

Fifth declaration of the Lacandon Jungle

**Today we say:
We are here! We are resisting!**

"We are the avengers of death.

Our lineage will never be extinguished as long as

there is light in the morning star."

Popul Vuh

Brothers and sisters.

Ours is not the house of pain and misery. That is how he who robs and deceives us has painted us.

Ours is not the land of death and anguish. Ours is not the treason nor does our way have room for the forgetting.

Ours are not the empty ground and the hollow sky.

Ours is the house of light and joy. That is how we created it, that is how we struggle for it, that is how we nurture it.

Ours is the land of life and hope.

Ours is the path of peace which is planted with dignity and harvested with justice and liberty.

I. Resistance and silence

Brothers and sisters.

We understand that the struggle for the place which we deserve and need in the great Mexican Nation, is only one part of everyone's great struggle for democracy, liberty and justice, but it is a fundamental and necessary part. Time and again, since the beginning of our uprising on January 1, 1994, we have called on all the peoples of Mexico to struggle together, and by all means possible, for the rights which the powerful deny us. Time and again, since we saw and spoke with all of you, we have insisted on dialogue and meeting as the path for us to walk. For more than four years, the war has never come from our side. Since then the war has always come from the mouth and the steps of the supreme governments. From there have come the lies, the deaths, the miseries.

Along the path that you asked us to walk, we held talks with the powerful and we reached agreements

which would mean the beginning of peace in our lands, justice for the indigenous of Mexico and hope for all honest men and women in the country.

These agreements, the San Andres Accords, were not the product of only our will, nor were they created alone. Representatives from all the Indian peoples arrived at San Andres, their voice was represented there, and their demands were expressed there. Their struggle, which is lesson and path, was shining, their word spoke and their heart defined.

The zapatistas and their accords were not alone there. The zapatistas were, and are, next to and behind the Indian peoples. Like now, then we were only a small part of the great history with face, word and heart of the nahuatl, paipai, cucapa, cochimi, kumiai, yuma, seri, chontal, chinanteco, pame, chichimeca, otomi, mazahua, matlazinca, ocuilteco, zapoteco, solteco, chatino, papabuco, mixteco, cuicateco, triqui, amuzgo, mazateco, chocho, izcateco, huave, tlapaneco, totonaca, tepehua, popoluca, mixe, zoque, huasteco, lacandon, maya, chol, tzeltal, tzotzil, tojolabal, mame, teco, ixil, aguacateco, motocintleco, chicomucelteco, kanjobal, jacalteco, quiche, cakchiquel, ketchi, pima, tepehuan, tarahumara, mayo, yaqui, cahita, opata, cora, huichol, purepecha y kikapu.

As we did then, we now continue walking together with all the Indian peoples in their struggle for recognition of their rights. Not as vanguard or guide, only as a part.

We keep our word of seeking a peaceful solution.

But the supreme government did not keep their word and broke the first fundamental accord which we had reached: recognition of indigenous rights.

To the peace which we offered, the government countered with their stubborn war.

Since then, the war against us and all the Indian peoples has continued.

Since then, the lies have grown.

Since then they have deceived the country and the entire world, feigning peace and making war against all the indigenous.

Since then they have tried to forget the breaking of the governmental word and they have wanted to hide the treason which governs Mexican lands.

II. Against the war, not another war, but the same dignified and silent resistance

While the government unveils to Mexico and the world their desire for death and destruction, the zapatistas do not respond with violence, nor do we enter into the evil competition to see who can inflict the most deaths and misery on the other side.

While the government piles up hollow words and hastens to argue with a rival that constantly slips away, the zapatistas make a weapon of struggle out of silence, which they do not understand and against which they can do nothing, and time and again they oppose our silence with sharp lies, bullets, bombs, blows. Just as we discovered the weapon of words after the combat in January of 1994, now we do it with silence. While the government offered everyone threats, death and destruction, we could learn from ourselves, teach ourselves and teach another form of struggle, and that, with reason, truth and history, one could fight and win . . . being quiet.

While the government handed out bribes and lied with economic supports to buy loyalties and break

convictions, the zapatistas made out of our dignified rejection of the powerful's charity, a wall which protected us and made us stronger.

While the government baited with corrupt wealth and imposed hunger in order to force surrender and to conquer, the zapatistas made our hunger into food, and our poverty into the wealth that we deserved and were entitled to.

Silence, dignity and resistance were our strengths and our best weapons. With them, we fight and defeat an enemy which is powerful but whose cause lacks right and justice. From our experience and from the long and shining history of indigenous struggle which we inherited from our ancestors, the first inhabitants of these lands, we pick up these weapons again and convert our silences into soldiers, our dignity into light, and our walls into resistance.

Despite the fact that, during the time our remaining quiet lasted, we kept away from direct participation in the primary national problems with our position and proposals; although our silence allowed the powerful to create and to spread rumors and lies about internal divisions and ruptures within the zapatistas, and they tried to dress us in the cloth of intolerance, intransigence, weakness and renunciation; despite the fact that some grew discouraged from the lack of our words and that others took advantage of their absence to pretend to be our spokespersons, despite those sorrows, and also because of them, we have taken, and are taking, great steps forward.

We saw that our dead could no longer remain silent, the dead speak of our dead, the dead accuse, the dead shout, the dead live again. Our dead will never die again. Our dead are always ours and of all of those who struggle.

We saw dozens of us confront thousands of modern weapons with hand and nail, we saw ourselves taken prisoner, we saw ourselves rise up with dignity and resist with dignity, We saw members of civil society taken prisoner for being close to the indigenous and for believing that peace has to do with art, education and respect. We saw them, their fighting hearts now with ours, and so we saw them as brothers.

We saw the war come from above with its thunder, and we saw them think that we would respond, and we saw them absurdly turn our responses into arguments to step up their crimes. And the government brought war and received no response at all, but their crime continued. Our silence unclothed the powerful, and showed him exactly as he is: a criminal beast. We saw that our silence kept the death and destruction from growing. This way the assassins were unmasked who were hiding behind the robes that they call the "state of law." The veil was torn away from what they were hiding, the half-hearted and faint-hearted were revealed, those who play with death for profit, those who see in the blood of others a staircase, those who kill because the matador is applauded and underhanded.. And the government's ultimate and hypocritical robe was removed. "The war is not against the indigenous," they said while persecuting, imprisoning and assassinating indigenous. Their own and personal war accused them of murder while our silence was accusing them.

We saw our powerful government become irritated when it could find neither rival nor surrender, we saw them then turn against others and strike out against those who do not walk our same path but who raised the same banners: honest indigenous leaders, independent social organizations, mediators, like-minded non-governmental organizations, international observers, any citizens who wanted peace. We saw all these brothers and sisters beaten and we saw them not surrender. We saw the government lash out at everyone and, wanting to take away strength, add enemies we saw.

We also saw that the government is not one, nor is the vocation of death, which their chief flaunts, unanimous. We saw that within it there are people who want peace, who understand it, who see it as necessary, who see it as essential. Being quiet, we saw other voices from within the war machine

speaking to say no to its path.

We saw the powerful refuse to keep their own word and send the legislators a proposal for a law that did not resolve the demands of the very first of these lands, which distanced peace, and which disappointed hopes for a just solution that would end the war. We saw them sit down to the table of money, and announce their treachery there, and seek the support which those from below deny them. From the money the powerful received applause, gold and the order to eliminate those who speak mountains. "Let those who must die, die, thousands if necessary, but get rid of this problem," so spoke the money to the ear of he who says he governs. We saw this proposal break with what had already been agreed, with our right to govern and to govern ourselves as part of this nation.

We saw this proposal want to break us into pieces, want to take away our history, want to erase our memory, and forget the will of all the Indian peoples who joined together at San Andres. We saw this proposal bring division in its hand, destroy bridges and erase hope.

We saw our silence was joined by the will of good people and persons who, in the political parties, raised their voices and organized forces against the lie, and in that way they could stop the injustice and pretense that paraded as a constitutional law for Indian rights and was no more than a law for war.

We saw that, being quiet, we could better hear voices and winds from below, and not just the cruel voice of the war from above.

We saw that while we were being quiet, the government buried the legitimacy which is conferred by a desire for peace and reason as route and step. The space created by our absent word pointed out the empty and sterile word of he who orders by ordering, and they convinced others to not listen to us and to look at us with distrust. And so the need for peace with justice and dignity as surnames was confirmed in many.

We saw all of those who are others like us, look to themselves and look for other forms for the peace to return to the lands of possible hopes, we saw the building and undertaking of initiatives, we saw them grow. We saw them arrive in our communities with help, letting us know that we are not alone. We saw them marching in protest, signing letters, banners, painting, singing, writing, reaching us. We also saw them proposing dialogue, true dialogue, with them, not that which is simulated by the will of the powerful. We also saw some of them discredited through intolerance by those who should be more tolerant

We saw others whom we had not seen before. We saw new and good people, join the struggle for peace, not us, men and women who, able to opt for cynicism and apathy, chose commitment and mobilization.

In silence we saw everyone, in silence we greet those who seek and open doors, and in silence we construct this response.

We saw men and women born in other lands join the struggle for peace. We saw some extend the long bridge of "you are not alone" from their own countries, we saw them mobilize and repeat "Ya basta!," at first we saw them imagine and make complaints of justice, march as they sang, write as they shout, speak as they could march. We saw all of those sparks bounce across the heavens and arrive in our lands with all the names that Joseph had named, with all the faces of all who in all the worlds want a place for all.

We saw others cross the long bridge and, from their lands, arrive in ours after crossing borders and oceans, to observe and to condemn the war. We saw them come to us to let us know that we are not alone. We saw them being persecuted and harassed like us. We saw them being beaten like us. We saw them being vilified like us. We saw them resisting like us. We saw them staying even when they left.

We saw them in their lands speaking of what their eyes had seen and showing what their ears had heard. We saw them continuing to struggle.

We saw that, being quiet, our people's resistance spoke more strongly against deceit and violence.

We saw that in silence we also spoke what we truly are, not like he who brings the war, but like he who speaks peace, not like he who imposes his will, but as he who longs for a place where everyone belongs, not like he who is alone and pretends to have crowds by his side, but as he who is everyone even in the silent solitude which resists.

We saw that our silence was shield and sword which wounded and exhausted what the war wanted and imposed. We saw our silence make the power which simulates peace and good government slip time and again, and make their powerful death machine crash time and again against the silent wall of our resistance. We saw that with each new attack they won less and lost more. We saw that by not fighting, we were fighting.

And we saw that the will for peace being quiet also affirms, demonstrates and convinces.

II. San Andres: a national law for all the indigenous and a law for peace.

A national indigenous law should respond to the hopes of the indigenous peoples in the entire country. Representatives of Mexico's indigenous, and not just zapatistas, were at San Andres. The signed accords are with all the indigenous peoples, and not just with the zapatistas. For us, and for millions of indigenous and non-indigenous Mexicans, a law which does not carry out San Andres is only a pretense, it is a door to war and a precedent for indigenous rebellions which, in the future, will have to pay the bill which history so regularly exacts from the lies.

A constitutional reform in matters of indigenous rights and culture should not be unilateral, it should incorporate the San Andres Accords and in that way recognize the fundamental nature of the Indian peoples demands: autonomy, territoriality, Indian peoples, sets of regulations. In the Accords, the right to indigenous autonomy and territoriality is recognized, in accordance with Convention 169 of the OIT, signed by the Senate of the Republic. No legislation which tries to shrink the Indian peoples by limiting their rights to communities, promoting in that way their fragmentation and their dispersal which will make their annihilation possible, can assure the peace and the inclusion in the Nation of the very first Mexicans. Any reform which tries to break the bonds of historical and cultural solidarity which exist among the indigenous, is condemned to failure and is, simply, an injustice and an historical denial.

Although it does not incorporate all the San Andres Accords (one more proof that we are not intransigent, we accept the coadvisory work and we respect it), the law initiative drawn up by the Commission of Concordance and Peace is a proposal for a law which was created through the negotiation process and, therefore, in the spirit of lending dialogue continuity and a reason for being, it is a firm foundation which can herald the peaceful solution to the conflict, it becomes an important help in canceling the war and proceeding to peace. The so-called "Cocopa law" was built on the foundation of what was produced by the Indian peoples from below, it recognizes a problem and sets the bases for its solution, it reflects another way of doing politics, that which aspires to make itself democratic, it responds to a national demand for peace, it unites social sectors and allows them to continue forward in the agenda of the great national problems. For this today we reaffirm that we support the law initiative drawn up by the Commission of Concordance and Peace, and we demand that it be elevated to a constitutional level.

III. - Dialogue, negotiation, possible if real.

Concerning dialogue and negotiation, we say that they have three great enemies which must be defeated so that they can be built on a path that is viable, effective and credible. These enemies are the absence of mediation, the war and the lack of carrying out of the accords. And the lack of mediation, the war and the breaking of word are the responsibility of the government.

Mediation in the negotiation of a conflict is essential, without it it is not possible for dialogue to exist between two opposing sides. By destroying the National Commission of Intermediation with their war, the government destroyed the only bridge that existed for dialogue, they destroyed an important obstacle to violence and they provoked the emergence of a question: national or international mediation?

Dialogue and negotiation will have relevance, viability and effectiveness when, in addition to having mediation to count on, confidence and credibility are restored. Meanwhile, it can only be a farce in which we are not inclined to participate. We are not going to enter into dialogue for that. We will enter into it to seek peaceful means, not to gain time betting on political swindles. We cannot be accomplices in a sham.

Nor can we be cynical and feign a dialogue only to avoid persecution, imprisonment and the assassination of our leaders. The zapatista flags were not just born with our leaders, nor will they die with them. If our leaders are assassinated or jailed, it will not be able to be said that it was for being inconsistent or traitorous.

We did not rise up and we did not become rebels in order to believe ourselves stronger or more powerful. We rose up demanding democracy, liberty and justice because we have the right and the dignity of history on our side. And with this in our hands and in our hearts, it is impossible to remain impassive in front of the injustices, betrayals and lies which are now a "style of governing" in our country.

Reason has always been a weapon of resistance in front of the stupidity which now, but not for much longer, seems so overwhelming and omnipotent. Whether we be zapatistas or not, peace with justice and dignity is a right which honest Mexicans, indigenous or not, will continue to struggle for.

IV. We resist, we continue.

Brothers and sisters:

The EZLN has managed to survive one of the fiercest offensives which has been unleashed against it. Its military capacity is preserved intact, its social base has been expanded, and it has been strengthened politically by demonstrating the justice of its demands. The indigenous nature of the EZLN has been reinforced, and it continues to be an important driving force in the struggle for the rights of the Indian peoples. The indigenous are national actors today, and their destinies and their platforms form part of the national discussion. The words of the first inhabitants of these lands now hold a special place in public opinion, the indigenous are no longer tourism and crafts, but rather the struggle against poverty and for dignity. We zapatistas have extended a bridge to other social and political organizations, and to thousands of persons without party, and we have received respect from all of them, and we have corresponded with them all. And we have also, together with others, extended bridges to the entire world and we have contributed to the creation (alongside men and women of the 5 continents) of a great network which struggles through peaceful means against neoliberalism, and resists fighting for a new and better world. We have also contributed something to the creation of a new and fresh cultural movement which struggles for a new man and new worlds.

All of this has been possible thanks to our companero and companera bases of support, the greatest weight of our struggle has fallen to them, and they have confronted it with firmness, decision and heroism. The support from Indian peoples in the entire country has also been important, from our indigenous brothers who have taught us, who have listened to us, and who have spoken to us. National civil society has been the fundamental factor for the just demands of the zapatistas and the indigenous in the entire country to continue through the path of peaceful mobilizations. International civil society has been sensitive and has kept ears and eyes attentive so that the responses to the demands would not be more deaths or prisons. The independent political and social organizations have accepted us as brothers, and in this way our resistance has been filled with inspiration. Everyone has supported us in resisting the war, no one in making it.

Today, with all of those who walk within us and at our side, we say: We are here! We are resisting!

In spite of the war which we are suffering, of our death and prisoners, the zapatistas do not forget why we are struggling or the nature of our primary flag in the struggle for democracy, liberty and justice in Mexico: that of the recognition of the rights of the Indian peoples.

For the commitment made since the first day of our uprising, today again we put in first place, from within our suffering, from within our problems, from within our difficulties, the demand that the rights of the indigenous be recognized with a change in the Political Constitution of the Mexican United States, which will assure for everyone the respect and possibility of struggle for what belongs to them: land, roof, bread, medicine, education, democracy, justice, liberty, national independence and dignified peace.

V. It is the hour of the Indian peoples, civil society and the Congress of the Union.

Brothers and sisters:

The war has already spoken its thunderous noise of death and destruction.

The government and its criminal mask have already spoken.

It is the time for the silent weapons which we have carried for centuries to flourish in words again. It is the time for peace to speak, it is the time for the word of life.

It is our time.

Today, with the indigenous heart which is the dignified root of the Mexican nation, and having listened long enough now to the voice of death which comes from the government's war, we call on the People of Mexico and on the men and women of the entire planet to unite their steps and their efforts with us in this stage of the struggle for liberty, democracy and justice, through this.

Fifth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle.

In which we call on all honest men and women to struggle for the

Recognition of the rights of the Indian peoples and for an end to the war of extermination

There will be no transition to democracy, nor State reform, nor real solutions to the primary problems of the national agenda, without the Indian peoples. A better and new country is necessary and possible with the indigenous. Without them there is no future at all as a Nation.

This is the hour of the Indian peoples of all Mexico. We call on them so that, together, we can continue struggling for the rights that history, reason and the truth have given us. We call on them so that,

together, reclaiming the inheritance of struggle and resistance, we will mobilize across the entire country and we will let everyone know, through civil and peaceful means, that we are the roots of the Nation, its dignified foundation, its struggling present, its inclusive future. We call on them so that, together, we will struggle for a place of respect alongside all Mexicans. We call on them so that, together, we will demonstrate that we want democracy, liberty and justice for everyone. We call on them to demand to be recognized as a dignified part of our Nation. We call on them so that, together, we will stop the war which the powerful are making against everyone.

It is the hour of National Civil Society and independent political and social organizations. It is the hour of the campesinos, of the workers, of the teachers, of the students, of the professionals, of the religious men and women, of the journalists, of the neighbors, of the small shopkeepers, of the debtors, of the artists, of the intellectuals, of the disabled, of the sero-positives, of the homosexuals, of the lesbians, of the men, of the women, of the children, of the young people, of the old persons, of the unions, of the cooperatives, of the campesino groups, of the political organizations, of the social organizations. We call on them, together with the Indian peoples and with us, to struggle against the war and for the recognition of indigenous rights, for the transition to democracy, for an economic model which serves the people and does not serve itself, for a tolerant and inclusive society, for respect for difference, for a new country where peace with justice and dignity will be for everyone.

This is the hour of the Congress of the Union. After a long struggle for democracy, headed by the opposition political parties, there is, in the chambers of Deputies and Senators, a new relationship of forces which hampers the presidentialism's own injustices and points, with hope, to a true separation and independence of the powers of the Union. The new political make-up of the lower and upper chambers presents the challenge of dignifying legislative work, the expectation of converting it into a space of service to the Nation, and not to the acting president, and the hope of making a reality of the "Honorable" which proceeds the collective names by which the federal senators and deputies are known. We call on the deputies and senators of the Republic from all the political parties of record, and on the independent congressional members, to legislate on the behalf of all Mexicans. That they govern, obeying. That they carry out their duty supporting peace and not war. Making the separation of powers effective, making the federal Executive stop the war of extermination which it is carrying out against the indigenous peoples of Mexico. With full respect for the powers granted to them by the Political Constitution, listening to the voice of the Mexican people and making that what directs them at the moment of legislating. Supporting firmly and fully the Commission of Concordance and Peace, so that this legislative commission can discharge their coadvisory work effectively and efficiently in the peace process. Responding to the historical call which demands full recognition of the rights of the Indian peoples. Passing into national history as a Congress which stopped obeying and serving the one, and carried out their obligation to obey and serve all.

This is the hour of the Commission of Concordance and Peace. In their hands and competence is the stopping of the war, the completing of what the Executive refuses to carry out, the opening of hope for a just and dignified peace, and the creating of conditions for the peaceful coexistence of all Mexicans. It is the hour for legally complying with the law dictated for dialogue and negotiation in Chiapas. It is the hour to respond to the confidence which has been invested in this Commission, not just by the Indian peoples who attended the table at San Andres, but also by all the people who demand for the given word be kept, a halt to the war and the necessary peace.

This is the hour for the struggle for the rights of the Indian peoples, as a step towards democracy, liberty and justice for all.

As part of this struggle which we are calling for in this Fifth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle for the recognition of indigenous rights and for an end to the war, reaffirming our "For everyone, everything, nothing for ourselves," the **Zapatista Army of National Liberation** announces that it will directly and

in all Mexico carry out a

National Consultation concerning the initiative of the indigenous law of the commission of concordance and peace and for and end to the war of Extermination

In order to accomplish this, we propose to carry the initiative of the law of the Commission of Concordance and Peace to a national consultation in all the municipalities in the country so that all Mexican men and women can express their opinion on this initiative. The EZLN will send a delegation of their own to each one of the municipalities in the entire country to explain the contents of this initiative of Cocopa's, and to participate in the carrying out of this consultation. For this, the EZLN will address, at their opportunity and publicly, national civil society and political and social organizations in order to let them know the exact announcement.

We call on:

The Indian peoples of all Mexico to, together with the zapatistas, mobilize and demonstrate, demanding the recognition of their constitutional rights.

The brothers and sisters of the National Indigenous Conference to participate, together with the zapatistas, in the work of consulting with all Mexican men and women on the initiative of the Cocopa law.

To the workers, campesinos, teachers, students, housewives, neighbors, small business owners, small shopkeepers and businesses, retired persons, disabled, religious men and women, young people, women, old persons, homosexuals and lesbians, boys and girls, to, individually or collectively, participate directly with the zapatistas in the promotion, support and carrying out of this consultation, as one more step towards peace with justice and dignity.

To the scientific, intellectual and artistic community to join with the zapatistas in the work of organizing the consultation across all the national territory.

To the social and political organizations to, with the zapatistas, work in the carrying out of the consultation.

To the honest Political Parties, committed to popular causes, to lend all the support necessary to this national consultation. For this, the EZLN will address, at their opportunity and publicly, the national leadership of the political parties in Mexico.

To the Congress of the Union, to assume their commitment to legislate on behalf of the people, to contribute to the peace and not to the war, supporting the carrying out of this consultation. For this, the EZLN will address, at their opportunity and publicly, the coordinators of the parliamentary wings and the independent legislators in the chambers of Deputies and Senators.

To the Commission of Concord and Peace to, carrying out their coadvisory work in the peace process, smooth the path for the realization of a national consultation on their initiative. For this, the EZLN will address, at their opportunity and publicly, the legislative members of the Cocopa.

VII. Time for the word of peace.

Brothers and sisters:

The time has now passed for the war of the powerful to speak, we will not let it speak more.

It is now the time for peace to speak, which we all deserve and need, peace with justice and dignity.

Today, July 19, 1998, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation endorses this Fifth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle. We invite everyone to know it, to disseminate it and to join in the efforts and the work which it demands.

DEMOCRACY!

LIBERTY!

JUSTICE!

From the mountains of Southeast Mexico
Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee
- General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation.
Mexico, July of 1998

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN SPANISH IN MEXICO BY THE FZLN - CI

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY irlandesa FOR THE FZLN-CI AND
NUEVO AMANECER PRESS
