



**Faced with the Serious Acts of Police Brutality  
on Saturday, May 30, 2020, in the town of Fontana, Chaco, (Argentina)  
the United Mission Board Federation (JUM)  
Expresses its Deep Rejection and Demands Immediate Action**

Police action recalls the worst times in our country when that force was part of the exercise of state terrorism. The facts expose the discrimination exercised from public institutions, charged with the psychophysical security without making any difference by gender, ethnicity, or economic condition.

Unfortunately, they are not isolated events. United Mission Board Federation, JUM by its Spanish Acronym, composed by the Christian Church of the Disciples of Christ (IDC), Argentine Methodist Evangelical Church (IEMA), Valdensian Evangelical Church of Río de la Plata (IEVRP), and Evangelical Church of Río de la Plata (IERP), has walked for the past 56 years with Indigenous peoples of the area. We have witnessed the systematic violations of the Indigenous Peoples' rights in the province. JUM accompanies the integral development of Indigenous Peoples that involves the exercise of all their rights, especially the right of access to fundamental justice as guaranteed in a democratic, participatory, and equal society.

Our institution and the four-member church organizations are shaken through the recent events of persecution and violence towards Indigenous Peoples, documented and widely disseminated facts, which took place in the Province of Chaco, more precisely with the Qom community in the town of Fontana. These events are added to the unjust reality, which our brothers and sisters are going through, not only because of the lack of basic needs, but also because of diseases resulting from state neglect, such as Dengue, Tuberculosis, Chagas, and Leprosy.

Moreover, JUM has warned the Provincial State at various times about the growing risks faced by Indigenous Peoples in the region, especially concerning the territorial and environmental conflicts associated with extensive extraction of natural resources, which in turn have a direct impact on the right to food, water, and health. JUM recognizes the importance of the Indigenous Peoples' protection of nature and stresses that respecting the link between them and their territories is fundamental to their existence.

Public institutions should prevent and ensure psychophysical security without differences in gender, ethnicity, or economic status. On the contrary, they exercise unconstitutional discrimination by promoting stigmatization and criminalization by "tagging" vulnerable peoples as part of the spread of COVID-19. This discourse, unfortunately, multiplied through several media outlets. The impact on the individual, social, and even institutional behaviors are alarming.

To strengthen actions to prevent violence against indigenous peoples and promote steps to ensure compliance with their rights, we demand:



**Public Declaration of JUM – June 2, 2020**

1. A detailed and reasonable investigation, administratively and judicially, where the responsibilities of all persons involved in these events, especially those responsible for each area of government, are determined.
2. That the statements of Chief of Police, Fernando Romero, who aims to reduce the events to simple "excesses," be condemned, and the protection of victims be ensured.
3. That the State, in its three powers, take concrete actions to eradicate institutionalized racism. The dismissal and prosecution of the police officers involved are not enough. Public policies should be implemented in all state institutions that guarantee the human rights of Indigenous Peoples. Through these actions and following the example of the "Micaela Law," it will be necessary to implement mandatory training of all persons in public service of the issues related to Indigenous Peoples, including international, national, and provincial law.
4. That during the COVID-19 pandemic, the rights to health and self-determination in their total dimension be respected, as the highest level of psychophysical well-being, and the right of national and international nature of Indigenous Peoples from the approaches of inter-culturalism, gender, and intergenerational solidarity. That these rights be urgently addressed in the formulation and implementation of public policies aimed toward health care, through the inclusion of their representative entities.
5. That specific measures be adopted for Indigenous Peoples aimed at mitigating the socio-economic effects of healthcare actions during the pandemic, respecting the principle of equality and non-discrimination as expressed in our national and provincial constitutions, not as a forced action, but with the conviction that is legally and humanly appropriate.
6. That the State refrain, within the framework of COVID-19, from promoting legislative initiatives and authorizing extraction, exploitation, or development projects in the vicinity of the territories of Indigenous Peoples, by the impossibility of carrying out the prior consultation processes, free and informed, and following applicable international standards.

We greet you praying for Peace and Justice for all the peoples of our country.

***"And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'"***  
(Matthew 25:40 NRSV)

