



VIDS

Association of Indigenous Village Leaders in Suriname

Verl. Gemenelandsweg 18d; Paramaribo, Suriname – Tel.: +597 520130 | 520131 – Email infovids@vids.sr

VIDS concerned about use of force

This morning we have received reports and images from villages in the district of Para in connection with a suspected protest, in which there have been deaths and destruction.

Our fight for law and justice for Indigenous peoples in Suriname has been going on for decades. Even judgments of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights have not been implemented since 2005, while our communities are always paying the price – socially, economically and environmentally. Although we do not condone or support violence and destruction at all, we see this outburst as a clear signal that our communities and our territories no longer want to wait for our turn. This has been made known many times to successive governments, including the current, and most recently at the meeting of VIDS and OSIP with the District Commissioner of the Para district dated April 26, 2023. It is therefore not inconceivable that the absence of actual change by the government, including legal changes, and the lack of recognition of the seriousness of situations in which communities are inadvertently brought into, due to government acts or omissions, have fed such activists.

VIDS stresses, however, that neither the traditional authority, nor VIDS, nor OSIP, nor the traditional authority of the villages concerned, were informed about, or consented to, these actions, and certainly not in the manner in which they are now conducted.

The Association of Indigenous Village Leaders in Suriname (VIDS) and the Organization of Cooperating Indigenous Villages in Para, Wanica and Commewijne (OSIP) call on our communities to remain calm and we ask law enforcement to maintain close contact and communication with the village authority of the respective villages, in order to ensure together that peace returns and order and safety are guaranteed in our villages. We will also monitor that excessive force is not applied against villagers and civilians.

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Lespeki Gi Wi Leti, Fu Dati Wi E Feti!