded. The latest MEM figure is 257 contracts and 126 concessions granted by the current administration. Nevertheless, other government entities have other figures, which is another symptom of the state of anarchy and corruption which has prevailed throughout the granting process.

Source: AMIGRANSA (Sociedad de Amigos en Defensa de la Gran Sabana). 11/11/97.