Statement of María Isabel Navarrete  
President, Women Without Borders [Translated from Spanish]  
February 2, 2014

Mr Alvaro Berger, landlord, and press representatives; good afternoon to you all. I am addressing you today representing MUJERES SIN FRONTERAS (Women Without Borders)- a collective of mothers and daughters across the earth, concerned about the destruction of our communities and environment. We address you in this instance to call to your attention critical threats to the watersheds of two binational rivers; the Puelo and Manso. These major ecosystems are currently being devastated by corporations whose destructive actions promise to degrade our lives and irreparably destroy the treasure that is our environment. Powerful international corporations- in this case MEDITERRANEO and ENDESA- retain protection by the shortsighted laws of this country and use their overwhelming financial and political influence to selfishly feed their own interests at the ultimate sacrifice to our people.

THEY WILL NOT CONTINUE. Our struggle knows no rest.

Sisters from many different parts of Chile, from the Mapuche community of Primer Corral, sisters from Argentina, from Llanada Grande, Primero and Segundo Corral, Puelo, Las Hualas and Cochamó, have gathered and travelled by horse from the Andes to defend our traditions, our earth, and the future of our children, a future that is threatened by the power of companies that only care about profits and their own enrichment.

THEY WILL NOT CONTINUE. Our struggle is against greed.

We demand that the government respect and abide by the international treaties on shared watersheds, such as the UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, as well as the Agreement Nº 169 on indigenous consultation of the International Labour Organization. Corporations like MEDITERRANEO and ENDESA, with the help of certain political actors, are ignoring these laws and treaties. They are supported by the press who cover up their crimes as progress and development. Anyone who speaks out against this destruction of nature and life is labeled a terrorist by them.

THEY WILL NOT CONTINUE. Our struggle cannot be cheated.

Not only do they continue to get wealthier by building million dollar projects which use and abuse the resources of our ÑUKE MAPU (mother earth in the Mapuche language), but they also work to divide our communities to make their jobs easier.

THEY WILL NOT CONTINUE. Our struggle is the product of a union.

Sadly, all the crimes against our communities and the crimes against our protected species, like the coihues, cypreses, alerces and even our national symbols, the condor and the huemul, have an element in common. They are the product of widespread corruption and the fraudulent usage of the environment laws coming from both corporations and the mediocre bureaucracy of the state. Instead of defending our most dear natural treasures, they sell them to the highest bidder. These criminals…

WILL NOT CONTINUE. Our struggle is not for sale.

But now our women, the mothers of yesterday and the daughters of tomorrow, like in past times and all throughout human history, provide the foundation for our families and communities. They have the key to stop this tragedy that is leading us towards certain extinction. It is us women who feel in our own wombs the responsibility to reestablish the balance lost. Thus, as we are the ones giving life, we will undoubtedly be the ones to defend it.

THEY WILL NOT CONTINUE. Our struggle was given birth with the blood of the earth.

Today, ENDESA and MEDITERRANEO. Tomorrow, there will be others who will want to destroy our environment, other usurpers of harmony, other looters of peace.

THEY WILL NOT CONTINUE. Our struggle is without borders.

United, we stand to say, “Gentlemen, we DO NOT want your so-called progress, as your progress is our imminent destruction and death.”

We want the Puelo River without dams.  
We want hydroelectric companies out of our paradise on earth.  
This fight is to the death!

THEY SHALL NOT CONTINUE.  
THEY WILL NOT CONTINUE.