

2 May, 2004

President Enrique Iglesias
Inter-American Development Bank
1300 New York Ave.
Washington DC 2000

Dear President Iglesias,

We are writing to formally bring to your attention several offenses by IDB security that occurred on Monday, March 29, 2004 in conjunction with the 45th Annual Meetings at the Museo de la Nación in Lima, Peru. These actions by or with the complicit authorization of the event security contracted by the Bank represent serious violations of the rights of civil society organizations to attend and participate in the IDB's Annual Meetings. These offenses are sadly ironic in light of their occurrence only minutes after Peruvian President Toledo's opening speech to the Board of Governors on the importance of increasing participation, transparency and democracy.

We are writing to request a formal investigation of the events surrounding the temporary closure of the NGO office, the serious harassment of non-governmental organization representatives by event security, including detainment, and the misinformation of the media regarding the status of the press conference planned by the participating NGOs at 1 pm on the 29th of March.

As the U.S. Executive Director was made aware on the 27th of March, a number of civil society organizations had planned a press conference on Monday, March 29th at 1:00 pm in the "NGO Room." A request to have this press conference in the official press conference room was denied by the U.S. Executive Director on Sunday, March 28th. The media were advised about the planned press conference on the 28th through advisories handed to them and placed in the 3rd floor press room and other locations in the Museo where similar information was available. Representatives of the civil society organizations were available for inquiries regarding the press conference until 10:00 pm on the 28th in the NGO Room and early the next morning. Despite visits by several media organizations, no such inquiry was attempted by the IDB or Site security.

On the 29th, at approximately 12:30 pm, about a half hour prior to the planned press conference, police or security officers closed the NGO Room to the public, preventing any civil society representatives to enter the adjacent hallway. IDB staffers were on hand advising reporters who tried to approach the entrance to the NGO Room that the press conference was not authorized and had been canceled. Security removed press announcements that were posted in the press room and in recognized places for distribution to the media.

The police detained Elizabeth Barclay, from the Seattle-based NGO, APEX against her will for a period between twenty to forty minutes. Her detention occurred after she posted two press advisories to assist interested press in finding the obscure basement location that the NGO community was forced to use for its press conference. Security officials in the vicinity gave her permission to post the flyer and were holding it for her as she taped it up. Nonetheless, an angry BID official approached her from behind, yelled at her, snatched the flyers out of her hands, and

removed her identification placard. She was then immediately taken into the custody of the police and held against her will in a basement police security room. The door of the room was closed for at least ten minutes. She was not allowed to inform any member of the NGO community of her whereabouts before being taken into the custody of police. During this period of detention, in response to her inquiries as to why she was being detained, she was told only that she had violated Peruvian law and that there was a security problem. These events not only entailed severe harassment of an invited IDB guest, but curtailment of rights of expression, as Elizabeth was prevented from being able to perform several time-sensitive tasks related to press conference preparation. Moreover, the IDB bears significant direct responsibility for these events since they were precipitated by the removal of her identification placard by an IDB official. The attached statement provides further details on these events.

Another NGO Representative, Janneke Bruil, of Friends of the Earth International, reported being followed by a security guard and blocked in the elevator when she wanted to get out on the 2nd floor to visit the German ED. She reported having to fight her way out of the elevator only then to be stopped by a security guard from entering the halls of the ED offices. The guard stated that “he had received orders to search me and not to let me enter because I had materials critiquing the IDB in my bag.” Janneke was then followed through the building and decided to keep quiet the rest of the day. Most ominously, she reported that the security guards in her presence continuously had their hands on their pistols. Several other civil society representatives reported similar threatening arms displays by security in elevators.

These outrageous actions by IDB security contributed to a generalized atmosphere of intimidation, especially during the last few days of the meeting. For example, security officials were stationed outside the NGO office and credentialed NGO representatives were approached by unidentified security officials and asked for their passport numbers. Credentialed NGO representatives reported being followed throughout the building and had close up photos taken of them by unidentified security personnel while using first floor internet facilities. Credentialed NGOs were subject to disproportionate and arbitrary searches, had media advisories and other materials confiscated, and were blocked from entering parts of the Meeting Site (2nd Floor Executive Director office area). Moreover, other civil society representatives (Johnson Cerda of Amazon Alliance) were prevented from entering the meeting site although he had been cleared for a meeting with Executive Directors of the Bank later that afternoon.

Mr. Dante Vera Miller, who identified himself as in charge of the Peruvian national police at the Ministry of the Interior arrived at the NGO Room approximately 20 minutes after the room had been blocked and reported to Nadia Martinez of the Institute for Policy Studies that the IDB had ordered them to block entry to the NGO Room. He was upset that the police officers had followed the order, and said that the IDB is not authorized to give the Peruvian police orders. He said that IDB’s Operations Manager, Fred Clarke, was the one who gave the order. He asked his officers to move aside and to restore free entry into the NGO Room. He also apologized and said that the police had nothing to do with it.

Several representatives of civil society organizations then visited Mr. Clarke’s office, who denied having placed the order to block the NGO room. Ms. Martinez reported what the Ministry representative had said and Clarke refuted that claim. In the meantime, NGO delegates

from the US and Europe sought assistance from their respective Executive Directors. Two people from US ED's office accompanied civil society representatives back down to the NGO room and stayed until we were able to begin our press conference, to make sure nothing else happened.

These clear violations of the rights of civil society representatives at the IDB Annual Meetings were reported to several Executive Directors, the representative of the Dutch Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Executive Vice-President.

A series of troubling questions emerge from the sequence of events witnessed prior to the NGO press conference on the 29th:

1. Who ordered the NGO room to be closed and for NGO representatives to be confronted, searched and followed?
2. Why was the NGO room closed?
3. Why were Elizabeth Barclay of APEX and Janneke Bruil of Friends of the Earth International detained and why were other NGO representatives followed or harassed?
4. Why was the press impeded from knowing about the planned NGO press conference through the removal of press advisories, the detainment of press advisors, and the misinformation that the press conference had been cancelled, unauthorized or was allegedly a protest?
5. Why were certain civil society representatives prevented from entering the Meeting Site, when they had in fact already been cleared for meetings with Bank officials later that day.

In reflecting on the overall experience that civil society organizations faced at the 45th Annual Meetings, further more far reaching procedural questions emerge:

1. Given the difficulty of distinguishing between IDB security and the Peruvian national police since all were dressed alike, who was in charge of security at the IDB Annual Meetings (Bank officials/contractors or Peruvian officials)?
2. Why was there no coordination between security and NGO representatives prior to Monday if any potential special security issues were anticipated related to the visit of President Toledo?
3. What are the criteria for requesting access to the formal press briefing room? Why does the an Executive Director have to approve the NGO use of the official press room?
4. What are the entitlements of a prior approved civil society organizations at the IDB Annual Meetings vis-a-vis use of site facilities, guest privileges, access to Bank officials and the media – as well as general freedom of mobility, freedom of expression, and protections against harassment from security officials). What will the IDB do to ensure that the identification placard of an invited guest is never inappropriately removed in the future?

The appalling events that occurred on the 29th have not been forgotten and now merit a full investigation by the Bank to answer the questions set out above, but moreover to clarify the

status and rights associated with participation of NGOs in future Annual Meetings. The arbitrary nature in how the cited actions unfolded on the 29th, as well as other issues that arose during the course of the Annual Meetings, call into question the Bank's stated commitments to civil society participation, transparency and accountability. We look forward to your response to these issues and how the IDB will address them to ensure maximum participation by civil society at future IDB Annual Meetings.

Signed

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Nadia Martinez, Institute for Policy Studies

Sara Grusky, Public Citizen Water for All Campaign

Beatrice Edwards, Public Services International

Elizabeth Barclay, Policy Analyst, Asia Pacific Environmental Exchange (APEX)

David Bakter, Director, Asia Pacific Environmental Exchange (APEX)

Janneke Bruil, Friends of the Earth International, Coordinator IFI Program

Kari Hamerschlag, Amazon Alliance

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