

MACHU PICCHU UPDATE — as at 4 February 2010

As you are most likely aware the recent rainfall received in Cuzco, the Sacred Valley & Machu Picchu has resulted in catastrophic conditions which unfortunately has affected access to the ruins of Machu Picchu.

This past week we have been working very closely with our local representatives and have successfully had all Inca Tours clients evacuated from the ruins. Alternative arrangements have been put in place for our affected clients and they are now continuing on with their South America tours.

On Tuesday evening Peru's Minister of Tourism and Foreign Trade, held a meeting with the leaders of Peru's Travel Industry. The good news is that everyone who needed to be evacuated - foreign visitors and local inhabitants - from the town of Aguas Calientes, have been safely transported to Cuzco by air and the evacuation efforts have officially concluded. The air-lift will continue for as long as necessary, to ensure a supply route for the town and to shuttle personnel and resources that will be needed for the reconstruction efforts. According to the Minister who was there on Saturday, the actual Machu Picchu Archeological Park does not seem to have been damaged at all. This will be confirmed by a team of UNESCO experts who will visit this week.

The bad news, for the local inhabitants, is that there are some 40,000 homes affected by the rains/flooding throughout the Cuzco Region and neighbouring areas, and more locals will be affected in the days and weeks to come by the imminent decline in the area's tourism flows, on which many of them depend for their incomes and livelihood.

Unfortunately, for foreign visitors, opening up the road/rail access to Machu Picchu is estimated to take two months. The consensus reached on Tuesday night with the Minister in regards to opening access to the site by air/helicopter, is that this alternative should not be made available during February & March, primarily because, all resources need to be devoted to the reconstruction efforts and the re-establishing of the road/rail access. February and March are rainy months in the Andes and flying is advisable only for emergency cases. **The official announcement from the Peruvian Government is that Machu Picchu will be completely closed for the months of February and March.** We are receiving daily updates and if this situation changes, we will inform you via another newsletter.

Kindly contact our Travel Specialists at Inca Tours on 1800 024 955 to discuss any questions you may have.