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## **AIDA Confronts large dams in Latin America**

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This month, AIDA generated fresh international attention for the issue of large dams. On November 2, at AIDA's request, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) held a hearing on how large dams in Latin America impact human rights and the environment. At the hearing, AIDA presented the conclusions set forth in its report,

The report presents case studies of five large dams that illustrate the social and environmental problems associated with large dams: [Yacyretá in Argentina and Paraguay](#), [Río Madeira in Bolivia and Brazil](#), [Baba in Ecuador](#), [Chan-75 in Panama](#), and [La Parota in Mexico](#). All of these dams violate numerous national and international laws and threaten the livelihood of fishing and farming communities, many of which are indigenous. In each of these cases, the government ignored the significant negative environmental and social impacts of dams, and failed to consult with affected communities as required by law.

Perhaps no dam in the Americas is more emblematic of the destructive potential of large dams than the Yacyretá Hydroelectric Project. This dam, financed by the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, has displaced an estimated 80,000 people, contaminated potable water, decimated fish populations, and caused massive flooding of forests, farmland and endangered species habitat.

Despite the abysmal track record of Yacyretá and other dams, Latin American governments and corporations have plans to construct more than 300 new large dams. People affected by existing and proposed dams are clamoring for compliance with international standards, including the recommendations from the World Commission on Dams. More than 40 NGOs came together to request that the IACHR hold a hearing to fully explore the issues raised in AIDA's report.

At the IACHR hearing, AIDA, International Rivers and a representative from an affected community in Mexico presented information about common large-dam impacts, including displacement, water contamination, flooding, habitat destruction, greenhouse gas emissions and repression of human rights activists. AIDA also emphasized the legal violations that typify dam development, namely the failure to provide the public with information and allow affected communities to participate in the decision making process. Finally, AIDA urged the IACHR to recommend that member states strictly enforce human rights and environmental laws and international standards when it comes to approving new dams. [With your support, AIDA will continue its efforts to engage international institutions on this critical issue that affects millions of Latin America! ns.](#)