



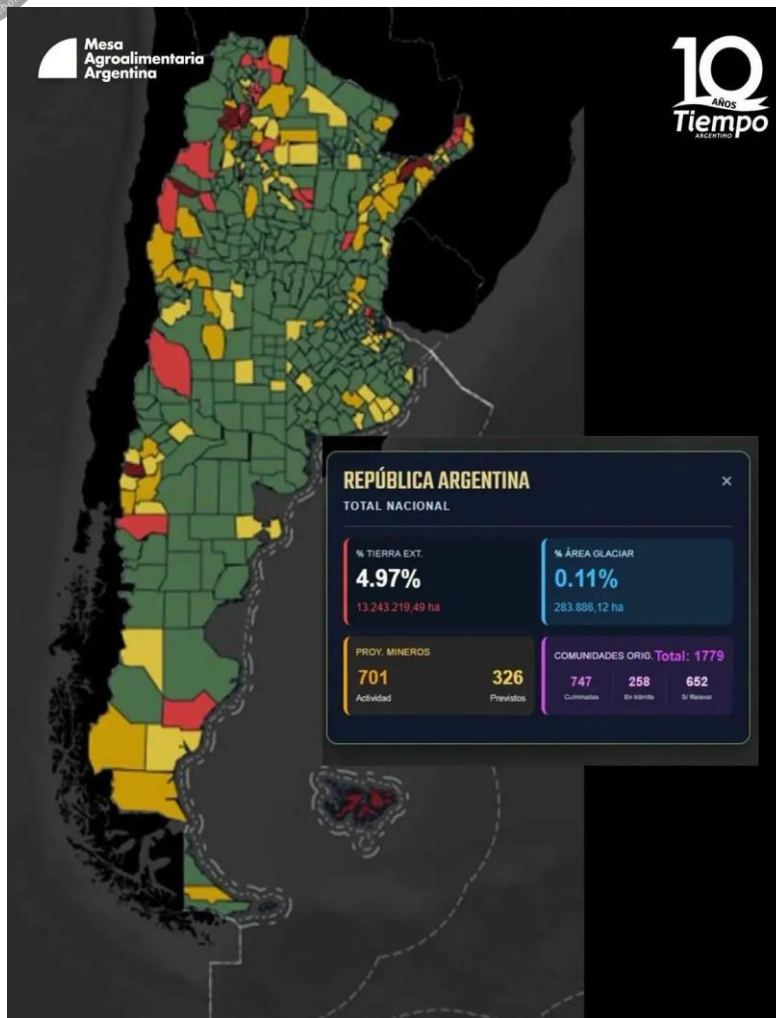
STATEMENT

DEFENDING ARGENTINA'S TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY: AN INTERNATIONAL CALL AGAINST THE DEREGULATION OF FOREIGN LAND OWNERSHIP

Next Thursday, August 6, the Argentine Congress will debate a bill aimed at flexibilizing and eventually eliminating National Law 26,737, enacted in 2011, which restricts foreign ownership of land. From the Collective of Agrarian Scholar-Activists from the South (CASAS), we express our strong rejection of this initiative and deep concern about its territorial, social, political, and environmental implications.

Land is not merely an economic asset. It is the material basis for the reproduction of peasant and Indigenous life, food sovereignty, the conservation of commons, and the self-determination of peoples. Weakening regulations that limit foreign land ownership would open a new cycle of territorial concentration, private appropriation of strategic resources, and loss of sovereignty—whose significance transcends national borders.

For more than a decade, Law 26,737 has functioned as an institutional tool to preserve Argentina's territorial sovereignty by establishing limits on the acquisition of rural land by foreign individuals and corporations. This legislation did not prohibit foreign ownership but set a 15% cap at the national, provincial, and municipal levels, recognizing the strategic nature of land and its associated resources. However, various surveys indicate that this limit has been reached or even exceeded in multiple local jurisdictions, particularly in border areas and regions rich in natural resources and biodiversity. Current initiatives to relax or eliminate these restrictions represent a significant setback in territorial governance and public-interest protection.



Source: Newspaper "Tiempo Argentino"¹

Currently, approximately 13 million hectares of rural land in Argentina—about 5% of the national territory—are in foreign hands. The main countries of origin include the United States, Spain, and Italy, with the United States alone accounting for around 2.7 million hectares. Moreover, more than one million hectares are registered through tax havens, further complicating effective regulation. This land grabbing has not been random; it has been concentrated in highly strategic areas, including border zones, glaciers, water basins, native forests, logistical corridors, and regions with high mining potential.

These territories are also home to numerous Indigenous communities. Argentina has 1,779 Indigenous communities, many located in regions where disputes over land, water, biodiversity, and other strategic commons converge. In this context, further liberalization of the land market could intensify tensions over their territorial rights. This convergence reveals that deregulating foreign land ownership affects not only land tenure regimes but also the governance of territories where strategic resources, extractive activities, and collective rights intersect.

The push to dismantle land regulation in Argentina is not an isolated event. It is part of a long-standing historical pattern of land concentration in private and foreign hands dating back to the late 19th century during the consolidation of the nation-state. Today, we are witnessing a new global wave of land and commons grabbing that, since the 2007–2008 food and financial crises, has enabled transnational corporations, investment funds, and financial actors to appropriate millions of hectares worldwide.

¹ https://www.tiempoar.com.ar/ta_article/inviolabilidad-de-la-propiedad-privada-sinonimo-de-extranjerizacion/



These processes are accelerated in contexts of economic deregulation and increasing concentration of political power, where the weakening of public controls and territorial rights facilitates new forms of accumulation by dispossession. The recent arrival of Peter Thiel (owner of Palantir and a key Pentagon contractor) and his interest in Argentine Patagonia—particularly investments aimed at maximizing the exploitation of the Vaca Muerta formation (a major unconventional hydrocarbon reserve)—along with the visit of IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva to this strategic geological region, illustrate the renewed dynamics of colonialism affecting Argentina and the broader region. It is also important to note that Argentina is currently the IMF's largest debtor.

The attempt to dismantle the current land regime is not merely an administrative reform to attract investment; it constitutes a structural transformation in territorial governance that could deepen land concentration, expand private control over strategic resources, and weaken sovereignty in a global context marked by competition over freshwater, critical minerals, biodiversity, and food.

These concerns are heightened by the broader context in which these reforms are being promoted. Argentina is experiencing a rapid expansion of extractive activities—particularly mining, hydrocarbons, agribusiness, and large-scale infrastructure projects—across territories inhabited by peasant, Indigenous, and rural communities that have historically sustained essential forms of production for food security and ecosystem care.

Family, peasant, and Indigenous agriculture remain a strategic actor in food production and regional economies, despite occupying a very small share of agricultural land. According to a study by the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA) based on the 2018 National Agricultural Census, small producers represent 63.7% of agricultural units but control only 13.4% of the land. Between 2002 and 2018, the total number of agricultural holdings declined by 25%, reflecting a persistent trend toward land concentration. Although updated data are lacking, this trend has likely continued—and even intensified—after the pandemic and the policy shifts introduced in 2023.

Since March 2026, more than 15 legislative proposals have been introduced to modify or repeal Law 26,737, many of which have been revised in response to pressure from peasant, Indigenous, academic, and political organizations. This dynamic demonstrates widespread social opposition to a model that undermines territorial sovereignty.

This issue cannot be reduced to a debate over investment or property rights. It concerns who controls access to water, critical minerals, biodiversity, and territories that are strategically vital in the context of the global climate crisis and the crisis of the agri-food system.

As an international community of scholars committed to agrarian justice, environmental justice, and the sovereignty of peoples, we recognize that decisions about land have



consequences that transcend national borders. The growing financialization of natural resources, the expansion of transnational capital, and global competition over strategic resources make it essential to strengthen—not weaken—democratic mechanisms for territorial regulation.

We therefore express our solidarity with peasant, Indigenous, rural dwellers, environmental, labor, academic, and human rights organizations defending the social function of land and the commons in Argentina.

We call on the international community to:

- Publicly reject any initiative aimed at eliminating or weakening restrictions on foreign ownership of rural land;
- Support the efforts of Argentine peasant and Indigenous organizations in defending their territories and ways of life;
- Promote respect for Indigenous and rural territorial rights in accordance with international human rights standards;
- Demand that any regulatory reform ensure transparency, effective public participation, and evaluation of social, environmental, and territorial impacts;
- Reaffirm that land, water, and the commons cannot be reduced to commodities governed solely by market logic.

Defending land is also defending democracy, food sovereignty, environmental justice, and the possibility of building more just rural futures.

International solidarity is more necessary than ever.

CASAS

COLLECTIVE OF AGRARIAN SCHOLAR-ACTIVISTS FROM THE SOUTH

