
[Action for the U'wa people in Colombia](#)

During the long conflict that has involved the U'wa indigenous people -with the support of national and international NGOs and social organizations- and Occidental Petroleum (Oxy), there have been constant comings and goings. For almost a decade, the U'wa people have successfully prevented Oxy from exploiting oil -that they consider the Earth's blood- in their traditional territory. But in September 1999 the Environment Ministry, which has always acted in collusion with the company's interests, granted a permit to Oxy that allows it to begin an exploratory drilling just outside the Unified U'wa Reservation, in a site that is within U'wa traditional territories (see WRM Bulletin 27). This arbitrary step was and is still strongly resisted both in Colombia and abroad.

The U'wa authorities have issued the following communique, asking for international solidarity:

"Approximately 200 members of the U'wa indigenous tribe of northeastern Colombia assembled in a permanent settlement on part of our ancestral lands yesterday, November 16. This area is the site where Occidental Petroleum wants to drill the oil well 'Gibraltar 1', an action which threatens life and our ancient culture.

With this permanent presence and with the support of the local farmers of Sarare, we are claiming our ancestral and constitutional rights to life and to our traditional territory. We demand that the Colombian government and Oxy leave us in peace and that once and for all they cancel the oil project in this area. We U'wa people are willing to give our lives to defend Mother Earth from this project which will annihilate our culture, destroy nature, and upset the world's equilibrium. Caring for the Earth and the welfare of our children and of future generations is not only the responsibility of the U'wa people but of the entire national and international society.

We ask people around the world who value the Earth and indigenous peoples to speak out against the multinational oil company Oxy through protests, letters and other actions of solidarity."

Demand him not to accept campaign contributions from oil companies, and ask him why he has invested in Occidental Petroleum shares, which is in complete contradiction with his declared environmentalist viewpoints,

- Edward C. Johnson III
Chairman and CEO, Fidelity Investments

Fidelity Investments controls over 8 percent of the company's total value under the slogan "We help you invest responsibly". Demand them to show that they act according to this slogan by taking actions to convince Occidental to cancel its project on the indigenous traditional lands.

In the last days even graver events happened. On the January 19th, more than 5000 heavily armed soldiers of the Colombian Army entered the U'wa traditional territory, in Cedeno, where the oil drilling

well Gibraltar 1 is located. This is an extreme step of the Colombian government to make sure that Oxy's oil exploitation goes ahead. An urgent campaign has been launched to stop the invasion. You are asked to address the following Colombian authorities, expressing your concern and rejection to this new violent action againsts the U'wa.

Source: Global Response, 19/1/2000 and 21/1/2000;