

# [Peru is backtracking on indigenous rights says report](#)

Source: Mining, People, and the Environment

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The [Peruvian](#) government is striving to get mining projects off the ground at the expense of local communities, according to a report this week by Reuters.

According to [Reuters](#), concern over delays to mining projects in the country may see Peruvian President Ollanta Humala go back on one of the most contentious promises of his 2011 election campaign - to allow Andean indigenous communities the right to prior consultation on mining projects being developed near where they live.

It is understood that mines and energy minister Jorge Merino has succeeded in convincing Humala's cabinet that Quechua-speaking communities in the Andes should not be covered by what is known as the 'prior consultation law', which Humala signed into law in September 2011.

Merino argues that the Quechua – a local community who speak the native Latin American language of the same name – should be excluded from the law as they cannot be considered truly "indigenous".

Deputy minister for culture Ivan Lanegra, the minister tasked with implementing the [legislative](#) amendment, has reportedly threatened to resign if Humala allows the changes to go ahead.

The law originally came about as a result of widespread protests by indigenous communities over mining projects, often ending in violence. In June 2009, a 10-week peaceful protest by 2,000 protesters ended in bloodshed when police opened fire on the protesters at a road blockade in Bagua in northern Peru. Ten members of indigenous communities and over 20 policemen are thought to have been killed in the clashes, with hundreds more injured.

The protest took place as a result of growing fears that legislative decrees signed by the erstwhile president Alan García would allow foreign companies to develop mining projects on Amazonian territory without first consulting with local indigenous communities.

All this looked to change with the signing of the prior consultation law in 2011, but the new amendment, if passed, looks set to put further pressure on the already strained relations between Peru's government and indigenous communities.

In 2011, foreign direct investment in Peru increased by 5% and the majority of this investment was connected with the mining industry.

The news also follows the recent publication of a [report](#) by Washington-based advocacy group Rights and Resources Initiative that condemned governments across Latin America for putting foreign investment ahead of the rights of local indigenous communities.

The full report is available to read [here](#)