

The allegations that Ocho Sur is sponsoring a smear campaign against the Comunidad Nativa Santa Clara de Uchunya, in Peru, while repeated in several outlets, is absolutely baseless. It is first important to note that the allegation itself is in direct contradiction to the democratically expressed perspective of the community members and leaders through their legitimate deliberation and decision-making mechanisms.

See their official facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/ComunidadNativaSantaClaradeUchunyaOficial>

We are always very careful in respecting the community members, their organization and leadership, and never pretend to speak for them. But we can direct you to publicly available information published by this community on its facebook page (see above) and to publicly available news stories in which the community expresses its opinions and perspectives. To the best of our knowledge, there is only one institution legitimately representing the people of Santa Clara de Uchunya, and that is their indigenous community run by basic democratic standards. To the best of our knowledge, parallel entities such as the so-called Frente de Defensa de Santa Clara de Uchunya have not been authorized by the community to speak on its behalf, but we encourage you to ask the Community directly about this matter.

Here are some publicly available news stories that include the perspective and the points of view of the community, as approved in their assembly and presented by their leadership.

<https://trome.com/actualidad/comunidad-nativa-shipibo-koniba-denuncia-a-ons-por-violacion-de-derechos-humanos-imp-noticia/>

<https://peru21.pe/peru/comunidad-indigena-denuncia-a-la-ong-idl-y-fpp-por-violacion-de-derechos-humanos-noticia/>

<https://www.agroperu.pe/comunidad-indigena-denuncia-en-lima-a-ong-idl-y-fpp-por-violacion-de-derechos-humanos/>

<https://youtu.be/qMdEoXFI5ME?si=n-AjpQPbK9XpbXti>

You may want to note that the communiqué released by the so-called Frente de Defensa de Santa Clara de Uchunya is only signed by two persons, out of a community of 242 members. See:

https://www.facebook.com/ComunidadNativaSantaClaradeUchunyaOficial?locale=es_LA

While the views of these two community members deserve full respect and consideration, their minoritarian character should not be overlooked.

We completely reject “smear campaigning”. Moreover, we are often victims of it due to the persistent defamation we suffer from certain NGOs who refuse dialogue with us, have paid little respect to factual evidence that has been presented to them, and who have ignored the democratic rights and opinions of indigenous communities they claim to represent and protect. We have, on many occasions sought dialogue with them to engage in a respectful discussion, to exchange information, and compare and contrast views with the goal of reaching agreements for the betterment of the region, its rich biodiversity and especially the living conditions of its inhabitants including the local indigenous communities. Sadly, those invitations to dialogue have been rejected.

Ocho Sur has a long standing, friendly and respectful relationship with the Community of Santa Clara de Uchunya and with all the neighboring communities surrounding our operations. We work together with them and other communities in Ucayali on projects that address most of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. In our region, this most often means projects that involve the fundamental human rights to healthcare, basic infrastructure, and education. Here you can find links to different stories about projects that we have done together specifically with the Community of Santa Clara de Uchunya.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vp9q_OUVjA&pp=ygUIb2NobyBzdXI%3D

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKO27pfYyiw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPKxFo1an24>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WREni572OB4>

<https://youtu.be/wn8kstDPLS4?si=YQ-PhsoAZuTTI3OW>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxQtrbIWTto&t=3s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgbTgIYNTHw&t=6s>

And on this youtube channel you will also find many videos and stories about our part of Peru, the people who live here, and especially about the intersection of business and human rights in Ucayali.

<https://www.youtube.com/@OchoSur/videos>

Please watch these videos and hear the testimonies and truths of the people in the region. We believe passionately that it is through this kind of engagement between companies and their neighbors that the needs of the most vulnerable can and should be met.

You can also find abundant information on us in response to the false allegations made by certain NGOs at the website of the United Nations Special Rapporteurs:
<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TmSearch/Mandates?m=45> .

We also would like to take this opportunity to invite you to visit our region, to have conversations (with or without us) with the local indigenous leaders, with our workers, and with governmental authorities, to gain firsthand information of the positive socioeconomic transformation taking place here as a result of our work and alliance with the local and indigenous communities. Although much has been written about events in our region, little of that has included the first-hand perspectives and opinions of people who live and work here.

I hope that this channel of communication between us remains open and that you do not hesitate at all to contact us if you have further questions or would like additional information, now or in the future.

Sincerely,

Michael C Spoor