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Phil Little Thunder Sr. carries water from his home, the Rosebud Reservation, during a protest march at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota, September 9, 2016. (Photo: Alyssa Schukar / The New York Times)

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

Dear Friends and supporters,

This illustrated autumn edition includes news and updates covering three Southeast Asian Regions: **the Philippines, Indonesia, Peninsula Malaysia**, as well as **Australia, India**, in addition to nine Latin America nations: **Honduras, Nicaragua, Trinidad and Tobago, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina** and seven African countries: **DR Congo, Angola, Cameroon, Liberia, Madagascar, Zimbabwe and South Africa**. North America (**Canada and the USA**) and **Greenland (Denmark)** are also featured.

For the month of October, through an attentive monitoring of web sources and media releases, and thanks to information provided by our local partners, we have recorded at least **8 new cases of extra-judicial killings of activists and human rights and environmental defenders (HREDs) occurring in the Philippines (2), India (1), Brazil (2), Honduras (2), Peru (1)**. Virtually all cases are associated to conflicts being related to mining, dams and other forms of large scale land grabbing. Murders of HREDs in Africa are likely to have occurred during the same period, but these occurrences remain unrecorded and undocumented.



Mexico Honduras Environmentalist Killed: A woman places flowers on an altar set up in honor of Berta Caceres during a demonstration outside Honduras' embassy in Mexico City, Wednesday, June 15, 2016.

This year is the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the **International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**, which formed the sophisticated global human rights framework in place today. Yet, millions of people continued to flee armed conflict, violence, persecution and natural disasters in unprecedented numbers, and violence against human rights and environmental defenders (HREDs) has escalated to an unprecedented level. Hence, the impacts of climate change must be looked at not only as a security, development and environmental issue, but as a human rights concern.

The general section of our Autumn Bulletin has several articles on the ongoing violence perpetrated globally against human rights and environmental defenders (HREDs). The situation faces by HREDs is rapidly deteriorating and, in early October, this has prompted **a coalition of 76 environmental and human rights organizations from 19 countries to ask Pope Francis to stand up for their protection**. Specifically, the coalition has asked the Pope to be a patron for all environmental defenders who risk their lives by intimately caring about, and fighting for the preservation of nature and our common home. **Every week, three people are killed because they stand up for nature. An even larger number faces threats, intimidation and physical violence.** Indigenous groups are most vulnerable, since they often live in remote areas and their territory often lacks legal protection from the state. The concerns of the NGO Coalition have been echoed by several other reports around the World and by important initiatives being taken at the UN level. In fact, recently, **a major UN report has been launched on the situation of Human and Environmental Human Rights Defenders world-wide.**



United Nations special rapporteur Michel Forst. Photo: United Nations

The reports analyses this issue from the point of view of UN experts who provide concrete recommendations to a range of actors including business and investors, in the hope of reversing the ominous trend. From this UN comprehensive report, a new approach is emerging, one that tackles the root causes of the problem rather than its symptoms. In fact, once a project is under way it can be hard to dampen disputes over land and the

environment. Authorities and businesses are eager to see a return on their investment and wield more power than local communities, who are often marginalized in the first place. In this respect, **UN Human Rights Rapporteur Michel Forst's report advocates for a preventative approach, one that puts communities at the center of decisions about the use of their land.** Forst believes that consulting people at the outset will make them less likely to encounter threats further down the line. Their input and expertise would shape projects, making them more sustainable, less destructive and

ultimately more profitable for the communities, businesses and states involved, as tensions and violence are prevented.

Unfortunately, as of now, **only 22 states have ratified the International Labour Organisation's convention 164** on the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous people regarding the use of their resources, and far fewer stay true to their commitments. This, surely, has to change. Governments must also make it easier for civil society to gain companies, meanwhile, need to reverse their terrible track record and ensure they carry out impact assessments before they start developing land, to assess what the social and environmental cost might be and how to mitigate it. As backers of numerous projects involving attacks against environmental defenders, bodies such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank must use their significant influence to ensure that their own activities – and those of their borrowers – aren't fuelling violence.



Also Alex Soros, a young philanthropist who established the Alexander Soros Foundation in 2012, believes recognition of 'defenders' and brave advocates is long overdue. Each year the foundation honors environmental defenders with the ASF Award for Extraordinary Achievement in Environmental and Human Rights Activism. As it has been pointed out by David Kaye, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of expression of opinion and expression, **counter-terrorism (a**

Catch-all to Throttle Flow of Information) continues to **Justify the detention of journalists, lawyers and judges who are suffering repression, harassment and censorship as States struggled against terrorism.** The extrajudicial killing of journalists by non-State actors is also a subject on which Agnes Callamard, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, has expressed serious concerns. She suggests to explore the human rights responsibilities of non-State actors through case studies. **The impunity with which those attacks to journalists, human and environmental defenders are carried out sent the message that certain lives are worth less than profit.**

In view of the raising of populist and extreme rightists' discourses the link between displaced people and security risks, in countries where they had sought refuge, has been irresponsible and misleading. According to Ben Emmerson, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, **there is almost no evidence that refugees were more prone than others to radicalization, or that terrorist groups would take advantage of refugee flows to carry out acts of terrorism.**

There is little doubt as Rapporteur Michael Foster has pointed out that, in most cases, **business enterprises are responsible for attacks on human rights defenders and must be engaged more actively through a "value chain" approach.** The human rights expert warned that, although the situation is particularly dramatic in Latin America and Asia where many international investors, companies and local governments ignore the legitimate concerns of the population, "attacks and threats happen everywhere in the world." As pointed out by M. Forst, best practices could be

advanced if championed by States, but – as of now – the latter have not made any robust commitment in this direction. Furthermore, **the widespread failure to hold perpetrators accountable for attacks on HREs and journalists suggests the weakness of states' judicial systems, as well as the absence of concern for the media's role in democratic societies.**



In addition to the UN Rapporteurs' report, a recent [Oxfam report](#) is calling the **European Union to critically review and improve its current bioenergy policy**, which is based on getting fuel from plants. This industry, in fact, is linked to the eviction of thousands of people from their lands, out-competing food crops, and creating more not less pollution. More importantly as **Oxfam says, because of the implementation of this policy, indigenous and rural communities are suffering**

from loss of land and rights abuses, especially in Tanzania, Peru and Indonesia. This is directly linked to the ever-increasing European demand for crops to produce energy. One of the key challenges of environmental advocates at the moment is, in fact, to reverse this trend and push the EU to end the use of biofuels produced from food or energy crops and food by-products. "In its anxiety to diversify its energy sources and cut fossil fuels, the EU is instead directly and indirectly causing eviction, poverty, hunger – and more, rather than less, carbon emissions," said report author, Oxfam's Marc-Olivier Herman. **"The EU has unleashed powerful market forces that are leaving a trail of destruction around the planet."** Overall, the EU is risking to break its international commitments to sustainable development and jeopardizing its commitments to tackle climate change. On average, **food-based biofuels emit 50 percent more greenhouse gases than fossil fuels. In 2012, over 40% of the land needed to grow crops for EU energy was outside of Europe.** Oxfam has tracked cases from Tanzania, Peru and Indonesia where energy crop and palm oil producers have kicked families off their lands where they lived, farmed, hunted and earned their living. **In Bengkulu province on the southwest coast of Sumatra (Indonesia) a company at the end of the supply chain of European biofuel producers is barring the access of residents to 1000 hectares of land, which the local government had allocated to them.** The company is threatening the people, destroying their homes and their land. **Global demand for palm oil is steadily increasing. The EU is among the world's top three importers.** As available land in South-East Asia diminishes, the industry is aggressively seeking to expand from Indonesia and Malaysia into new areas such as the Amazon region – palm oil's new frontier.



Primary growth forest near Muara Wahau, East Kalimantan. Image by Kent Wagner. Indonesia, 2016.

It must be pointed out that **under the terms of the EU's Renewable Energy Directive (RED), EU member states are required to source 10 per cent of transport energy from renewable sources, mainly biofuels, by 2020.** However, another law, the Fuel Quality Directive (FQD), has a carbon intensity reduction target of six per cent until 2020. The FQD and RED include 'sustainability criteria' that dictate the minimum CO₂ savings biofuels should achieve compared with fossil fuels in order to qualify for the scheme (and receive state subsidies). These criteria account only for the emissions that occur when land is converted specifically to grow biofuel crops (direct land-use change). However, they do not take into account the emissions linked to indirect land-use change (ILUC). When ILUC is taken into account, some biofuels lead to more GHG emissions than the fossil fuels they are meant to replace. **The final reform of the EU biofuels policy now includes a seven per cent limit on biofuels from land-based biofuels (food and energy crops) that can be counted towards the 10 per cent target.** The amount of palm oil used in biodiesel has increased significantly in recent years. Cars and trucks now burn almost half of all palm oil used in Europe. However, while there is a mandatory reporting of ILUC emissions, 'ILUC factors' are still not included in sustainability criteria. This omission means that the most damaging biofuels will still count towards renewable targets.

Moreover, EU biofuel policy has fed a forceful machine behind the scenes. **The lobby of European biofuel producers alone is now as financially powerful as the tobacco lobby and employs 121 lobbyists. That means for every civil servant within the European Commission working on the EU's new bioenergy sustainability policy, the industry has seven lobbyists working to water it down.**

Oxfam, in addition to some very vocal environmental groups, is calling on the EU to invest more instead in energy efficiency and in fuel sources that are genuinely sustainable. It must include indirect

carbon emissions from changes in land use as it accounts for its emissions cuts. It also must insist without fail that European bioenergy companies are getting the prior, free and informed consent from local communities in their supply chains.



A clearcut in a wetland hardwood forest in the southeastern USA, that has been cut down and turned into wood pellets to be used for energy in the UK; credit: Matt Adam Williams

As it has also been pointed out by campaigners at Fern, an environmental group that coordinates NGO activities on forests at European level, **biomass production in Europe is projected to rely more and more on materials that have a high risk of increasing greenhouse gas emissions.** One source of this 'green energy' is the United States, specifically the South Eastern states of North and South Carolina and Virginia.

Forests there are being cleared for wood which is pulverized into dried pellets, then shipped across the Atlantic and burned to generate heat and electricity in homes and businesses across Europe. A recent [exhaustive study](#) by the European Commission showed that the EU's seemingly insatiable demand for woody biomass is threatening biodiversity and deforestation in South Eastern US forests.



Cypress trees in the Atchafalaya Basin (pictured) will now receive better protection

To protect its forests, the EU [therefore needs a renewable energy policy](#) that encourages sustainable sourcing and use of biomass. A policy, moreover, that genuinely contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions rather than merely promises to do so. As Bill McKibben puts it, **burning biomass for power is the latest in the "parade of false solutions" used to tackle climate change's existential crisis.**

Another article in this section explains why the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) [is joining other environmental organisations](#) across the world in calling for bioenergy that protects wildlife, forests and the climate, and for risky practices to be brought to an end. It also provides additional information on the role that bioenergy plays in our energy system, why it poses risks, and which kinds of bioenergy can help wildlife.

Advocates at Birdlife are more than convinced that European bioenergy policies have been built on the myth that bioenergy – being a ‘renewable resource’ – is all good. Good for the climate, good for a more sustainable future. **“All that glitters is not gold and, similarly, all that is renewable is not sustainable” says people of the Birdlife organization.** This is to say that **bioenergy is not the clean dream we all hoped it would be** and thus policies driving the rapid growth in bioenergy use need to separate the *good* from the *bad*, and reveal the *ugly* truth behind the real climate impacts of bioenergy.

Another article, in this section, summarizes the results of a **New Cornell research.** It suggests an economically viable model to scrub carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to thwart runaway, point-of-no-return global warming. **The researchers propose, using a “bioenergy-biochar system” that removes carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in an environmental pinch, until other removal methods become economically feasible and in regions where other methods are impractical.** This work appeared in the Oct. 21 edition of Nature Communications. Among the recent ideas to cleanse the atmosphere of carbon is to plant huge regions of forests – called reforestation or afforestation. Scientists have also considered bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), in which bioenergy power plants capture their own carbon dioxide emissions, and then store them underground or in the ocean. BECCS is very expensive and impractical now, but could become a more viable option toward the end of this century, according to this research.

A new documentary produced by starring actor and activist Leonardo DiCaprio has now been broadcasted globally in 45 languages in 171 countries on the National Geographic Channel starting Oct. 30. The film highlights the critical role forest destruction plays in driving carbon pollution into Earth's atmosphere and focuses specifically on how the rapid spread of industrial palm oil plantations in Southeast Asia are at the heart of this crisis.



Chairperson of Forest, Nature, and Environment Aceh (HAKA) Farwiza Farhan (from left to right), Conservation Manager of Leuser Conservation Forum (FKL) Rudi Putra and actor Leonardo DiCaprio are flanked by two critically endangered Sumatra elephants in the Leuser Ecosystem on March 26. (HAKA/Paul Hilton)

Other articles in this section highlights the fact that to secure the land rights of indigenous people and forest dwellers is crucial to keeping global rises in temperature below the agreed 2 degree Celsius threshold.

Community forestlands from Brazil to Indonesia contain at least 54,546 million metric tons of carbon, equivalent to four times the global carbon emissions in



FILE – A worker marks timber logs at a concession area in the Miri interior, eastern Malaysian Borneo state of Sarawak.

2014, according to analysis by the Rights and Resources Initiative, Woods Hole Research Center and World Resources Institute. Without secure rights for the communities that live in these forests, there is a risk that the people will be displaced and the lands destroyed, releasing the carbon into the atmosphere.

Deforestation contributes about a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions globally, and 58 percent in Latin America alone. In tropical forests where indigenous and community land rights were recognized and protected, deforestation rates were two to three times lower, the report said, citing research. **One tenth of the total carbon contained above ground in tropical forests is in collectively managed forests that lack formal, legal recognition, the article says, based on “conservative estimates” from 37 countries.** Tenure security is a far more cost-effective means of achieving climate mitigation targets than other carbon capture and storage measures. It is also proven to reduce poverty and inequality, as well as conflict, says a report by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), US-based Woods Hole Research Center (WHRC) and global research organizations like World Resources Institute (WRI).

Indigenous people and local communities customarily claim at least 50% of the world’s lands—including forests—but legally own just 10% of global lands, and have some degree of recognized management rights over an additional 8%.

The mentioned above DiCaprio's film has brought much attention to the destruction of rainforests for palm oil, which is a huge driver of global climate change. Indonesia is now one of the world's top carbon emitting countries, primarily due to the massive deforestation in the region. And just last month, the Indonesian government again declared a national state of emergency due to the severe impacts caused by the out of control fires. **DiCaprio's trip to the Leuser Ecosystem in Sumatra has caused an international uproar when the Indonesian government briefly threatened him with deportation** following his social media posts that drew attention to the deforestation and destruction caused by palm oil expansion. The Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation later committed three years of major funding for local and international efforts to save the Leuser Ecosystem.

While deforestation for oil palm expansion continues in Indonesia, as elsewhere, RSPO certification scheme appear to have lost the trust of many. Just recently, **RSPO has lost key backers in Australia.** In fact, the group known as Palm Oil Investigations (POI), had played a key role in pressuring companies like Snack Brands Australia and Arnott's to join the RSPO and to only buy oil the roundtable had certified as ethically produced. **The RSPO is a global organization whose members include firms up and down the palm oil supply chain as well as NGOs and banks.** But in a statement posted to its website last month, POI announced it had lost faith in the roundtable's ability to reign in an industry tainted by environmental destruction and human rights abuses. POI's announcement follows the resignation from the RSPO in May by the PanEco Foundation, which is known for protecting orangutans in Indonesia, the world's top palm oil producer. While PanEco had been an RSPO member, POI had simply promoted RSPO-certified palm oil to consumers. **"The whole RSPO system is broken,"** POI founder Lorinda Jane told Mongabay. **"We just can't trust it anymore."** RSPO-certified palm oil, known as CSPO, is supposed to be free of any link to land grabbing, labor abuses and the destruction of virgin forests and deep peat swamps, not all of which are necessarily illegal in the countries where oil palm trees are grown. But **the RSPO's credibility has been called into question by a torrent of cases in which it has been seen as allowing violations to persist.** In March, the RSPO suspended the Malaysian company - IOI Group's - right to sell CSPO over environmental abuses by the firm's units in Indonesia. It was one of the most drastic steps the roundtable had ever taken. But in August, the RSPO lifted the suspension, a decision condemned as premature by watchdogs like POI.

Indofood is another well-know case of a RSPO members disregarding all standards for sustainability, environmental protect and respect for human rights. Indofood is an arm of the Salim Group, and one of the world's largest palm oil companies. Amid allegations of widespread abuses on its plantations, including the use of child labor, three NGOs in October lodged a formal complaint against Indonesian palm oil giant Indofood, calling for two of its subsidiaries to be suspended from the industry's largest certification scheme. The complaint, signed by Rainforest Action Network (RAN), Indonesian labor rights advocacy group OPPUK and the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF), was filed with the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). The complainants, again, raised doubts over the RSPO's own credibility in detecting and responding to labor violations on member plantations — [not the first time](#) this has been called into question. Indofood, which operates a joint venture with global snack food brand PepsiCo, is the largest private oil palm plantation company in Indonesia that has yet to adopt a commitment to use only responsibly produced palm oil.

In addition to biofuel trade and oil palm expansion, also **the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) must be taken into account amongst the key factors threatening indigenous peoples and traditional communities worldwide.** TPP is a multilateral free trade agreement in which Chile, Mexico and Peru participate along with Australia, Brunei Canada, the United States, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam; this agreement had been secretly negotiated since 2010. In February 2015 it was signed by the governments of the negotiating countries and is now ready to be approved by the Congress of each of the participating countries (although, it is not known whether the position of US on TPP will change during Trump's administration).

The negotiations for the TPP which brings together 40 percent of the world economy, and which is considered the most ambitious economic treaty in the planet, comprises 23 areas that include agriculture, customs administration, industrial goods, rules of origin, textiles, financial services, investment, telecommunication, state owned commercial enterprises, intellectual property, trade and labor, services, entry for business persons, trade and the environment, government procurement,

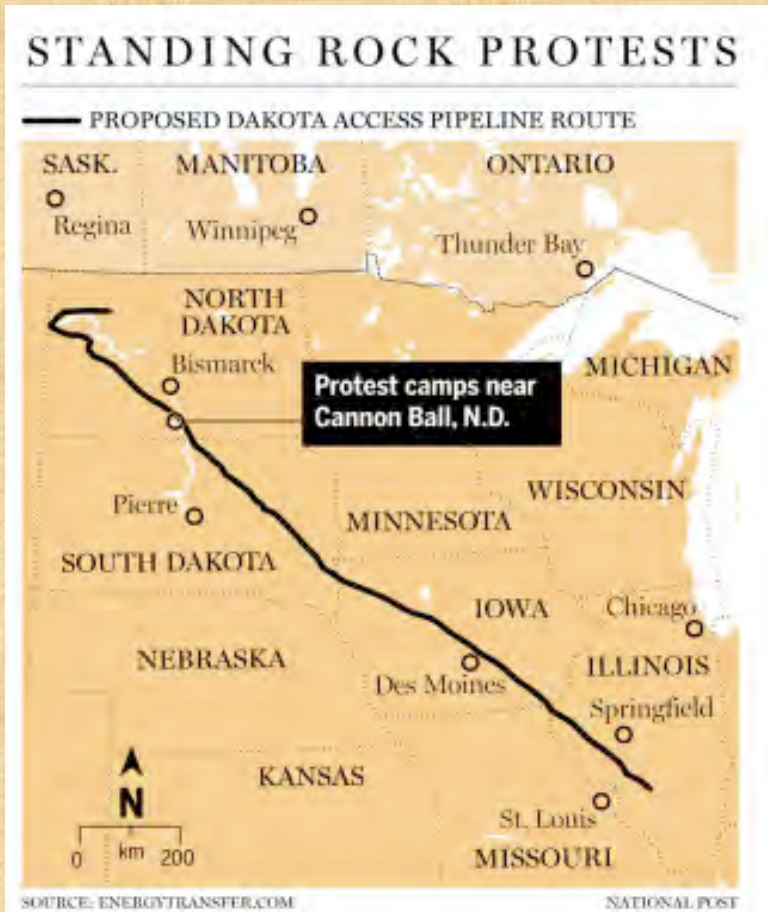
sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, trade remedies, and institutional/legal issues. Although the governments guarantee that the treaty will bring huge commercial advantages for the signing countries, in truth, it includes protection mechanisms for intellectual property, patents and operating licenses, as well as guarantees to foreign investment, issues that go beyond the existing free trade agreements. The chapter on Intellectual Property Rights is one of the most delicate because it extends the protection period for patents, limits access to Internet free content, and imposes obstacles to the free dissemination of knowledge. It is believed that TPP will have adverse negative repercussions on the rights of traditional communities to self-determination; lands, territories and resources; participation; and free, prior and informed consent while exacerbating the conflict between land rights and investment and free trade agreements.

Our regional highlight in this bulletin is the US, where the courageous actions of the Standing Rock Sioux have inspired indigenous people and their advocates everywhere. “The people of Standing Rock Sioux Reservation ... are calling us anew to respect and protect this sacred gift of God, and in so doing to respect and protect God’s gift of human life,” [stated](#) Michael Curry, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church. “In protesting ... they recognize the gift of water to all of us, a gift given to us by our Creator. ... This God-given resource courses through our mighty rivers and our human veins, working to renew and reinvigorate all of creation.”



Members of the Pikuni Blackfeet Nation march into Sacred Stone Camp near Cannonball, ND

AMBER BRACKEN FOR POSTMEDIA



The actions happening at Standing Rock are not only about a specific tribe, rooted in a specific place. But what the Standing Rock Sioux are doing is much bigger than that. Gracey Claymore, a 19-year-old youth representative of the Standing Rock Sioux, recently spoke before a panel of about two-dozen United States lawmakers. [She explained](#) how her tribe knows that they are acting in defense of not only their home place, but in defense of all humanity. The Standing Rock Sioux are part and parcel of that 1 percent of the U.S. population, represented by Native Americans. Today, there are 567 federally recognized tribes. The largest are the Navajo Nation and Cherokee Nation. They have rights that are established in the U.S. Constitution and in federal statutory law, which have long been recognized by the courts. In recent years, however, there has been somewhat of a retrenchment in federal

courts, and especially in the Supreme Court, with respect to the recognition of tribal jurisdiction and tribal statutory rights that were enacted to remedy some of the past dispossessions American Indians endured. The Sioux of Standing Rock represents a vivid and extraordinary example of how a tiny campout has grown into a global movement.

The Water Protectors of the Oceti Sakowin, Red Warrior and Sacred Stone spirit camps, near Cannon Ball, North Dakota, set out to shut down construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline, a US\$3.8-billion project that aims to connect the Bakken oil fields with a transport hub near Patoka, Illinois. If completed, Dakota Access could handle some 570,000 barrels of oil per day. That's nearly half of North Dakota's entire daily production. But though much of the pipe is already in the ground, the

project itself—like Keystone XL before it—is in jeopardy.

While the World watches, as their movement is live-streamed on social media, indigenous protesters have banded together with major environmental groups like the Sierra Club and 350 organizations to fight Dakota Access. For now, they've battled the pipeline's owners — which will likely soon include Canada's



Enbridge Inc. — to a standstill. Protesters have confronted construction teams on pipeline sites near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, south of Bismarck. Lawyers for the tribe have tied the project up in litigation and campers are now clashing with police. Police in riot gear have used sound cannons, beanbag guns and pepper spray to drive protesters from a camp on private land directly in the pipeline's path. The hours-long confrontation, watched live on Facebook by tens of thousands of viewers, was the most heated yet of the increasingly prominent occupation. More than 140 people were arrested, according to the Morton County Sheriff's office. Several cars were set on fire. Despite the setback, the protesters have vowed to carry on. "We won't step down from this fight," Dave Archambault II, one of the organizers, said in a public statement.

The protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline are, in many ways, an outgrowth of the ones fought against Keystone XL. But they are also something bigger and something new. **The camps that have sprung up in the plains south of Bismarck have drawn what some are calling the largest gathering of Native American tribes in history.** Thousands of people, from what organizers say is more than 200 tribes, have come from all over the United States — and some from much further — to join the occupation. Hundreds have vowed not to leave until they win.

One organizer has called this moment the beginning of a new Native Civil Rights Movement. Whatever is happening at Standing Rock, organizers are hoping it will spread. They want Standing Rock to become the new normal on pipeline sites — in the United States, and in Canada too.

Indigenous opponents of Dakota Access have two broad complaints. One is that the pipeline crosses through traditional tribal territory, home to sacred sites. The other is that, by passing under the Missouri River, the pipeline would put the tribe's water supply at risk. The protest's main



Thousands of Native Americans have joined the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's protest against an oil pipeline in Cannon Ball, N.D. (AL YSSA SCHUKAR/NYT)

slogan, whispered among supporters like a benediction, is “Water is life.”

The movement gained celebrity support, including from actress Shailene Woodley (who was arrested while protesting in North Dakota in October) and Leonardo DiCaprio. Protesters from the camps confronted the workers, first from outside the fence, with shouts like “Criminals!” and “Go get your money somewhere else.” Eventually, they surged through the wire and came face to face with a team of private security guards. After everything was over that day, the Morton County Sheriff’s office released a statement decrying the protest as an “unlawful ... riot.”

In the communities surrounding the camps, meanwhile, there’s a sense of fear. Several people said they were afraid to speak on the record because they feared retaliation from the camps. What is clear is that the situation could get ‘out of hands’ soon. The police are heavily armed and overworked; sheriffs have been called in from all over North Dakota, and now eight other states, to bolster the

Morton County crew. People fear that with the new Presidency of Donald Trump, the whole situation could deteriorate and brutality by police increase.



Protesters against the Dakota Access Pipeline stand-off with police in this aerial photo of Highway 1806 and County Road 134 near the town of Cannon Ball, North Dakota, U.S., October 27, 2016. © Morton County Sheriff's Office / Reuters

Undoubtedly, **what’s going on in North Dakota is rooted in historical wrongs.** The original damage can’t be repaired, but it certainly shouldn’t be compounded by contemporary harm. **Indigenous people from all over the Americas have gathered in North Dakota to fight for their present and future.** They have to fight because the attitude of entitlement and indifference to others that fuelled European expansion across the continent is still alive.

What's happening in North Dakota isn't isolated. It's part of a continuing failure to value the rights and even the lives of all people. Standing Rock Sioux in North Dakota have filed a lawsuit to stop the pipeline project, but it is the protests that have brought attention. Ironically many arrests of first nations' demonstrators have taken place also on the anniversary of the **Sept. 3, 1863, Whitestone Massacre, in which the U.S. Army killed or injured as many as 300 people in a Sioux village.** Those arrested have been held at the Morton County Correctional Center in 10-by-14 foot cages, some in dog kennels. They reported being forced to wait for access to food, water, bathrooms and medical attention. Some charged with misdemeanors were strip-searched. **Women were left naked in their cells and male guards harassed them.** Some people were zip-tied in stress positions for hours. Water **Protectors who had locked themselves to some construction equipment reported being waterboarded.** Waterboarding has long been considered torture, which violates the UN's Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ratified by the United States. Amnesty International, which has sent a team to Standing Rock to investigate the human rights abuses, stated that some of this treatment violates the prohibition on cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. (In addition to ratifying the Convention against Torture, the United States has also ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which outlaws cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.) The UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples, **Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, has called on the United States to halt the construction of the DAPL because it poses a significant risk to the drinking water of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and threatens to destroy their sacred sites and burial grounds.**



Right now, at the northernmost point of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota, around 700 people are preparing for winter and the continued protest of the 1,172-mile Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). This is a classic modern-day example of the people challenging and making things very difficult for the faceless corporation. All that's going on in North Dakota right now is the product of a larger, overarching societal shift in mentality and perception of what's considered normal. The movement represents a shift in popular commentary surrounding

A Morton County Sheriff's deputy Tom Stromme/The Bismarck Tribune via AP officer arrests actress Shailene Woodley at a protest against the Dakota Access

energy use, resource extraction, development and people's standard of well-being.

But the struggle of Native Americans to save their land is also reverberating all over the nation. Tribes in Nevada are now pushing for permanent protection of lands they consider sacred around militia leader Cliven Bundy's ranch, the man who inspired the Oregon occupation and father of Ammon and Ryan. A coalition of tribes in Utah is pushing for a national monument on cultural lands there.

In Canada, as well, the Muskrat Falls fight has escalated into a national struggle.

While many protestors are opposed to the controversial and massively expensive hydro development in its entirety, what all agree upon is that the key demands of

the [Make Muskrat Right](#) campaign, organized by the Nunatsiavut Government, are a bare minimum for the project to

proceed. If they are not met, and the reservoir area is not cleared of all surface vegetation, there is a very real and credible likelihood of methyl-mercury poisoning of the region's waterways and food chain. And this in a region that relies heavily on food harvested from the land.



Demonstrators gather in support of Indigenous Peoples Day in Lincoln, Nebraska on Oct. 10. While changing a holiday that celebrates a murderous colonizer into one that celebrates indigenous people is progressive and needed, more active policy should be put in place to protect indigenous communities. (AP Photo/Nati Hamik)

At the meantime, in spite of all challenges, some successes are also being recorded. For instance, historic land deal with Algonquin peoples have been signed by federal, Ontario governments. The agreement in principle involves more than \$300M, roughly 36,000 square kilometers of land stretching from Ottawa to North Bay, including large parts of the Ottawa Valley.

As usual, our regional update starts with Southeast Asia and, in particular, with the Philippines, which – together with Iraq and Syria – is amongst the countries where journalists are most likely to be murdered with impunity, according to a new study from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Earlier this year, the Philippines' new president, Rodrigo Duterte, was on the headlines after he made

comments that appeared to justify the killing of journalists. Speaking at a press conference in June, Duterte said: “Just because you’re a journalist, you are not exempted from assassination if you’re a son of a bitch.” The Philippines was also the site the 2009 Maguindanao massacre, which CPJ calls “the deadliest event for the press” since the organization began keeping records in 1992.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, dialogue between Indigenous people (IP) and state departments continue and the former appear to have found an ally in Environment Secretary Gina Lopez. Lopez has reassured communities that all efforts will be made to avoid the eviction of IPs from their ancestral lands due to corporations’ encroachments. DENR secretary’s reassurance came at the time indigenous peoples, who have been camping out at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, protested against the encroachment of corporations and the militarization of their ancestral lands. **The indigenous people called for the closure of mining operations in their areas, saying it destroyed the environment, their ancestral domain and their livelihood.** The Mangyans from Mindoro specifically mentioned a mine operated by Intex, while the Kankanaey, Bago and Ibaloi tribes of Northern Luzon said they were against mines operated by Lepanto, OceanaGold and Golden Summit.



Indigenous peoples in the Philippines demand the repeal of anti-indigenous peoples laws in a protest caravan dubbed “Lakbayon (Journey) of National Minorities for Self-Determination and Just Peace.” (Photo by Ken Bautista)

Manobos from Caraga and representatives from Compostela Valley also called for justice for the killings of activists and advocates in their areas, including the recent killing of anti-mining advocate Jimmy Saipan. He was the secretary general of the Compostela Farmers Association (CFA) and was shot by still unidentified armed men in Barangay New Visayas, Montevista, Compostela Valley on October 10. He is the 17th farmer killed under the Duterte administration. “This incident happened as farmers are launching a nationwide campaign for land and peace in support of the recently

concluded second round of peace talks between the GRP and the NDFP” said KMP Southern Mindanao Region chair Pedro Arnado (<http://kilusangmagbubukidngpilipinas.com/farmer-leader-and-anti-mining-advocate-killed-in-compostela/>). Less than a week later, **another environmental activist in Compostela Valley (Joselito “Anoy” Pasaporte, 32) was killed by still unidentified assailants.** According to police authorities, Pasaporte was allegedly on drug watch list. But Renante Mantos, leader of peasant group Hugpong sa Mag-uuma sa Walog Compostela (Humawac) said the drug-related issue being linked to Pasaporte by the police was already a recycled issue. Mantos urged the police to probe Pasaporte’s death. **“We strongly condemn the death of Pasaporte who strongly opposed the entry of foreign mining companies in our area,”** he said. On Monday, human rights group Karapatan said **the Philippine National Police continues to implement the anti-insurgency plan Oplan Bayanihan, “targetting activist farmers resisting landgrabbing, now in the guise of the so-called war against drugs.”** Karapatan secretary general Cristina Palabay said farmers in San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan were recently arrested and detained for charges in relation to the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. There is now a risk that the **“war against drugs” is now being used as a convenient excuse by the PNP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines to undertake illegal arrests against citizens.**



Bai Ali Indayla, secretary general of the group Kawangib Moro Human Rights Group, observes that the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) had not yet significantly aligned themselves with President Duterte's peace pronouncements. Photographed by Bernard Testa, InterAksyon.

On October 13, 3,000 indigenous and Moro peoples converged in the Philippine capital of Manila to demand recognition of their right to self-determination. The protest, dubbed Lakbayan (Journey) of National Minorities for Self Determination and Just Peace or simply Lakbayan, kicked off at the southern Philippine island of Mindanao on October 8. The protesters have been on the road since then, making stop overs in different regions of the country to gather support.

This is [not the first time](#) that indigenous peoples have journeyed to the capital to demand their rights, yet this is the first Lakbayan that indigenous peoples and Moros have banded together as national minorities in demanding the recognition of their right to self-determination. This is also not the first time that indigenous peoples in the Philippines are calling for the scrapping of laws that they see as unjust.

Indigenous peoples rights activists who joined the Lakbayan believe that IPRA and the Mining Act will not solve the problems of indigenous peoples in the country.

In fact, the current secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has recommended the cancellation of permits of 20 large-scale mining companies for violating the rights of indigenous communities as well as environmental and health standards, violations that were made possible through the enactment of IPRA and the Mining Act. **It remains to be seen whether the present President Rodrigo Duterte, who has spoken against the killings of indigenous rights activists, will listen to the demands being pushed by the protesters.**



National minorities cry out for self determination in the streets of Manila, Philippines. (Photo by Ken Bautista/IPMSDL)

On the other hands other public protests, carried out in the context of the ongoing [Pambansang Lakbayan ng mga Pambansang Minorya](#) (National Caravan of National Minorities) have been met with violence. **On October 19, in front of the United States Embassy in Manila a police van has repeatedly attempted to ram and run over indigenous peoples and national minority groups gathered in protest.** During the protest national minorities were demanding the pullout of military troops from their communities and the dismantling of state-sponsored paramilitary groups. The demonstration was also partly meant to express support for President Rodrigo Roa Duterte moving the Philippines away from its decades-old unequal relationship with the US, which indigenous groups say has led to foreign mining companies and agro-corporations laying waste to their ancestral

lands. But instead of finding sanctuary from violence in the national capital, their peaceful march to the US Embassy was met with brutality as police violently dispersed the protest with tear gas and truncheons just as it was about to end. A police vehicle driven by Police Officer Franklin Kho repeatedly drove his police van into the mass of protesters and ran over several indigenous people and activists.



Also in the month of October an ICCA (indigenous and community conserved areas and territories) project has been launched in Quezon City. The DENR intends to work for the recognition of indigenous peoples rights in those areas where conservation is at its finest. In this respect, last June, the DENR -BMB had launched the project called Strengthening National Systems to Improve Governance and Management of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' Conserved Areas and Territories. The program, funded by the United Nations Development Programme, seeks to identify IPs and their communities, and give them due recognition for successfully protecting environment and conserving their natural resources, which they consider their sacred tribal ground, from land and water, to the wildlife that thrive within them. **There are Indigenous Peoples and Community Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCA) sites, which the DENR -BMB, through the project, aims to popularize in support of the country's international commitment, particularly Target 11 of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity.** According to data from the DENR-BMB, 1,444,000 hectares of ancestral lands are within protected areas. "When we mapped areas rich in biodiversity, we found these areas are in ancestral domains. This is why eventually, we need to recognize their traditions to help in taking care of biodiversity," said DENR-BMB director Theresa Mundita Lim.

The project's \$6,776,723 budget was made possible through the assistance of the United Nations Development Program, and the Global Environment Facility. Lim said that the NCIP, the agriculture

department's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, and respective local government units would be the BMB's co-implementers on the project. The project will be implemented until 2019 in 10 biodiversity areas in the seven ethnographic regions in the country. Ifugao representative Teddy Baguilat Jr., author of House Bill 115 or the Philippine ICCA Act, said the measure stressed the government's recognition not only of indigenous ancestral areas, "but also indigenous knowledge and practices. "At the same time, the Philippines is pursuing a two-track strategy for mitigating the adverse effects of irresponsible mining. One strategy already done by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is the comprehensive audit of mining sites.

The second and parallel strategy is the review of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, which covers revenue-sharing to favor affected communities, rehabilitating areas affected by disasters due to mining operations, identifying "No-Go Zones" and issuing liability insurance to cover damages in mined-out and identified impact areas. **Overall, President Rodrigo Duterte may be considered as the "greenest" president the country has ever had since former President Cory Aquino, an environment coalition said.** Alyansa Tigil Mina National Coordinator Jaybee Garganera said Duterte is living up to his campaign promises and has made very clear pronouncements particularly with regards to the mining industry. Garganera added that with the landslide victory of Duterte last May, the President can set a clear direction for the mining industry in the country. However, the coalition feels that despite the DENR and the President's support for mining reforms, the legislative is not as keen in developing a national industrialization plan, which specifies the role of mining in the country's economy yet. Garganera proposes to replace the current mining act with the Alternative Minerals Management bill, which limits the operating areas of mining companies and increases penalties for violators, since the current law is "inadequate and cannot respond to climate change."

Recently, presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Jess Dureza said that he will organize an Indigenous Peoples Advisory Council to give ethnic groups and cultural minorities a voice in the ongoing peace negotiations with both the communist and the MILF rebels. Peace talks with the NDFP, the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), resumed in Oslo, Norway this August after President Rodrigo Duterte, who is known to have friendly ties with the left, expressed his intention to achieve a just and lasting peace in the country during his term. Pres. Duterte newly announced plan to allow Malaysian investors to establish massive oil palm plantations in Mindanao and Palawan is raising much concern. "We were hoping that Duterte's administration would have represented a major departure from the neo-liberal and imperialist approach of former Pres. Aquino" says CALG President **"although we really appreciate Duterte's crack-down on mining, we are so surprised that he is now so enthusiastically supporting the idea of putting under the control of big capitalistic Malaysian enterprises thousands of hectares of land of our Filipino farmers"** he added. There have been several press releases being circulated recently on Duterte's plan **to give up Philippine land to Malaysia for oil palm expansion.** For instance see article below: <http://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2016/11/duterte-eyes-malaysian-investments-in-oil-palm/> According to this article, Pres. Duterte said that "despite the potentials offered by the oil palm industry to improve the standard of living of farmers, the plan did not push through as the New People's Army objected to it citing environmental factors" and that "he will ask the National Democratic Front to reconsider its position against oil palm plantations".

Aside from Philippines, intimidation and violence against the Orang Asli also continues in neighboring Malaysia. Advocacy group for the indigenous people Jaringan Kampung Orang Asli

Semenanjung Malaysia (JKOASM) has urged for an immediate stop to intimidation tactics and violence against the indigenous people who are blockading a logging trail. Their call comes after reports that a blockade by a group of Orang Asli along a logging trail deep in the interior of Gua Musang had recently been destroyed by loggers. What happened at Gua Musang shows that outsiders, including the government and police, look down on the Orang Asli and have no respect for them. **The Orang Asli protesters have claimed that an armed man in a logging lorry had fired warning shots at them and three activists were detained by men allegedly posing as police officers.**



Also in **Indonesia**, as pointed out by another articles in this bulletin, government still lacks in protection of human rights and environmental activists. The latter have urged authorities to increase the protection of rights defenders amid mounting violence against them. **Activists of the Indonesian Forum for Environment (Walhi), Protection International (PI) and Arus Pelangi said their fellow activists across the country had experienced various abuses when fighting for people's rights.** According to a survey from the Centre for Applied Human Rights at the UK-based University of York, the government is the most common violator against human rights activists. Companies, particularly those related to environment and labor rights issues, come second, while fundamental religious organizations rank third, according to the survey. The survey was conducted earlier this year on 87 human rights activists of various issues like the environment, LGBTs, women's rights and religious freedom. The activists originated from Jakarta, Surabaya, Ambon, Aceh, Palu and Manokwari. **The survey also found that activists received various types of abuse, most commonly threats through phone calls and text messages. They also experienced assault, became subject to investigations and criminal charges and faced defamation in the media.** As many as 90 percent of the respondents said they were worried about their safety.

Activists also claim that recurrent man-made forest fires have degraded the health of citizens around the country, as well as that of its neighbours. Oil palm expansion through land clearing, is one of the main causes of land and forest fires. According to data from the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi), **from 439 companies involved in the 2015 forest fires, 308 of them were palm oil companies.** But all of these plans may go out the window if the House of Representatives and the government approve the contentious palm oil bill, which critics say contains provisions that protect business at the expense of the environment, reducing land and building taxes. The country's palm oil industry is driven by global demand and investment by Malaysian and Singaporean companies, among others. **In 2014, Indonesia supplied about 52 percent of the world's palm oil,** which is used in a wide range of products from potato chips and cosmetics to cooking oil and toothpaste. Advocates fear that the new proposed bill will become a milestone for the future of the palm oil industry in Indonesia. The palm oil business has an enormous impact on the country's natural landscapes. **Since 1990 the country has lost some 31 million hectares (76 million acres) of forest, or an area nearly the size of Germany.** The reality is that oil palm companies are poised to destroy critical orangutan habitat and indigenous peoples' hunting grounds in breach of Indonesia's moratorium. This is the case, for instance, of Sungai Putri, a beautiful natural forest area in West Kalimantan that is home to between 750 and 1750 orangutans. This makes it the third largest population of this critically endangered species in the province. Sungai Putri has extensive deep peat areas, up to 14.5 meters deep in places. Now, a company named PT Mohairson Pawan Khatulistiwa apparently plans to clear more than half of their license area for conversion into an industrial tree plantation. Ironically enough, **Indonesia is amongst those countries that signed the Paris Agreement on April 22 in 2016 in New York,** but this has not been followed by serious national policies on natural resources management. The non governmental organization concerned with environment Wahana Lingkungan Hidup (Walhi) argues that **"ratification is not enough as the country has the responsibility to meet its pledge, to meet its commitment of reducing 29 percent of greenhouse gas emission by 2030 and to prevent ecological disaster."** As a result, Walhi is calling on the government to gradually phase out the use of fossil

energy such as coal in favor of renewable energy. In addition, the ratification decision should also be followed with a halt to expansion of mono-culture plantations such as oil palm plantations and industrial timber estates.

Complaints against oil palm expansion are now being heard from every corner of Indonesia. A complaint lodged earlier this year about alleged abuses by a palm oil company in Indonesian Papua has



This fire burning across peatland in Sebangau in 2015 offers a preview of the fate that could befall Sungai Putri if it is drained and degraded. Courtesy of the Borneo Nature Foundation.

raised questions over the credibility of the industry's largest certification scheme in investigating member violations. **In April, indigenous rights NGO Pusaka wrote to the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) with detailed allegations that PT Nabire Baru — a subsidiary of Goodhope Asia, which is owned by Sri Lankan palm oil giant Carson Cumberbatch — had violated "both legal**

regulations and the customary law” of the Yerisiam Gua people, as well as the RSPO’s own principles and criteria, which ban unsustainable practices like the conversion of virgin rainforests and land grabbing that aren’t necessarily illegal in countries where palm oil is produced.

Aside from Pusaka’s letter to the RSPO, issues and concerns with the company have already been raised in the past. In early 2015, a group of organizations calling themselves the “Coalition caring for oil palm victims in Nabire” urged the governor of Papua province to revoke the company’s permit



Dozens of families had to evacuate their homes when Sima village was severely flooded in March, allegedly as a result of deforestation by PT Nabire Baru. The company is also accused of never having conducted an environmental impact assessment, or AMDAL, as required by law. Photo courtesy of Indonesia’s National Disaster Management Agency

over its alleged violations. **Nabire Baru is probably the most controversial plantation in Papua**, and the case was also featured in an inquiry into land conflicts affecting indigenous peoples conducted by Indonesia’s National Commission on Human Rights. As of now, the company has denied all of the allegations.

In Jharkhand (Eastern India) police continue to fire on tribal protesters, leaving seven people dead since August. Protesters had tried to join a rally against the government’s alleged attempt to dilute two British-era laws safeguarding tribal land. Several policemen have also injured when hundreds of villagers clashed with security personnel who tried to stop them from marching to Ranchi, to join a rally by a conglomerate of tribal groups. The growing tribal anger in Jharkhand has echoes of the nationwide protests by farmers against the Narendra Modi government’s controversial bill that aims to ease India’s laws governing land acquisition for industries. The Raghubar Das-led BJP government has brought in an ordinance seeking changes in the century-old Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (CNT) and Santhal Pargana Tenancy (SPT) Act to facilitate acquisition of tribal land for “public interest projects” such as roads, dams, water pipelines, transmission cables, hospitals and educational institutions. The

tribals - constituting 26.2% of the state's 3.29 core population – say the move could lead to rampant acquisition of land belonging to the indigenous people.



Tribals in Ranchi attend the Adivashi Akrosh Maharally expressing solidarity with the unmodified Tribal land Acts - Chotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) and Santhal Pargana Tenancy (SPT) act against state government. (Parwaz Khan/Hindustan Times)



Violations of basic human rights continue unabated also in Kashmir, where the high Court in Jammu and Kashmir has again prolonged the arbitrary detention of Kashmiri human rights defender Mr. Khurram Parvez, who has already spent 40 days in jail. On 14 September 2016 Mr. Parvez was stopped from travelling to Geneva to

participate in the United Nations Human Rights Council on orders from the Intelligence Bureau, and was arrested 2 days later at his home in Kashmir under Sections 107 and 151 of the Criminal Procedure Code and denied access to legal counsel. A judge from The High Court in Srinagar District issued an order for Mr. Parvez's release on 20 September, but police promptly re-arrested him under the preventive detention provisions of the Public Safety Act (PSA). **On 19 October 2016, several United Nations experts called on the Government of India to release Mr. Parvez, and expressed their concerns regarding the arbitrary application of the PSA against human rights defenders.** Nevertheless, the Indian authorities have ignored this call and their obligations under international law by continuing to hold Mr. Parvez in arbitrary detention.

Also in Nagaland, the present status of human rights protection is still very much behind any expected standard. **Promoting human rights is one of the core purposes of the United Nations. And the core purpose of the United Nations was deliberately failing as Nagaland government could not constitute a State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) till date. The President of Nagaland Voluntary Consumers' Organisation (NVCO) & Convenor ACAUT Nagaland (legal cell) Kezhokhoto Savi said that the churches, educational institutions and colleges in Nagaland are to play an active role in promoting peace, justice and social transformation. Slavery, poverty, physical torture, destruction of property, killing, hunger, sex exploitation, forced labor, child labor, commercial sex exploitation, illiteracy, etc. are against human rights. As indigenous people of the land, Article 371A of the constitution of India provides a special provision giving the Naga people rights to protect their own way of life, its land and resources. A major theme of the human rights discourse in Nagaland is the Armed Forces (Special Power) Act widely seen in the state as 'draconian'. The law comes into force in any part of India that is declared to be 'disturbed' by the state. It allows anyone of any rank in the army, or a paramilitary force under its operational command, to shoot, arrest or search without warrant – even to kill on the basis of suspicion alone.**

In India human abuses are also connected to mining, both 'legal' and illegal. Recently, the mines ministry came out with mining surveillance system (MSS), which aims to check illegal mining activity through automatic remote-sensing detection technology. The system checks 500 meters around the existing mining lease boundary to search for any unusual activity relating to illegal mining. Any discrepancy is flagged off as a trigger. There are in total 3,843 mining leases of major minerals in India, of which 1,710 are working and 2,133 non-working mines. Most working mines have been digitized. According to government data, 48,467 illegal mining cases of major and minor minerals have been registered in April–September of 2015–16. This is against 97,149 in 2014–15, 88,689 in 2013–14 and 98,597 in 2012–13.

In addition to mining, India is also witnessing the expansion of the oil palm industry. Arunachal Pradesh has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Ruchi Soya Industries to plant 25,000 hectares of oil palm in four districts – East Kameng, Papumpare, Lower Subansiri and West Siang. This brings the total area earmarked for oil palm in the state to 45,000 hectares (or 450 sq. km.). However, **expanding oil palm in Arunachal Pradesh is a risky proposition.** First, according to crop suitability maps of the United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), no areas in Arunachal Pradesh are suitable for cultivating oil palm. The oil palm plant grows best in temperatures between 25 and 28 degrees Celsius, and plentiful rain (or intense irrigation) throughout the year, which does not occur even in the low elevations of Arunachal Pradesh. Arunachal Pradesh also has a long dry season, and receives most of its rain between June and September – in the absence of



capital-intensive irrigation and suitable temperatures therefore, oil palm cultivation in low elevation Arunachal Pradesh will not provide significant yields of palm oil.

Oil palm plantations will have to replace other

forms of land use in Arunachal Pradesh. A majority of Arunachal's lands are community-managed Unclassified State Forests (USF). Sixty two percent of Arunachal's forest cover consists are USFs. Therefore, unlike replacing other crops in the rest of India, oil palm will replace USFs in Arunachal Pradesh (and the rest of northeast India). More importantly, in Arunachal, USFs provide important products and services to entire tribal communities, including timber, bamboo, medicinal plants, and clean water and air. Also, a significant part of these forests are used for shifting cultivation (or jhum) by most Arunachali people. Unlike oil palm, jhum uses "natural cycles of forest regeneration" to cultivate of multiple crops that can provide a balanced diet, without polluting chemical inputs. Replacing these forests with oil palm will mean the outright loss of all these benefits for the people of Arunachal.

A further concern is that the benefits of oil palm cultivation will be shared by few, while the costs will be borne by many.

Overall, Indian officials have been slow to implement a landmark law giving rights to forests to indigenous people because they view it as a handicap to development projects spurring expansion in the fast-growing economy. The 2006 Forest Rights Act aims to improve the lives of impoverished tribes by recognizing their right to inhabit and live off forests where their forefathers settled. Under the law, at least 150 million people could have their rights recognized to a minimum of 40 million ha of forestland, the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) estimated. But the group, which promotes access to land and natural resources, said barely 1.2 per cent of the area has been recorded in the last decade. "There is a genuine misunderstanding among the political class that if you grant rights, it will be against development," said Mr Arvind Khare, an executive director at RRI in New Delhi. "There is fierce competition among the states for investment in infrastructure and mining. The law is seen as an impediment to this." Few states have implemented the law fully and more than half of all claims for titles have been rejected, according to recent data from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Eleven of India's 29 states did not award any titles in the past year. Conflict over land rights has increased in India as land is sought for industrial use and development projects. Indigenous people hold legal titles to about 5 per cent of the land they have lived on.

Everywhere in India, local tribal people are demanding the respect of their right and ownership of their ancestral lands. Recently in Raipur in Raigarh district, nearly 1,400 villagers from Tamnar and neighboring places gathered at Gare village along with human rights activists supporting the cause. Villagers and farmers said that it is their land and although they don't prefer mining on it, they won't stop it for the sake of development. One farmer talking on the behalf of his community said: "giving away our land to private companies for mining and getting royalties from them isn't acceptable. Government should allow us to do mining on our land, let us extract coal from it and we will pay 10 per cent more royalty to state. We should be allowed to do mining on our own land."



Sushil Kumar Modi (Photo: Sushil Kumar Modi).

Talking to TOI, Amnesty International human rights campaigner Satyendra Kumar said, "at the 'Koyla satyagrah', communities from several villages have come together to discuss issues, including displacement and forced eviction. Several Indian laws make it mandatory for authorities to consult or seek the consent of adivasi communities before acquiring their land for development projects. But the government routinely flouts these laws, including when it acquires land under Coal Bearing Areas Act. Under international standards, indigenous peoples have the right to free, prior and informed consent in decisions that affect them. As of now, the central and state governments do not appear to protect such rights. The largest concentration of indigenous people in India is found in the seven States of Northeast India, and the so-called 'central tribal belt' stretching from Rajasthan to West Bengal. In mainland India, the Scheduled Tribes are usually referred to as Adivasis, which literally means indigenous people. With an estimated population of 84.3 million, they comprise 8.2 per cent of the total population. **Today, with complete disregard for indigenous people's rights, the Forest development corporations (FDCs) are felling thousands of valuable trees on communities' land.** FDCs have been set up since the 1970s in 19 states with the objective of increasing yield from forests through forestry programmes, but the outcomes have been disastrous for local communities. **Many villages have filed community forest resource (CFR) rights claims under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.** Some had filed the CFR claims way back in 2011. But the forest department allotted forestland to FDCM without settling their CFR claims. And FDCM started felling trees with scant regard for IPs customary rights. The community's biggest concern is that replacing natural forests with commercial plantations will severely affect their livelihood and destroy the region's ecosystem.

As we 'move' to **Australia**, it clearly appears that there is still a **political unwillingness to recognize the sovereign-to-sovereign relationship with the First Peoples through a Treaty**. As of now



Five protesters were arrested at Lapoinya earlier this year under the State Government's anti-protest laws but the charges were later dropped. Picture: DALE CUMMING

Australian aborigines remain dispossessed of their human rights, deeply disadvantaged, disempowered in all of the political decision-making that impacts their lives and discriminated against in so many tragic ways. As it is argued in one of the article in this section, **a Treaty is about the common good, not about separation, superiority**

of any culture or about white or black supremacy in terms of power. Treaty, the article argues, is simply one of the best legal options, based on global evidence, to recognize the rights of First Peoples on the road to making things better.

Of all British Commonwealth nations with First People, Australia stands alone with a Constitution that permits discrimination, and in the absence of a Treaty, historic injustices continue unchecked. This is in contrast, of course, to Canada where Section 35 of the Constitution recognizes Aboriginal people and reaffirms their Treaty rights. The article argues that negotiation of Treaties and Constitutional reform need not be mutually exclusive, however minimalist Constitutional change without even a non-discrimination clause as currently discussed by Australian Government does not

come close to the substantive change sought by most Indigenous people through the Treaty process. **On the other hand, the return of land to Indigenous custodians in Australia over the past 20 years is a dramatic shift in Australian land tenure and management.**



Representatives of the Whadjuk Noongar, recognised as traditional owners of Perth, mark the start of construction of Yagan Square in February 2016. *AP Photo/Phil Witte*

Yet this revolution has, as yet, barely touched urban Australia. In fact, property works against the recognition that cities, too, are Indigenous places. It is a first important reason why the revolution in land titling and management has not penetrated Australian cities. While more than [30% of the continent](#) has been returned to Indigenous control, almost none of that land is in urban areas. In contrast to Canada and New Zealand, it is exceptionally difficult for Indigenous people to gain access to land in urban Australia. There are few opportunities for land grants, and limited chance of success in

native title. A second reason is racial stereotypes. Indigenous values are able to be acknowledged in natural but not in built environments. In fact, indigenous people in urban environments are often being regarded as “too modern” to make legitimate claims and the urban environments too modified for ongoing Indigenous cultural connection. As one article argues, this is not an Indigenous problem. It is a problem of non-Indigenous racial stereotypes and the power of property rights.

Another line of argument been followed in this bulletin is that Australian Government must re-build trust of civil society. At least, this appears to be the opinion of a **UN human rights expert Michel Forst who has called on the Government of Australia to urgently dispel civil society’s growing concerns about the ‘chilling effect’ of its recent laws, policies and actions constraining the rights of human rights defenders.** Recognizing Australia’s traditional safeguards of constitutional democracy, rule of law and free media, Mr. Forst noted that his initial expectation of his official visit was to “encounter only laudable implementation of the State’s obligations under international human rights laws, aimed at ensuring a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders.” Instead, the expert found a number of detrimental measures, which include a growing body of statutory laws, at both federal and state levels, constraining the rights of defenders. “These range from intensifying secrecy laws to proliferating anti-protest laws, from the stifling Border Force Act to the ‘Standing’ bill shrinking environmental access to courts,” Mr. Forst specified. “These laws have not only accentuated the disparity between Government’s declared commitments at international forums and their implementation within the country,” he noted, “but they have also aggravated the situation after the drastic defunding of peak bodies by the Government, following their advocacy or litigation on such topical issues as immigration, security, environment and land rights protection.”

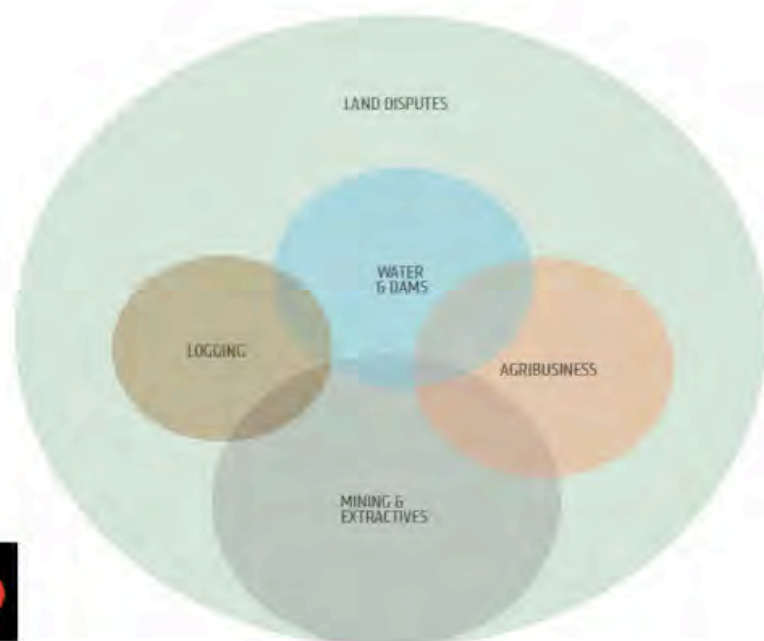
The **Latin America** continent continues to be featured in our bulletin as the most critical region for Human Rights and Environmental Defenders. It almost appears that the spiral of violence and assassinations can’t be stopped. **Human Rights Defenders Face an 'unthinkable spiral of violence' and 2015 marked the deadliest year for activists, particularly women and environmentalists fighting extractive industries.** A new report by Oxfam International, suggests that governments has been co-opted by economic elites and this is driving the violence against Earth Defenders to an unprecedented level.

KILLINGS IN 2014 BY SECTOR

These are the drivers of killings in 2014.
All of them were linked to land disputes.

NUMBER OF KILLINGS

116	LAND DISPUTES
25	MINING & EXTRACTIVES
14	WATER & DAMS
14	AGRIBUSINESS
10	LOGGING



HOW MANY MORE?

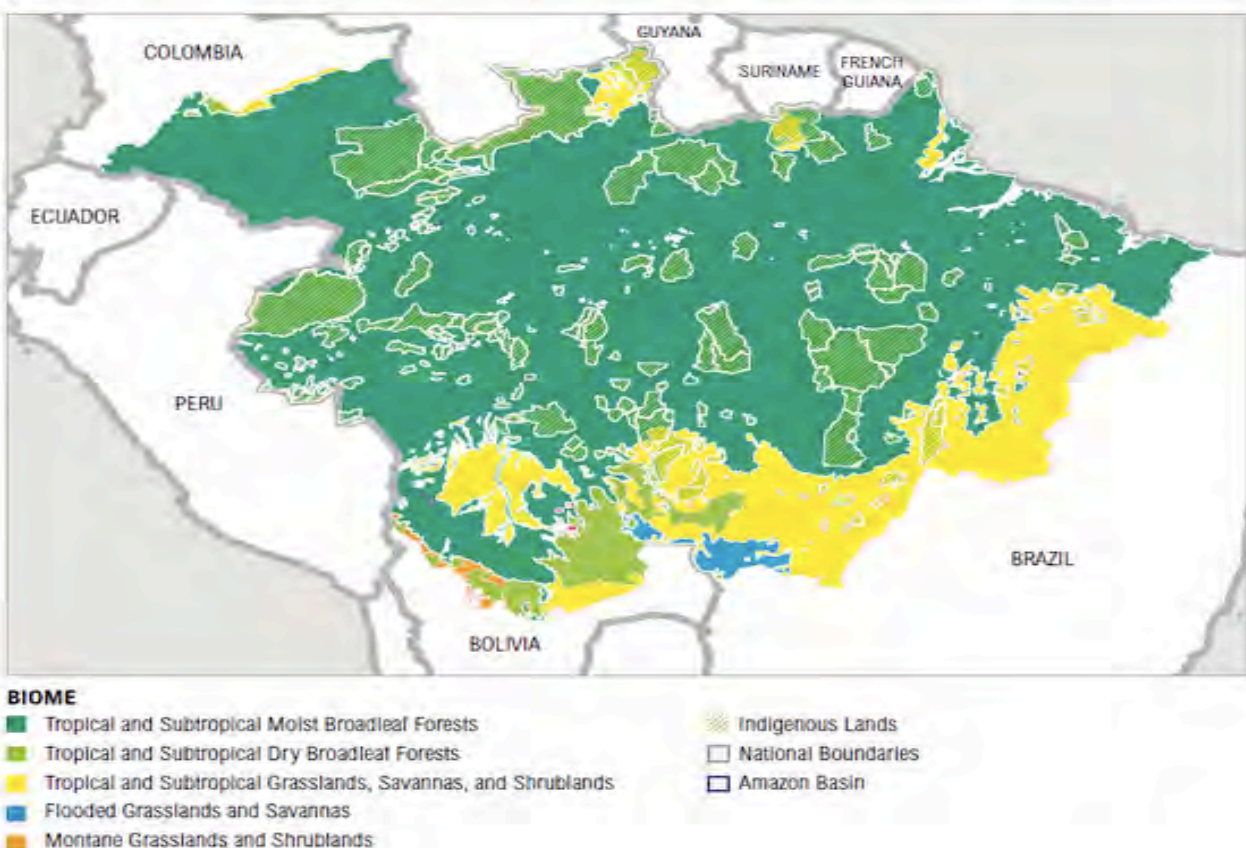
2014's deadly environment: the killing and intimidation of environmental and land activists, with a spotlight on Honduras

global witness

Global Witness' report, *The Risks of Defending Human Rights* (pdf), clearly shows that **amongst the 185 human rights defenders killed worldwide in 2015, 122 were murdered in Latin America.** And this trend appears to be continuing, with 58 additional murders occurring in the region between January to May of this year. Even worse, those numbers do not include the recent **assassinations of Brazilian environmental official Luiz Araujo** (<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/10/government-environmental-official-murdered-in-brazilian-amazon/>) - who was instrumental in bringing illegal loggers and other environmental lawbreakers to justice - and of **Honduran Campesino movement leaders José Ángel Flores and Silmer Dionisio**, nor the recent attack on Goldman-Prize-winning environmental activist Máxima Acuña de Chaupe in Peru. Oxfam has been deeply concerned about the worsening trend of violence and repression against defenders and strongly believes that this situation is linked to an economic model that creates extreme inequality and undermines people's fundamental rights. **Oxfam's report indicates that female defenders are more exposed to violence, due to the prevalence of a patriarchal culture across Latin America.** "El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Honduras have all reported an increase in attacks against female human rights activists; the great majority of these cases remain unsolved and the perpetrators act with impunity," the report states. Secondly, Oxfam highlights the connection between human rights violations and "the expansion of extractive industries as a national revenue model for Latin American and Caribbean countries."

The constant increase in land seizures by the agro-industrial and speculation sectors, together with the implementation of mining and energy mega-projects, has placed those who live in these areas in an extremely vulnerable situation and given rise to forced displacement, loss of livelihoods,

Figure 1 | Map of the Amazon Basin Showing the Indigenous Lands in Bolivia, Brazil, and Colombia



dispossession of land and environmental impact for rural communities and indigenous peoples. According to a September report from the group Frontline Defenders, **41 percent of murders of human rights defenders in 2015 were related to protection of the environment, land, and the rights of Indigenous people.**

"If governments, companies and investors don't change the way they do business, then more environmental activists will die and the planet will be exposed to irreversible destruction," said Michel Forst, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, who put forth another report on the rash of violence against environmental defenders.

Table 1 | Estimated Carbon Storage Benefits from Avoided Deforestation on Indigenous Forestlands (US\$/ha/yr, 2015 USD, Estimated with $SCC = \$41/tCO_2$)

COUNTRIES	AVERAGE	LOWER BOUND	UPPER BOUND
Bolivia	40	32	48
Brazil	14	12	16
Colombia	6	5	7

Note:

Lower-bound estimates the carbon storage benefits obtained from protecting partially deforested area.

Upper-bound estimates the carbon storage benefits obtained from protecting completely deforested area

Chart via WRI

In Honduras, on October 18, human rights defenders José Ángel Flores and Silmer Dionisio were murdered after they left a meeting of peasant farmers in the Bajo Aguán region. Both were organizers with the Unified Campesino Movement of the Aguán (MUCA), whose former president Johnny Rivas said "death squads chasing peasant families fighting for land rights" were behind the assassinations. More than 100 land rights activists and environmentalists have been murdered in Honduras since 2010. **"Honduras has turned into a 'no-go zone' for anyone daring to campaign for the protection of the environment,"** Erika Guevara-Rosas, Americas director at Amnesty

International, said in a statement. "How many more activists have to be brutally murdered before the authorities take effective action to protect them, or even be willing to talk about this crisis?" In Honduras, 14 people under IACHR precautionary measures have been killed in the past four years." **If also internationally recognized figures are being killed and threaten, the level of exposure and vulnerability for lesser-known leaders is even higher.**

According to Oxfam 24 defenders were murdered in Brazil **in the first four months of this year**; 19 defenders were killed in Colombia **between January and March**; seven were murdered in Guatemala **between January and June and at least** six defenders in Honduras **and two in Mexico were assassinated between January and April**. The Oxfam briefing also states that "of the 63 human rights defenders murdered in Colombia in 2015, 21 had previously reported threats and four were under the protection of the National Protection Unit.

In Paraguay, between 1989 and 2013, 115 leaders and members of farmers' organizations have been executed or disappeared. Many of those killed had repeatedly warned of threats against them or were even under government protection, raising questions about state inaction and complicity.



A woman from the indigenous Maca ethnic group during a celebration on American Indigenous International Day, Asuncion, Paraguay, April 19, 2011 (AP photo by Jorge Saenz).



Also in **Nicaragua** dispute over indigenous land has erupted in wave of killings. Recently two indigenous men had been abducted during a skirmish with nearby settlers, and no one knew where they were. A few days later, the men were found, decapitated — the latest in a series of Miskito Indian men killed in battles over land in [Nicaragua](#). **Indigenous communities all over Nicaragua's Caribbean coast say they are under attack by settlers who have taken over their ancestral lands.** Thousands of Nicaraguans have moved into the lush tropical rain forests that are home to the

country's nearly 180,000 indigenous Miskito people. The newcomers — called “colonists” by the Miskito — have been lured by the promise of gold and the abundance of lucrative timber. Some of the settlers have also been forced from their lands by drought. With the law on their side, and a bitter history of war, the Miskitos sometimes pushed back, confronting the settlers with large groups of people. The settlers responded with a vengeance, raiding indigenous towns. One indigenous village was burned to the ground. **At least 600 indigenous people have fled to neighboring Honduras, where they live in dirt and squalor**, advocates say. **The killings of at least 30 Miskitos have been documented; the settlers say at least 80 farmers have also been killed, but have been unable to provide a list of names.** It is an irony that such a brutal violence has now exploded in Nicaragua, a Central American nation that was an international pioneer in granting important land rights to indigenous peoples. But those same rural communities, clinging to their own languages and cultures, still sting with resentment against the Sandinista government over wartime cruelties that were supposed to have been resolved decades ago.



A Miskito man guarded an indigenous community in Esperanza Río Coco, where skirmishes over indigenous land have led to killings of Miskitos and settlers. *Oswaldo Rivas for The New York Times*

As it is well-known U.S. corporations are driving the oil and energy extraction happening across Latin America and the Caribbean. U.S. military aid has directly supported this horrific spike in violence against women and Indigenous human rights defenders. Similarly, **also Canada Mining Companies in Latin America have blood on hands.** A new report finds that the corporate social responsibility governing Canada's mining industry brings human rights abuses and death to Latin American communities. **Canadian mining companies have come under renewed criticism in October for their role in dozens of deaths, hundreds of injuries, and their systemic criminalization of mostly nonviolent grassroots activists protesting their operations in Latin American countries over the past 15 years.** The new report exposing such data sheds further light on the notorious human rights and environmental track records of Canadian corporations extracting resources abroad. Also in El Salvador, according to Mining Watch's coordinator for Latin America, Jen Moore, Canadian mining

companies are making use of international arbitration to bully governments when their mine projects



Protest against Pac Rim/OceanaGold in El Salvador (Photo: Transparencia Activa).

lack community consent and have not met legal or regulatory requirements.

In addition to all this, Latin America is also becoming the next frontier for palm oil expansion. Here, palm oil production has been primarily for domestic use, but is now seeing a rapid expansion driven by galloping global demand. While Latin America currently produces just **6 percent of globally traded palm oil**, with limited land available for expansion in Southeast Asia, the region is poised to becoming a very competing producer of palm oil. **Countries in the region are well aware of their potential. Colombia, Latin America's largest palm oil producer, has plans to increase production six-fold by 2020. Palm oil production in Ecuador has grown 7 percent per year over the past decade. Peru quadrupled production between 2000 and 2013.**

A closer look at a deforestation "hotspot" in central Peru finds oil palm expansion to be the primary driver of forest loss. That's according to a recent report by Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project (MAAP), which analyzed high-resolution satellite imagery in one of several patches of deforestation spattering the central Peruvian Amazon. Many of these events may be illegal, since northern Huánuco is not in a region zoned for agriculture. According to Ashwin Ravikumar, an environmental social scientist at the Field Museum "whether or not it's illegal really depends on how they're operating. It's possible that the government, or a regional government, sold the land or delivered a title to a company [to develop oil palm]."

Deforestation in northern Huánuco may be accelerating, according to data from the University of Maryland. Despite current trends, Peru claims to support the sustainable use of Amazon resources – a

position reinforced by laws that date back to 1998. However, issues of land tenure often undermine the sustainability of oil palm expansion, according to a recent report by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).



Guatemala, the largest palm oil exporter in Latin America, has increased the amount of land available for oil palm cultivation by 10 per cent annually for the last few years. Honduras is the third-largest producer of African oil palm in Latin America, exporting some \$300 million worth in 2015. It has been estimated that more than 150 farmers and some 20 security agents working for agriculture firms have died since 2009 in clashes over land rights in Honduras. Also in October, Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández declined a meeting with Amnesty International's Secretary General Salil Shetty to discuss the human rights crisis in the country, including the increasing wave of attacks against human rights activists.



An injured protester flees as riot police use tear gas and batons to disperse a protest against the Tambor mine, Guatemala, May 23, 2014. | Photo: Reuters

The lack of exhaustive investigations into the attacks and threats against activists, as well as the unwillingness of the authorities to implement effective mechanisms to protect them, are fuelling the increasing violence. The lack of exhaustive investigations into the attacks and threats against activists, as well as the unwillingness of the authorities to implement effective mechanisms to protect them, are fuelling the increasing violence.

Much of the recent expansion is driven by efforts to attract investment and promote economic growth in rural areas. But there is real danger that the Latin America palm oil boom may result in the same type of devastation, in both human and environmental terms, that has occurred in Southeast Asia. **Over 40 per cent of human rights defenders killed in the region last year were defending land, environmental, and indigenous peoples' rights.** The Latin American palm oil industry has done little to address these alarming developments, with rampant palm oil expansion resulting in human rights abuses and environmental damage. When acts that appear to be violent retaliation go unpunished, it sends the disturbing message that the government may tolerate such violent abuses.

Between October 8 to 16, in **Trinidad and Tobago**, the Santa Rosa First Peoples Community celebrated its Heritage Week under the theme 'Re-igniting the ancestral fires - Establishing Presence'. Chief Ricardo Bharath Hernandez addresses the nation on several aspects of his community's continuing lobby for recognition of the rights of First People's presence in Trinidad and Tobago today. **"The Santa Rosa First Peoples Community, is the only organized area of Amerindian Survival in Trinidad and Tobago, and was recognized as such by the State in 1990.** No historian, archaeologist or anthropologist can give an accurate time of the existence of the First Peoples in Kairi (Trinidad). There are differing dates—ranging from 6,000 —10,000 years, based on the scientific carbon dating of the remains of the First Peoples. Chief Bharath Hernandez also speaks about challenges to the authenticity of the First Peoples in today's diaspora. "In addition to the question of land tenure, one of our greatest challenges is that well-intentioned Trinidadians express doubts and question the authenticity of those of us who identify as Amerindians or First Peoples.



ceremonial: Santa Rosa First Peoples Community reignites ancestral fires.

It was presumed that indigenous people either died out or went out of existence by the process of inter-marriage and mixing of blood. In response to the challenge that the question of authenticity raises on the purity of blood, there is a guiding precedent set by Canada, where the Aboriginal status of the Metis who were also called 'Half Breeds' were constitutionally recognized in the Constitution Act of Canada 1982, Section 35, along with the Indians (First Nations and Inuit)." Ricardo Bharath Hernandez, chief of the Santa Rosa First Peoples Community records his appreciation to those citizens of Trinidad and Tobago who are increasingly acknowledging their ancestry, and to the many people of other ethnicities who support the community with their words of encouragement to continue the struggle for meaningful recognition.

In **Brazil**, the situation of human rights and environmental defenders is not getting any better. **A new report finds that violence against Brazil's indigenous people continues to increase, with 137 killings in 2015, often due to land conflicts;** Mato Grosso do Sul state had the most killings. **A new wave-of-killings has now erupted on the land of the Xukuru-Kariri people. One of their leaders has been assassinated on 11 October, he was at the forefront of his people's struggle to reclaim their ancestral land.** João Natalício Xukuru-Kariri was reportedly stabbed to death outside his home. Reports suggest that two men killed João, but their identities have not been confirmed.



Meanwhile, Brazilian prosecutors have charged 21 national and foreign mining executives with manslaughter and other environmental crimes almost a year after a mine dam burst killed 19 people and polluted hundreds of miles of rivers and streams. The office of the attorney general in the state of Minas Gerais says the group of mostly Brazilians also includes American, Australian and British board members and directors for the mining company Samarco and the two mining giants Vale of Brazil and BHP Billiton of Australia. Federal prosecutor Jose Adercio Leite Sampaio said in a press conference being held in October that the companies' representatives knew the basin of mine dump could burst but chose to ignore the risks to continue extracting iron ore in one of the richest deposits of the mineral.

Also in **Venezuela**, indigenous communities' struggles with mining are far from over. One key issue that concerns indigenous people like the Ye'kuana and Sanumá is the creation of a National Strategic Development Zone along the Orinoco River and the threat it represents to them and their land. This new national zone comprises an area of 111,843.70 square kilometers, which is the equivalent of 12% of Venezuela's national land. **The Venezuelan government maintains that the Arco Minero project that would take place here could be the answer to the country's out-of-control economic crisis (due to the fall in prices for petroleum).** According to government authorities, the needs of the many should outweigh the needs of a few. This would not be the indigenous communities' first experience with mining. In fact, it is their past experiences that make them wary. As you travel down the Caura River — which is the third most important river in Venezuela due to its vast richness and

the second main tributary of the Orinoco River — you'll see the Criollos, Ye'kuana, Sanumá, Piapoco, Kurripaco, Pemon, and Jivi (or Guahibo) tribes that live along the waterway in villages like Payaraima, Puerto Cabello, Las Trincheras, La Poncha, La Ceiba, La Fortuna, Boca de Ninchare, and Surapire. You'll also notice small mining excavations along with different people — both indigenous and non-indigenous — removing bits of earth and water with their trays in order to see if they can find any grams of gold. Mining activity has left its mark. **“All of the water from the Caura is contaminated,” says Saúl López, an indigenous speaker and member of the Kuyujani Organization,** referring to a study that the organization helped the La Salle Foundation and the Universidad de Oriente performed between 2011 and 2012 in which **high levels of mercury were found in Ye'kuana women.** There's even more concern because of illegal mining, which began here in 2002 but worsened in 2006. At the time, it was thought that the river would need more than 200 years to fully recover. **Now, the Arco Minero project advances towards these lands; the anticipated environmental catastrophe is expected to be unbearable for both forest environment and local communities.** During a meeting with government officials, among whom were representatives from the Department for Indigenous Peoples, the necessity of carrying out the mining project was explained to the indigenous communities. Numerous rights were overlooked, whereas the locals' duties were emphasized. **The exploration groups are already en route, some of them working in alliance with businesses from the People's Republic of China, such as Citic Group.**

The decree which seek to implement the Arco Minero project, published in April 2016, hangs over the indigenous communities. One of its articles in particular is worrisome, as it directly states that the



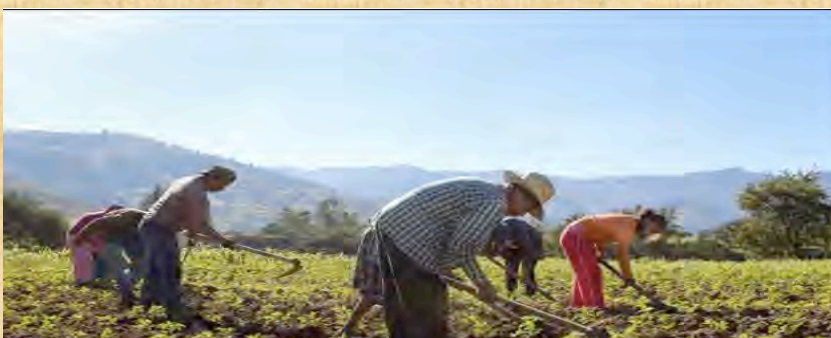
Miners at the Venezuelan town of El Callao in the Bolívar state (Photo: Elestimulo.com/Fabiola Ferrero).

interests of the project will prevail over the interests of the indigenous communities. On May 31 of this year, a group of former politicians and social activists filed an official complaint against the mega-mining enterprise with the country's highest court, claiming that the project would have devastating environmental and social consequences. Unfortunately, in October **the Supreme Court has denied the Injunction Request against the Orinoco Arco Minero Project.**

October 14 marked the first death of a protester related to mining and energy projects in Peru, under the government of President [Pedro Pablo Kuczynski](#). Police killed a protester while trying to clear a road near the [Las Bambas copper mining](#) Apurimac state. Clashes broke out when police tried to clear an estimated 200 protesters who had blocked an access road in the Challhuahuacho district of the Cotabambas province, home to Peru's largest copper mine [which came online this year](#). **The victim died from a bullet wound to the head.** Peru's interior ministry issued a statement saying that 20 policemen were injured in the clashes, and that one of them could lose an eye after being hit with a rock. **The protesters are angry about the Chinese firm MMG's scrapping of a planned pipeline, which requires the company to transport copper concentrates out of the area by trucks.** At least 300 trucks pass through the area around the mine every day, according to reports. Cabrera said the dust emitted has led to the deaths of livestock, and the noise is a nuisance in the rural community. Community leaders have requested that MMG Limited pay for the use of local roads to compensate for environmental damage and inconvenience. According to a community lawyer 34 local residents were injured, some with bullet wounds, and another 12 were arrested. The interior ministry has said it is investigating the incident. Last year [three protesters were killed](#) in similar conflicts near the \$10 billion Las Bambas mine, which produces a fifth of Peru's copper and will make the country the world's second producer.



Las Bambas mine is set to deliver 400,000 tonnes of copper per year during the first five years of production, placing Peru within the top three copper mines globally. (Image courtesy of [MMG](#))



Also in rural **Mexico** communities which would like to have a say in mining projects continue their struggle. In many instances, people who live in the vicinity of mining

projects are the last to learn about them, according to a 2013 report from the Comisión para el Diálogo con los Pueblos Indígenas de México (CDI), which oversees public policy for the indigenous population in the country. In addition, they are rarely informed about the procedures used to extract metals and how this could affect their health, their activities and their properties, according to the report. **In Mexico, the process for granting mining concessions does not require informing or obtaining the consent of those living within or near the project area.** Public consultation is limited if it happens at all, and the government isn't required to consider the opinions of local people. The only scenario in which local people should be consulted is when a mining concession stretches beneath land owned by indigenous or tribal groups, according to requirements set out in 1989 by the Convenio 169 sobre Pueblos Indígenas y Tribales, of the International Labour Organization. Individuals can comment on any mining project's environmental impact, but those comments only lead to public meetings when the activity in question has the potential to generate serious ecological imbalances or harm to public health or ecosystems, according to Mexican law. Even then, comments from the public don't impact the possible approval of a project, says Miguel Ángel Mijangos Leal, a liaison at Red Mexicana de Afectados por la Minería, a network of organizations and communities concerned about the impacts of mining in the country.



Thousands of people pile onto the tops of busses for a caravan procession to demonstrate the indigenous movement's support of the peace process. Photo: (C) Hanna Wallis

Colombia has the highest number of internally displaced people in the world at over six million, many of whom are ethnic minorities, a 2015

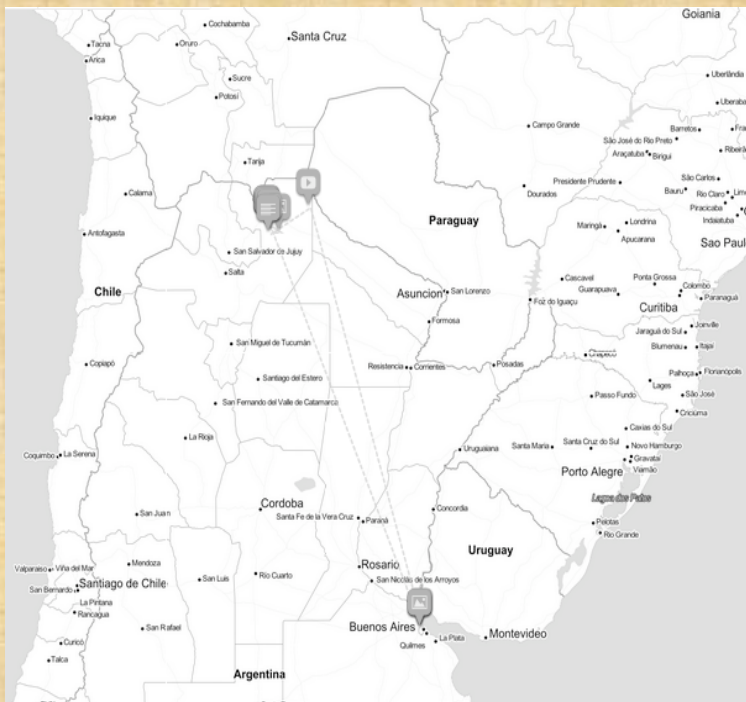
Amnesty

International report found.

Indigenous peoples share some skepticism about the proposed peace accord between the Government and the communist guerrilla (FARC) but also hope that this will bring to the end of violence in their communities. Since the beginning of the peace dialogues in 2012, Colombia's indigenous movement, led by the CRIC and ONIC, sought

participation, arguing that **whatever the government and FARC decided upon to end the conflict must take into account their unique forms of autonomy.** This remains their position as of now. Although the Ethnic Commission formed in 2015, it wasn't until June of this year that they paid their first visit to Havana, and it wasn't until three hours before the dialogues closed that they succeeded in appending an ethnic chapter to the 297-page peace agreement. The chapter enshrines their right to consultation and direct leadership for any projects occurring in their territories, like rural development initiatives or the placement of "concentration zones" where FARC combatants were supposed to demobilize and hand over their weapons. "For indigenous peoples, the signing of peace means an opportunity to live more peacefully in our territories without being displaced, massacred, and violated as it's happened during the more than 50 years of conflict," said Clemencia Herrera of the Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon in [a recent interview](#).

With all of its gaps and uncertainties, the peace accord represented a profound opportunity for Colombia to transition into a new chapter of post-conflict. But how does a country find peace when more than three-quarters of its population has known nothing but war? The vote in Colombia on October rejects the peace agreement that President Juan Manuel Santos had negotiated [by less than half a percentage point](#), and it shows that this is not an easy path to follow. It must be pointed out that at the U.N. General Assembly in September, all 15 members of the security council unanimously voted to support it. **But now that the Colombian population has struck it down, maybe the country's minority groups will lead the effort to turn the page.**



This bulletin also highlights the high level of socio-political marginalization that Argentinian indigenous people such as the Wichí of Rivadavia Banda Sur face. Thousands of kilometers from Buenos Aires, in the arid, low-lying floodplains of the Gran Chaco, this town of around 10,000 people is one of the poorest in Argentina. Stripped of their land and way of life during the 18th and 19th centuries, persecuted well into the 20th, the Wichí live somewhere between the old world and the margins of the new. The Wichí and other indigenous groups are largely invisible to Argentine society and politics and, very sadly, national identity continues to be built on the denial of the country's indigenous past.



Mariorosa Campo, from Misión La Paz community, strips down an Orletzach plant to make twine by rolling fibre together. It is then used to create bags and snares to catch animals.

The “conquest of the green desert”, or Gran Chaco, in which thousands of indigenous people were slaughtered and subjugated, is still celebrated as a triumph of civilization. Ironically, nowadays, there’s no shortage of laws in favor of indigenous people in Argentina: article 75C of the Constitution, recognizing their cultural and territorial rights; the land emergency law, which prohibits the eviction of indigenous peoples from land they occupy until a national land survey is completed; the 1989 Indigenous Tribal People’s Convention, ratified by Argentina, which recognizes their right to self-determination; as well as various provincial laws. There are also laws that indirectly benefit them, like the Forest Law, which prohibits deforestation in many parts of the country. The problem is they’re not enforced. Instead, forced removal of the indigenous people is relatively common, though the Land Emergency law prohibits this. As recently as November of last year, **in Salta, the infantry has forcibly removed 30 families from four different indigenous groups from their land.**



Barrick’s employees conduct a series of remedial works required by provincial authorities designed to prevent leaks from

In times of recession, it is also very likely that Argentinian mining industry would be given a chance to expand. This appears to be the case in the province of Chubut one of the largest silver, lead, and [gold reserves](#) in the world, as well as considerable amounts of uranium. But most of these mineral resources, particularly silver, cannot be exploited in the

southern region due to a moratorium that bans open-pit mining and the use of cyanide for metal recovery. However, local provincial authorities are planning to put an end to the moratorium, in view of the fact that income from oil, cattle farming, and fishing activities appear to be insufficient to sustain development and basic government services. **The possibility of relaxing regulations on mining activities seems to have federal approval.**

Also for this autumn edition of the bulletin, we have continued to record severe threats and violations of human rights and environmental defenders in **Central Africa**. Most extra-judicial killings occurring in this part of the globe go unrecorded. To be an owner, it is necessary to have land title, the only legal instrument in Central Africa guaranteeing legal access to the land. Local and indigenous communities without land titles, but who are dependent on the land, have in some cases, limited usage rights. In a number of Central African countries, the law allows the provision of temporary ownership certificates (or registration certificates), on the basis of customary land rights, which are



then converted to land titles after registration of the land. However, registration can only take place once the land has been developed, and therefore privileges a particular view of how land is to be appropriately used. **Not only is 'development' prioritized, but the process for gaining land titles is long and expensive, making it difficult for the communities to even apply.**

Particularly burning is the issue of tenure insecurity for indigenous women in the **Congo Basin**. Women, who represent 60 per cent of the indigenous population in the Congo Basin, are usually more dependent on forest resources. Lack of education,

however, makes them particularly vulnerable as they are often poorly informed about their rights. **With customary law often prioritizing male land holdings, moreover, indigenous women are increasingly isolated economically and have no other options than taking up unskilled manual jobs in rural areas.** There, they suffer a double discrimination: because they are women and because they belong to indigenous communities. Overall, due to land tenure insecurity and the rapid development of activities that impact on land ownership, such as extractive industries and agribusiness, indigenous peoples, with women in the front line, are increasingly vulnerable when it comes to access to land. **The land tenure reforms currently taking place in the Central African states should no longer be satisfied with substantive recognition of the rights affecting communities' usage or management rights, but rather the rights of transfer and of alienation, in other words the rights of ownership.**

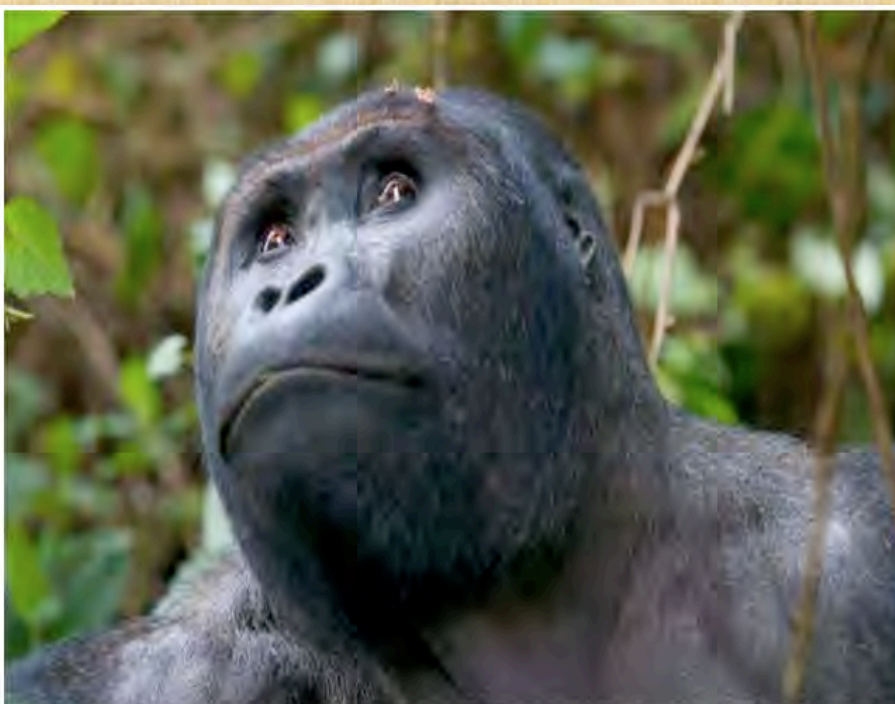
According to the Speaker of the National Assembly, Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos, in **Angola**, intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders are increasing. He also proposes that

parliamentarians should make a clear distinction between human rights defenders and political activists, who are mostly holders of an agenda and of well-defined interests. He also suggests some guidelines as the compilation and dissemination of information on the functioning of the parliamentary committees on human rights, implementation of the supervision of international treaties on human rights and the mobilization to combat child trafficking and child labour.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo activists are urging the government to pass a new mining code, claiming the country, which is Africa's top copper producer and the world's largest source of cobalt, needs the higher revenues a revised legislation would generate. Congo began reviewing the 2002 mining code in 2012 and last year it proposed hiking profit taxes to 35% from 30%, raising the state's free share of new mining projects to 10% from 5% and royalties on copper and cobalt revenue to 3.5% from 2%. Congo began reviewing its mining code in 2012, aiming to increase state revenues and tighten environmental and social regulations. In February, however, authorities dropped the planned changes as the move could have driven away investors at a time of historically low commodity prices and energy shortages that were driving down output in the country.

Activists are requesting the United States, the African Development Bank, European states, and the World Bank to strengthen Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) by pressing for EITI reports to disclose the expenditures of state-owned companies, as required by EITI, and push for full beneficial ownership disclosure, particularly for partners of state-owned companies, and following up on contract transparency. At the same time also the United States, European Union, World Bank, African Development Bank, and mining companies investing in Congo should urge the Congolese government to complete the Mining Code review with the full participation of civil society.

So far, in addition to social unrest, **mining has also been blamed for the 'catastrophic' decline in Eastern lowland gorilla**. Scientists says that, in Democratic Republic of Congo, the numbers in the wild have dwindled three quarters in 20 years, to just 3,800 from 17,000 before civil war first broke out in 1996, and fear that without rapid intervention, the majestic creatures could disappear altogether in the next five years.



Chiminunca, a silverback Eastern Lowlands Gorilla in the Kahuzi Biega National Park near Bukavu in the DRC CREDIT: ANDREW CROWLEY

In Liberia intimidations and violence against human rights and environmental defenders is primarily linked to the exponential increase of oil palm plantations. Surrounded by heavily deforested neighboring countries, Liberia resembles a green island in satellite images — yet the future of this West African country's forests is by no means guaranteed. **Only one-tenth of West Africa's original Upper Guinean**

rainforest remains, and 40 percent of that is in Liberia. Kept intact, this extensive forest has the incredible opportunity to help mitigate climate change. At least 60 percent of the country's population lives in predominantly forested ecosystems and depends substantially on forests for their livelihoods, local food production and rural development. That's nearly 700,000 households. Currently, palm oil development in Liberia is at a nascent stage, but given the scale of the concessions, the potential for growth is significant.

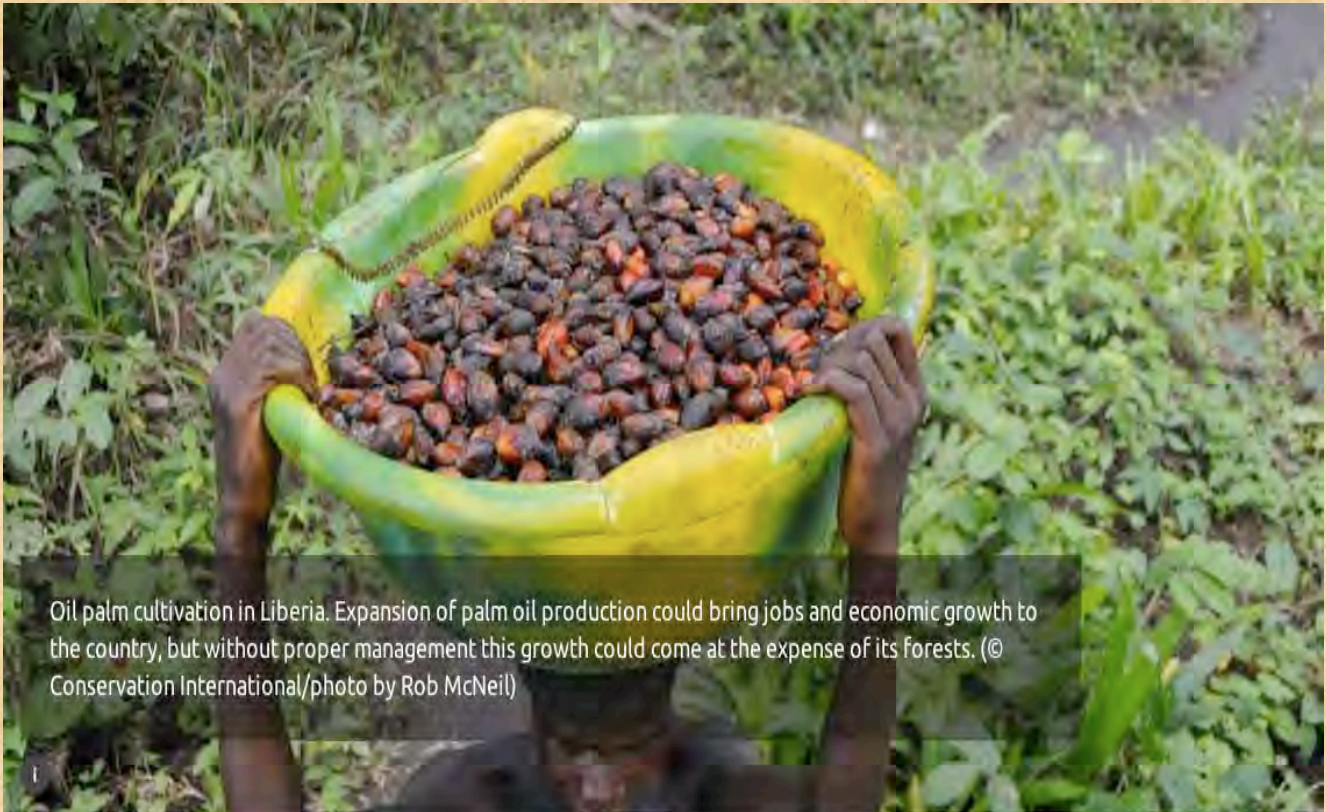


📷 Jacksonville, Sinoe County, Liberia. Informal unemployment in rural Liberia is staggeringly high and food poverty is a major problem. Photograph: Max Cutting/Banyak



In a new report called *The Temple and the Gun*, Global environmental watchdog Global Witness or GW says palm oil giant Golden Veroleum (GVL) has bulldozed religious sites in southeast Liberia and has paid police armed with assault rifles to protect its plantations. It has been estimated that 3,700 Liberians are working for Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL), a company whose main investor is one of the most powerful palm oil outfits in the world, Singapore-based Golden Agri-Resources.

Liberia is one of the poorest countries in the world. Almost one third of the population [is under the age of 10 \(pdf\)](#), and more than half cannot meet their basic needs. Food poverty is a major problem, particularly in rural areas, where insecure employment is staggeringly high. The government needed quick revenue, which could be generated through agricultural concessions, and jobs for unemployed youth, who could become a major security threat. GVL has faced community opposition. Open doors, fertile soils, high levels of rainfall and large tracts of uncultivated land made Liberia an obvious choice for palm oil companies, says GVL's CEO David Rothschild. The company's long-term investment in Liberia, which it says will reach \$1.6bn, was signed in 2010 towards the end of Sirleaf's first term as president – although GVL declined to comment on how much has been invested in country to date. Its 220,000 hectare concession area spans two counties, including the district of Tarjuowon in Sinoe County. The company's lease agreement grants it access to the concession land for 65 years, with the possibility of extending to 98 years.



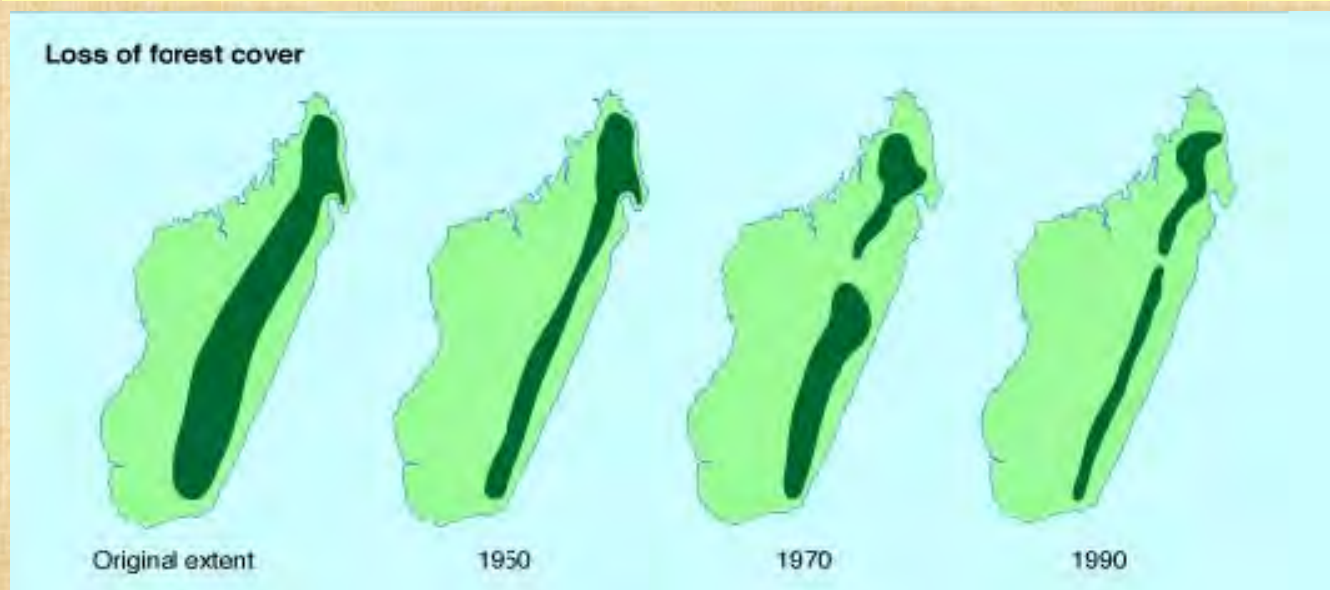
After initial disputes, **GVL began negotiating more actively with communities, in part to meet international obligations to the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, a sustainability body for the industry.** “We don’t always get it right, certainly, it’s a complicated environment to work in,” says a GVL representative. “But we really believe we’re doing responsible development [...] and ultimately if we fail at that, we fail the company and the communities and nobody wins.” **A new [report](#), commissioned by Global Witness, claims communities benefited more economically before GVL came, from subsistence farming, hunting and selling charcoal.** GVL says the report is “factually deeply flawed”, that it overstates both incomes from subsistence farming and the percentage of community land under development, and underestimates the benefit palm oil development has brought in terms of local infrastructure.



The expansion of oil palm plantations represents a serious threat also for **Cameroon.** By the end of November 2016, **the National Government needs to make a crucial decision of whether to renew a land lease for a controversial oil palm project [Si the Global Sustainable Oil Cameroon (SGSOC)], that**

has already negatively impacted the lives of thousands of community members, threatened biodiversity hotspots, and failed to meet development promises to local communities in the Southwest region of Cameroon. “The Cameroonian government has an opportunity to send a strong signal to foreign investors that it will no longer accept investments that undermine its people and its laws,” said Lisa Handy, EIA Director of Forest Campaigns. “Since the beginning of this oil palm project, SGSOC has shown very little interest in complying with Cameroonian laws at the expense of the national economy, local communities, and unique habitats. The Cameroonian government can now make a decision to lead the country – and the region – in a new direction.”

On 25 October United Nations Special Rapporteur John H. Knox has concluded his mission in **Madagascar. The country, unfortunately, is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change.** Its low-lying coastal regions are susceptible to rising seas, and the intensity of extreme weather events such as cyclones is likely to increase. Most immediately, southern Madagascar is currently experiencing a severe, life-threatening drought attributed to the El Niño effect and exacerbated by global warming. Last week, **UN agencies announced that nearly 850,000 people in southern Madagascar are acutely food insecure.** Major emitters of greenhouse gases must not delay in implementing and strengthening their commitments to reduce their emissions, and developed countries must carry out their commitment to provide assistance to vulnerable countries such as Madagascar, so that they can adopt effective measures to adapt to the unavoidable effects of climate change.



While Madagascar is fortunately not among the countries that have been identified as suffering the murder of environmental defenders, according to John H. Knox, environmentalists do receive threats and are often intimidated and legally persecuted. This is the case of Clovis Razafimalala, coordinator of the Lampogno coalition, who is currently imprisoned, and of Armand Marozafsky, who was imprisoned last year for four months, after trying to bring attention to illegal rosewood trafficking. Members of the VONA Fitiavan-Tanindrazana organization in the Soamahamanina area are also concerned about mining activities in their territories, and in particular, about the recent arrest of five people (Pierre Robson, Tsihoarana Andrianony, Fenohasina Andriaendrikinirivo, Tona Guillaume Andriarajoniana and Augustin Ranaivoarivelo) who engaged in protests against the mine. **It would**

appear that illegal trafficking in rosewood and other precious woods, as well as in endangered species, became much more prevalent in Madagascar as a result of the political transition period. As many people, including Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, have pointed out, illegal trafficking strikes at the heart of Madagascar's invaluable natural resources, depriving present and future generations of their heritage. It endangers the security of national park and other officials who work to prevent such illegal activity, as well as the safety of those who speak against it.

Despite being an ILO signatory, **Zimbabwe** has no coherent policy to tap into the indigenous and tribal communities. **Lack of specific laws on indigenous people's rights and the non-inclusion of indigenous people's concepts in the country's Constitution worsen the situation.** Despite government having voted for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007, implementation has lagged, especially regarding the right of indigenous people to economic and social well-being.

Gold mining and the abuse of environmental and human rights in **South Africa** continue, this has been made clear in a new report from Harvard Law School's International Human Rights Clinic named ["The Cost of Gold: Environmental, Health, and Human Rights Consequences of Gold Mining in South Africa's West and Central Rand"](#). **Undoubtedly, South Africa has failed to meet its human rights obligations to address the environmental and health effects of gold mining in and around Johannesburg.** According to the report, acid mine drainage has contaminated water bodies that residents use to irrigate crops, water livestock, wash clothes, and swim. Dust from mine waste dumps has blanketed communities. The government has allowed homes to be built near and sometimes on



Wakkerstroom Montane Grassland (Photo: Centre for Environmental Rights)

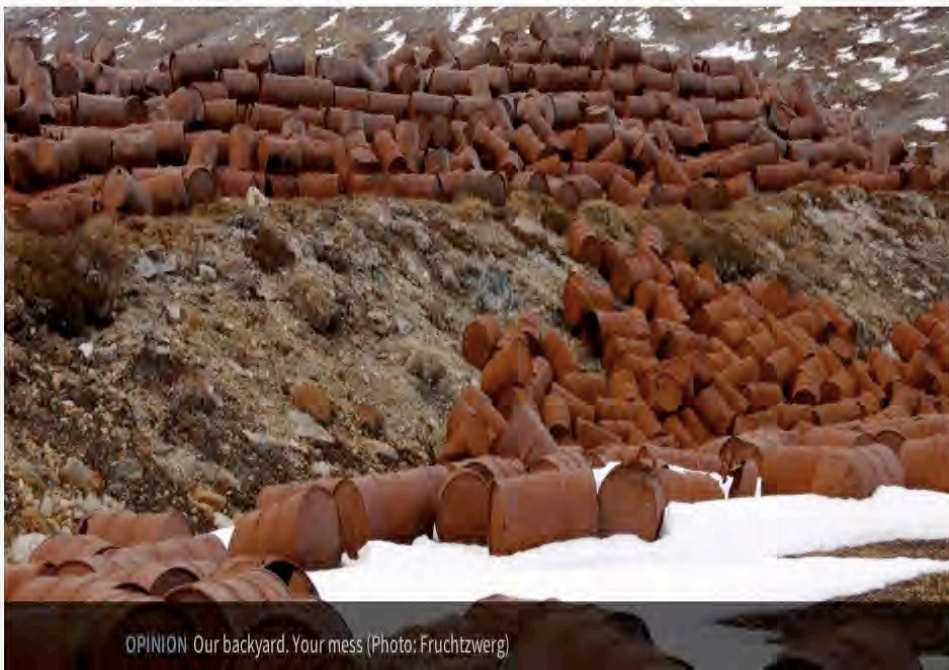
those toxic and radioactive dumps. Examining the situation through a human rights lens, the report

finds that **South Africa has not fully complied with constitutional or international law.** The government has not only inadequately mitigated the harm from abandoned and active mines, but it has also offered scant warnings of the risks, performed few scientific studies about the health effects,

and rarely engaged with residents on mining matters. "Gold mining has both endangered and disempowered the people of the West and Central Rand," said Bonnie Docherty, senior clinical instructor at IHRC and the report's lead author. "Despite some signs of progress, the government's response to the crisis has been insufficient and unacceptably slow."

Also coal mining is creating controversy between the South African government and environmental activists. For instance, the Indian company (Atha-Africa Ventures' Yzermyn project) has secured a mining right, an environmental authorization, and an integrated water-use license. The only step missing to kick-start operations is the approval the project needs from the Ministry of Environmental Affairs. **The problem is that the mine sits in the Mabola protected area, declared as such in 2014.** Three major rivers, the Vaal, the Tugela and the Pongola, converge there. Thus, the place is one of the top five sources of water for the region. Despite the fact that Mabola is a protected area, the mine could get the go-ahead because the Protected Areas Act allows the development of mining projects that have obtained written permission of the ministers of environment and of mineral resources. Activists are very worried at the moment. "The precedent that can be set by the allowance of this kind of activity within a protected environment opens up a floodgate of opportunities for any mining company to challenge protected environments" says Angus Burns, senior manager for the Land and Biodiversity Stewardship Programme at WWF-SA.

Also in Europe, **the Danish government is violating agreements on indigenous peoples' rights by not dealing with American pollution in Greenland.** Along the coasts and under the ice sheet of Greenland, extensive pollution has been left behind by the Americans over the 75 years where they have had military installations in the country. As indigenous people, and in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Greenlandic Inuit have the right to conservation and protection of the environment of their lands, territories and resources. This right may be put to the test unless the question about the responsibility for clearing up after the American military camps and bases is resolved very soon. **Scientific reports has warned that in case of further ablation of the ice sheet in Greenland, there is a risk of leakage and pollution. The people who would be directly affected are the Inuit whose livelihood is based on hunting and fishing and who, as of now, have had to accept an enormous uncertainty about the security of their livelihood and their health in the environment in which they live.**



OPINION: Our backyard. Your mess (Photo: Fruchtzweg)

The government of the United States of America has formally handed over the military installations to Denmark. And this is why Denmark is formally responsible for handling clearing up and any due compensation for damages, unless something else has been agreed between Denmark and the US, of which Greenland has no knowledge. **Being amongst the signatory countries of the ILO**

Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, Denmark is under an obligation to protect the Greenlandic Inuit as an indigenous people. The ILO Convention, in fact, instructs governments to take measures in collaboration with the peoples concerned with a view to protecting and conserving the environment in the areas in which such people lives.

ONLINE ARTICLES AND WEB LINKS

GENERAL TOPICS

Coalition of environmental and human rights organizations calls on the Pope to protect environmental defenders

Out of concern for the increasing violence against environmental defenders, a coalition of 76 environmental and human rights organizations from 19 countries asks the Pope to stand up for their protection. In a letter presented to Pope Francis this week, the organizations ask the Pope to be a patron for all environmental defenders who risk their lives by intimately caring about, and fighting for the preservation of nature, our common home.

READ MORE

<http://foecanada.org/en/2016/10/coalition-of-environmental-and-human-rights-organizations-calls-on-the-pope-to-protect-environmental-defenders/>

Police and hired assassins are killing land rights defenders. Let's end this violence

A demand for food, fuel and commodities cranks up pressure on land, companies are all too often striking deals with state officials without the consent of the people who live on it. But the stakes are high for anyone who tries to resist this pressure. Last year was the deadliest on record in terms of defending land, forests and rivers against industries like mining, hydro-electricity, agribusiness and logging. According to [Global Witness](#), more than three people were killed each week in 2015 by police, private security or hired assassins. At the [UN general assembly on Friday](#), I will [present a report](#) setting out the vital steps that governments, companies and investors must take to tackle and end this hidden crisis.

READ MORE

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/oct/21/police-hired-assassins-killing-land-rights-defenders-end-violence-michel-forst>

Recognizing environmentalists under threat

Environmental defenders are under threat: each year hundreds are killed, according to Global Witness. Alex Soros, a young philanthropist who established the Alexander Soros Foundation in 2012, believes recognition of these advocates is long overdue. Accordingly, each year the foundation honors environmental defenders with the ASF Award for Extraordinary Achievement in Environmental and Human Rights Activism.

Indigenous land rights are probably the most important things for indigenous peoples to have. If the people who have lived on their land for generations have constitutional protections, it is much harder for the extractive industries to take their land away. Unfortunately, it often takes years of campaigning for indigenous peoples to obtain their lands rights, and few indigenous communities already have these constitutional protections.

READ MORE

<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/10/recognizing-environmentalists-under-threat/>

Experts Express Alarm over Extrajudicial Killings, Attacks against Human Rights Defenders during Third Committee Interactive Dialogue

Counter-terrorism 'a Catch-all to Throttle Flow of Information' Justify Detention of Journalists, says Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion Human rights defenders including journalists, lawyers and judges were suffering repression, harassment and censorship as States struggled against terrorism, the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) heard today as special mandate holders presented their reports.

READ MORE

<http://reliefweb.int/report/world/experts-express-alarm-over-extrajudicial-killings-attacks-against-human-rights>

Violence against environmental defenders

Environmental human rights defenders are critical to our future but they face unprecedented risks, according to a new report to the United Nations General Assembly by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst. "I am extremely worried and appalled by the growing number of attacks and murders of environmental defenders, but also by the continuous resistance of States to act in front of egregious human rights violations," Mr. Forst said. "It is the responsibility of States and international community to empower and protect these defenders. We should listen to those who raise the alarm against environmental disasters, climate change and irresponsible resource exploitation, not repress them," he underscored.

READ MORE

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1610/S00079/violence-against-environmental-defenders.htm>

Adopt zero-tolerance approach to violence against environmental human rights defenders: UN Special Rapporteur

According to a new report to the United Nations General Assembly by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst, environmental human rights defenders are critical to our future but they face unprecedented risks. "I am extremely worried and appalled by the growing number of attacks and murders of environmental defenders, but also by the continuous resistance of States to act in front of egregious human rights violations," Forst said. The human rights expert warned that, although the situation is particularly dramatic in Latin America and Asia where many international investors, companies and local governments ignore the legitimate concerns of the population, "attacks and threats happen everywhere in the world." According to the study, a number of environmental conflicts could be avoided by prior consultation and active participation of local communities and environmental activists.

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<http://www.merineews.com/article/adopt-zero-tolerance-approach-to-violence-against-environmental-human-rights-defenders-un-special-rapporteur/15920429.shtml>

Oxfam report exposes EU lobby firepower of biofuel industry behind destructive bioenergy policy

The European Union must overhaul its current bioenergy policy, which is based on getting fuel from plants, because the industry is linked to the eviction of thousands of people from their lands, out-competing food crops, and creating more not less pollution, says Oxfam. A new Oxfam report (Tuesday 25 October) says that a powerful industry lobby has captured EU policy and is resisting its reform. The report tracks the impact of this policy and details cases of communities suffering from loss of land and rights abuses in Tanzania, Peru and Indonesia linked to the ever increasing demand from Europe for crops to produce energy. The EU is due to review its bioenergy policy in a month's

time. It must end the use of biofuels produced from food or energy crops and food by-products, the anti-poverty organisation says.

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<https://www.eureporter.co/world/2016/10/25/oxfam-report-exposes-eu-lobby-firepower-of-biofuel-industry-behind-destructive-bioenergy-policy/>

EU biofuels moves not guaranteed to cut emissions

EU legislation promoting biofuels for transport could lead to higher, not lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, according to Transport & Environment (www.transportenvironment.org). T&E says the full environmental impact of indirect land use change (ILUC) caused by biofuel production is not reflected in recent EU moves. Under the terms of the EU's Renewable Energy Directive (RED), EU member states are required to source 10 per cent of transport energy from renewable sources, mainly biofuels, by 2020, T&E says. However, another law, the Fuel Quality Directive (FQD), has a carbon intensity reduction target of six per cent until 2020. The FQD and RED include 'sustainability criteria' that dictate the minimum CO2 savings biofuels should achieve compared with fossil fuels in order to qualify for the scheme (and receive state subsidies).

READ MORE

<http://www.impactpub.com.au/micebtn/85-news/btn-news/18824-eu-biofuels-moves-not-guaranteed-to-cut-emissions>

Who Is Behind Destructive Bioenergy Policy?

A new Oxfam report says that a powerful industry lobby has captured EU policy and is resisting its reform. The report tracks the impact of this policy and details cases of communities suffering from loss of land and rights abuses in Tanzania, Peru and Indonesia linked to the ever increasing demand from Europe for crops to produce energy. The EU is due to review its bioenergy policy in a month's time. It must end the use of biofuels produced from food or energy crops and food by-products, the anti-poverty organization says.

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<http://www.infozine.com/news/stories/op/storiesView/sid/65619/>

The EU's dangerous biomass delusion

Bioenergy advocates claim that Europe's forests are well managed and don't contribute to global warming. Yet, biomass production in Europe is projected to rely more and more on materials that have a high risk of increasing greenhouse gas emissions, writes Linde Zuidema. Linde Zuidema is a campaigner at Fern, an environmental group that coordinates NGO activities on forests at European level. Over the past few years, power plants and heating installations across Europe – spurred on by government subsidies – have switched from burning coal to burning biomass in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet clean energy targets.

One source of this 'green energy' is the United States, specifically the South Eastern states of North and South Carolina and Virginia.

READ MORE

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/opinion/the-eus-dangerous-biomass-delusion/>

Using forests to curb climate change threatens human rights

The 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change was a landmark the world rightly applauded. Its pledge to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius - and preferably 1.5 degrees - lays down one of humanity's greatest challenge for the 21st century. But how to achieve it? Climate scientists say it is almost an impossible task if we only rely on reducing emissions from our power stations, transport systems and factories. Even ending deforestation will be insufficient. They say we will have to find ways of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere: "negative emissions" in the climate-change jargon. There are many schemes for how do this using chemistry and geology, but some are wildly expensive and others are not yet feasible. The most likely current option though, is giving terrestrial plants such as trees or bioenergy crops a helping hand in photosynthesising more CO₂ from the air.

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<http://news.trust.org/item/20161102085554-a5tf1>

Silver Power: Swiss Grannies challenge Government's weak climate policies

The Paris climate agreement got some new teeth today when more than 450 women age 65 and older submitted a [legal petition](#) to force the Swiss government to take stronger action on climate change. The complaint alleges that weak climate policies are violating their constitutional rights by failing to limit warming to politically-agreed safe levels. Greenpeace Switzerland is supporting the new group of women, called [KlimaSeniorinnen](#) ("Senior Women for Climate Protection"), in their quest to hold their government accountable for climate inaction. Older women are among the most vulnerable groups in a warming climate. [Studies](#) of heatwaves in Europe show they are more likely to get sick or die of dehydration, heatstroke, cardiac and circulatory problems. While the women of KlimaSeniorinnen have initiated a legal challenge to protect their own lives, they are also doing it for the good of future generations.

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http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jennifer-l-morgan/silver-power-swiss-granni_b_12631440.html

5 things you always wanted to know about bioenergy, but were too afraid to ask

Bioenergy involves the use of organic (very often plant-based) materials to generate energy for heat, electricity and transport. In some cases, bioenergy provides emissions reductions compared to fossil fuels, thereby helping to tackle climate change. In other cases it doesn't result in these savings, or even increases emissions, and it can also pose risks to wildlife. That's why RSPB is [joining other environmental organisations](#) across the world today in calling for bioenergy that protects wildlife, forests and the climate, and for risky practices to be brought to an end. But what role does bioenergy play in our energy system, why does it pose risks, and which kinds of bioenergy can help wildlife?

READ MORE

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/community/ourwork/b/climatechange/archive/2016/10/19/5-things-you-always-wanted-to-know-about-bioenergy-but-were-too-afraid-to-ask.aspx>

New model suggests scrubbing CO2 from the atmosphere

New Cornell research suggests an economically viable model to scrub carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to thwart runaway, point-of-no-return global warming. The researchers propose using a "bioenergy-biochar system" that removes carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in an environmental pinch, until other removal methods become economically feasible and in regions where other methods are impractical. Their work appeared in the Oct. 21 edition of Nature Communications.

READ MORE

<http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/2016/10/new-model-suggests-scrubbing-co2-atmosphere>

Exclusive Clip: DiCaprio's Climate Doc Exposes Destruction of Rainforest for Palm Oil as Huge Driver of Global Carbon Emissions

A new documentary produced and starring actor and activist Leonardo DiCaprio premieres in Los Angeles today and will be broadcast globally in 45 languages in 171 countries on the National Geographic Channel starting Oct. 30, timed to air in advance of the November elections. The film highlights the critical role forest destruction plays in driving carbon pollution into Earth's atmosphere and focuses specifically on how the rapid spread of industrial **palm oil** plantations in Southeast Asia are at the heart of this crisis. The film is directed by Fisher Stevens who, like DiCaprio, is an Academy Award winner.

READ MORE AND WATCH CLIP

<http://www.ecowatch.com/dicaprio-deforestation-palm-oil-2063356491.html>

Failure to Secure Forest Dweller Rights Risks Carbon Emissions Spike, Report Says

Securing the land rights of indigenous people and forest dwellers is crucial to keeping global rises in temperature below the agreed 2 degree Celsius threshold, according to a report. Community forest lands from Brazil to Indonesia contain at least 54,546 million metric tons of carbon, equivalent to four times the global carbon emissions in 2014, according to analysis by the Rights and Resources Initiative, Woods Hole Research Center and World Resources Institute. Without secure rights for the communities that live in these forests, there is a risk that the people will be displaced and the lands destroyed, releasing the carbon into the atmosphere, said the report.

READ MORE

<http://newsweekme.com/failure-secure-forest-dweller-rights-risks-carbon-emissions-spike-report-says/>

Indigenous people in carbon-rich tropical forests can help contain emissions

One-fourth of carbon stored above ground in the world's tropical forests is found in the collectively-managed territories of indigenous people and local communities. At least one-fourth of carbon stored above ground in the world's tropical forests is found in the collectively-managed territories of indigenous people and local communities, according to a new research released on Wednesday morning. The study further stated that global communities need to recognize that keeping tropical forests intact will prevent carbon emissions. The analysis, done by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), US-based Woods Hole Research Center (WHRC) and global research organizations like World Resources Institute (WRI), comes days before countries from across the world meet in Marrakech (Morocco) for the UN's annual global climate conference where issues like deforestation will be discussed. RRI is a global coalition of organizations including over 150 international, regional, and community organizations advancing forest tenure.

READ MORE

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/gfZMmkVEi74c3EwMEVFDxK/Indigenous-people-in-carbonrich-tropical-forests-can-help-c.html>

Is Keeping Communal Land Possible?

Is it possible to keep communal indigenous land within a market-based world? Land is an essential economic resource and symbolic entity for tribal communities. Many distribute land according to rules of use. A family, clan or village may have access to recognized hunting, gathering, and farming locations. Other tribal members respect those rights, and as long as the land is appropriately used, other tribal members do not interfere. If a group of tribal members stop using land for a period, a few

years, then other tribal members may use the land. This method of distributing land resources worked for many indigenous nations for thousands of years. The tribal entities manage the land collectively. However, there are rules that uphold the rights of tribal sub-groups for access to land sufficient for their livelihood.

READ MORE

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/10/30/keeping-communal-land-possible-166194>

Bioenergy: The Good, the Bad & the Ugly

Amid growing speculation that the EU will publish its much-anticipated Renewable Energy Package at the end of this month, Sini Eräjää dispels the myth that all bioenergy is 'Good'. European bioenergy policies have been built on the myth that bioenergy – being a 'renewable resource' – is all good. Good for the climate, good for a more sustainable future. However, we have a saying here at BirdLife: 'All that glitters is not gold' and, similarly, all that is renewable is not sustainable. Quite simply, bioenergy is not the clean dream we all hoped it would be: in some cases, it actually results in an increase in CO₂ emissions, exceeding fossil fuel use. The policies driving the rapid growth in bioenergy use need to separate the *good* from the *bad*, and reveal the *ugly* truth behind the real climate impacts of bioenergy.

READ MORE

<http://www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia/news/bioenergy-good-bad-ugly>

RSPO loses key backer in Australia: 'We just can't trust them anymore'

The cachet of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil has taken a hit with the withdrawal of support for the organisation by an Australian watchdog that had pushed some of the country's biggest firms into the RSPO's fold. The group, Palm Oil Investigations (POI), had played a key role in pressuring companies like [Snack Brands Australia](#) and [Arnott's](#) to join the RSPO and to only buy oil the roundtable had certified as ethically produced. The RSPO is a global organisation whose members include firms up and down the palm oil supply chain as well as NGOs and banks. But in a [statement](#) posted to its website last month, POI announced it had lost faith in the roundtable's ability to reign in an industry tainted by environmental destruction and human rights abuses. POI's announcement follows the [resignation](#) from the RSPO in May by the PanEco Foundation, which is known for protecting orangutans in Indonesia, the world's top palm oil producer.

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<http://www.eco-business.com/news/rspo-loses-key-backer-in-australia-we-justcanttrust-them-anymore/>

The TPP must be publically discussed

The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) is a multilateral free trade agreement in which Chile, Mexico and Peru participate along with Australia, Brunei Canada, the United States, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam; this agreement had been secretly negotiated since 2010. In February 2015 it was signed by the governments of the negotiating countries and is now ready to be approved by the Congress of each of the participating countries.

The negotiations for the TPP which brings together 40 percent of the world economy, and which is considered the most ambitious economic treaty in the planet, comprises 23 areas that include agriculture, customs administration, industrial goods, rules of origin, textiles, financial services, investment, telecommunication, state owned commercial enterprises, intellectual property, trade and labor, services, entry for business persons, trade and the environment, government procurement, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, trade remedies, and institutional/legal issues.

In a 2015 report Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Populations, has already stated that “investment clauses of free trade agreements and bilateral and multilateral investment treaties, as they are currently conceptualized and implemented, have actual and potential negative impacts on indigenous peoples’ rights, in particular on their rights to self-determination; lands, territories and resources; participation; and free, prior and informed consent.”

Also, Tauli-Corpuz says that “given the multitude of mining and petroleum projects, agribusiness investments, special economic zones, tourism developments and infrastructure projects taking place across almost all the worlds continents, often on indigenous lands, whether demarcated or not, conflicts between land rights and investment and free trade agreements are likely become increasingly common

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<http://lapress.org/articles.asp?art=7362>

REGIONAL TOPICS

SOUTHEAST ASIA

THE PHILIPPINES

IRAQ, SYRIA, PHILIPPINES HAVE HIGHEST RATES OF IMPUNITY IN JOURNALIST MURDERS

The Philippines, Iraq and Syria are among the countries where journalists are most likely to be murdered with impunity, according to a new study from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). The 2016 Impunity Index from New York-based CPJ calculates the number of unsolved journalist murders as a percentage of the population of each country. This year's report found that Islamist militant groups are responsible for "some of the highest rates of impunity in the murders of journalists." For a second year in a row the worst country is Somalia, which has 24 unsolved cases and where the al-Shabaab militant group is "suspected in the majority of murders," the report says. Iraq and Syria are the second- and third-worst countries, respectively; members of the Islamic State (ISIS) militant group have murdered six journalists in Mosul, Iraq alone in the past year, according to CPJ. In Nigeria, the extremist group Boko Haram is suspected of killing as many as five journalists in the past several years. Iraq has the highest number of unsolved journalist murders, at 71, followed by the Philippines, with 41, and Mexico, with 21. Brazil, Nigeria, Russia, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh make up the rest of the list.

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<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/834825/no-eviction-of-tribal-folk#ixzz4PX98fTkR>

Malaria, murder and other occupational hazards of indigenous activists

A little over a decade ago, indigenous activist Joan Carling from the Cordillera region lost three colleagues in the space of a few years -- all murdered in one of the world's deadliest countries for land rights defenders. Then came her turn: a relative in the military told Carling's father his daughter's name was on the "order of battle," the military's list of people, including activists, who are deemed enemies of the state. "When you are on the order of battle, you are an open target for extrajudicial killings," said 53-year-old Carling. "There was a time (when) suspicious men or motorbikes were following me, and I was advised to stay in the office," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview.

READ MORE

<http://www.interaksyon.com/article/133898/malaria-murder-and-other-occupational-hazards-of-indigenous-activists>

Slain youth activist in Comval is on drug watch list

A youth environment activist has been gunned down last Oct. 13 in Compostela Valley province. Chief Insp. Andrea dela Cerna, PRO-Davao spokesperson, said they received an information that Joselito Pasaporte's name was among the people enlisted on the drug watch list. "Based from the report forwarded to us, it is confirmed that Pasaporte was among the people included in the drug watch list," she said. But Renante Mantos, leader of peasant group Hugpong sa Mag-uuma sa Walog Compostela (Humawac) said the drug-related issue being linked to Pasaporte by the police was already a recycled issue. "That's an old issue," he said, adding that police authorities are more focused on investigating the drug issue instead of his untimely death. For Mantos, linking Pasaporte to illegal-drug activities would only trigger speculation that he died because of his alleged involvement in drug activities. "I won't be surprised if Pasaporte's death will be reported in the news because of his alleged involvement in illegal drugs and not because he stood to fight against foreign mining companies," he pointed out.

READ MORE

<http://davaotoday.com/main/human-rights/slain-youth-activist-in-comval-is-on-drug-watch-list/>

US: Philippines' Duterte sparking distress around the world

A top American diplomat for Asia said Monday that Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's controversial remarks and a "real climate of uncertainty" about his government's intentions have sparked distress in the U.S. and other countries. Daniel Russel, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said he also relayed to Philippine Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr. international concern over continuing killings under Duterte's crackdown against illegal drugs. In addition, Secretary of State John Kerry spoke by phone Sunday with Yasay about "recent challenges" in bilateral relations, the State Department said.

Russel's visit to the Philippines, part of a three-nation trip to Southeast Asia, comes amid increasing uncertainty about Washington's treaty alliance with Manila. The brash Duterte, who took office on June 30, has displayed antagonism toward America, declaring his desire to scale back military engagements with the U.S. and telling President Barack Obama to "go to hell."

READ MORE

<http://www.miningjournal.net/page/content.detail/id/1826584/US--Philippines--Duterte-sparking-distress-around-the-world.html?isap=1&nav=5016>

Pushing forward: Why the fight for self-determination of national minorities is far from over

Thousands of indigenous and Moro peoples in the Philippines are demanding that the government recognize their right to self-determination.

Since October 8, indigenous and Moro protesters have been in the streets for Lakbayan (Journey) of National Minorities for Self Determination and Just Peace or simply Lakbayan. Delegates from southern Philippine island of Mindanao and from the northern part of the country converged in Manila, the country's capital, on October 13 a few meters away from the presidential palace.

This is not the first time that indigenous peoples have journeyed to the capital. The first Manilakbayan in 2012, as the protest caravan was then called, was staged by 100 Lumad to call for a moratorium on large-scale mining in ancestral lands and a halt in the spate of extrajudicial killings of indigenous rights activists. Since then, it has been a yearly activity. This is the first time, however, that issues of the Muslim Moros are included and highlighted in the Lakbayan.

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<http://bulatlat.com/main/2016/10/21/pushing-forward-fight-self-determination-national-minorities-far/>

Indigenous peoples' meet with Gina Lopez turns into 3-way talk with AFP chief

Indigenous peoples (IP) calling for the demilitarization of their communities had a chance to air their gripes directly to the military chief yesterday during a dialogue with Environment Secretary Gina Lopez at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. The indigenous peoples from across the Philippines are holding a weeks-long campout on the campus of the state university to bring to national attention their plights in their communities. Lopez listened to various concerns—from calls to close mining sites to demands for justice for the killing of indigenous peoples in the past year.

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<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/831477/indigenous-peoples-meet-with-gina-lopez-turns-into-3-way-talk-with-afp-chief>

Discriminating against national minorities

Much has been said about the violent dispersal of protesters at the US Embassy last Oct. 19, which left scores injured, and compelled even the leadership of the Philippine National Police to relieve dozens of policemen involved pending investigation. We cannot, however, lay this issue to rest without belaboring one essential point—the incident is a blatant case of discrimination against our national minorities. First, the facts obscured by the hype of blood and adrenaline: The protest was led by an alliance of national minorities. Since early October, various indigenous tribes and Moros from all over the country have been holding a protest caravan, marching from their ancestral lands to

participate in a historic “Lakbayan ng Pambansang Minorya” (Caravan of National Minorities), which aims to highlight the plight of the Moro and indigenous peoples, especially the militarization and plunder of their ancestral lands. In an unprecedented and never-before-seen move, the various tribes formed a historic alliance: Sandugo, which translates to a “blood compact.” It was an alliance that sought to amplify the voices of those in the margins, uniting them under one common call—to assert their right to self-determination and peace.

Read more

<http://opinion.inquirer.net/98592/discriminating-against-national-minorities#ixzz4PcM0MfO3>

Tibaldo: Free prior and informed consent

Cordillera’s practice of forest management and communal utilization of natural resources has been part of the way of life hereabouts. Irrigation systems existed following the law of gravity and village folks even opposed the construction of dams. The practice of embalming or preventing a dead body from decay which we know as mummification was devoid of chemicals and other scientific processes. We haven’t read or heard much about it but there are certain cultures that seek for the recognition of their indigenous knowledge systems and practices and Philippines is one.

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<http://www.sunstar.com.ph/baguio/opinion/2016/10/24/tibaldo-free-prior-and-informed-consent-505451>

Dureza to create ethnic groups advisory council in peace talks

Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Jess Dureza said on Wednesday that he will organize an Indigenous Peoples Advisory Council to give ethnic groups and cultural minorities a voice in the ongoing peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) as well as in the Bangsamoro Transition Council (BTC) that would work toward creating a new law for the Bangsamoro. "I have already taken this up with the President, and he approved," Dureza said during a forum on "The Peace Process of GPH & the NDFP and its Impact on Indigenous Peoples" at the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) in Manila. Speaking before a crowd of indigenous peoples (IPs) from various parts of the country, Secretary Dureza gave cognizance to the importance of the sector in the peace process. The creation of an advisory council, he said, would enable cultural minorities to participate in and provide inputs on issues that impact their sector in the peace talks with both the communist and the MILF rebels.

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<http://www.interaksyon.com/article/133732/dureza-to-create-ethnic-groups-advisory-council-in-peace-talks>

Review of Mining Act to favor communities

The Philippines is pursuing a two-track strategy for mitigating the adverse effects of irresponsible mining, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said. Rosemarie Edillon, NEDA deputy director general said that the first strategy already done by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is the comprehensive audit of mining sites. Second is the review of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, which covers revenue-sharing to favor affected communities, rehabilitating areas affected by disasters due to mining operations, identifying “No-Go Zones” and issuing liability insurance to cover damages in mined-out and identified impact areas.

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[http://malaya.com.ph/business-news/business/review-mining-act-favor communities](http://malaya.com.ph/business-news/business/review-mining-act-favor-communities)

Environment Department to ban mining near protected sites

Conservation and heritage sites in the Philippines may yet be saved once a proposed ban on mining in and around these areas is in place, a top environment official said Friday. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez said she will devise a new policy that will prohibit mining operations in protected areas. This, after the suspension of the environmental compliance certificate of a nickel mine in the southern Philippine province of Davao Oriental.

The mine, operated by Austral Asia Link Mining Corp. sits between Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and Pujada Bay. Pujada Bay is known for its rich coral reef system and white-sand beaches.

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<http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2016/10/14/DENR-mining-protected-sites.html>

Environment sec vows moratorium on new mining

To the delight of thousands of indigenous and Moro people environment and natural resources secretary Gina Lopez said that her office will no longer entertain new permits for mining companies in the country. “I want you to know, that DENR now, I’m putting a moratorium on all new mining,” Lopez said during a dialogue with the representatives of “national minority” alliance, Sandugo on Monday, Oct. 24 at the University of the Philippines Diliman. “No new mining. Even if you put P500,000 you won’t get an (environmental compliance certificate). I don’t want it anymore. I’m finished,” Lopez added. She said she wants to focus on developing agriculture and ecotourism

instead. Lopez made the remarks after hearing the leaders of Sandugo who complained about their ancestral lands encroached by large mining companies.

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<http://davaotoday.com/main/environment/environment-sec-vows-moratorium-on-new-mining/>

A Philippine Police Van Brutally Runs Over Indigenous and Minority Protesters Calling for Their Rights

A police van repeatedly attempted to ram and run over indigenous peoples and national minority groups gathered in protest on the morning of October 19 in front of the United States Embassy in Manila. The protest was part of the ongoing [Pambansang Lakbayan ng mga Pambansang Minorya](#) (National Caravan of National Minorities) that saw 3,000 indigenous peoples come to the Philippines' capital to draw attention to human rights abuses and the militarization of their ancestral lands. The national minorities are demanding the pull-out of military troops from their communities and the dismantling of state-sponsored paramilitary groups. The demonstration was also partly meant to express support for President Rodrigo Roa Duterte moving the Philippines away from its decades-old unequal relationship with the US, which indigenous groups say has led to foreign mining companies and agro-corporations laying waste to their ancestral lands.

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<https://globalvoices.org/2016/10/20/a-philippine-police-van-brutally-runs-over-indigenous-and-minority-protesters-calling-for-their-rights/>

'Protesters are against Philippines being US military outpost in Asia'

The use of force by police against participants in an anti-US rally in Manila was totally unacceptable especially since President Duterte vowed to pursue an independent foreign policy and distance from the US, protest leader Renato Reyes told RT. The anti-America protest took place outside the US embassy in Manila, Philippines. Activists were protesting against the presence of US troops in the country. The rally turned violent as police used tear gas to disperse the protests.

Not only that they ran over some of the protesters they also used tear gas – they fired tear gas and hit a lot of people. At least 30 people were injured; 12 were brought to hospital; 29 people were arrested and eventually released from custody.

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<https://www.rt.com/op-edge/363333-philippines-us-militray-protest/>

Philippine Tribal Minorities Demand Justice

Hundreds of indigenous people [marched in the streets](#) of Manila on Monday, demanding respect for their basic human rights. They called for the government of President Rodrigo Duterte to drop [trumped-up charges brought by the previous administration](#) against 200 tribal minority rights advocates and urged [that state-security forces](#) stop committing abuses against tribal minorities, particularly on the southern island of Mindanao. Monday's protest is the latest attempt by indigenous groups to seek justice and accountability for abuses against them. Indigenous groups often bear the brunt of [human rights violations](#) by state security forces in the Philippines, especially in areas with mining and plantation interests. One [egregious attack documented by Human Rights Watch](#) occurred in September 2015 in the province of Surigao del Sur in Mindanao, when members of a military-backed paramilitary group killed the school administrator and two tribal leaders in Lianga town, while hundreds of terrified students and residents looked on.

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<http://asianjournal.com/news/philippine-tribal-minorities-demand-justice/>

Carbon majors respond to climate and human rights inquiry

That is the charge the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines put to 47 coal, oil and gas majors in July, based on a petition by Greenpeace and other NGOs.

It has yet to publish the responses, which will inform an inquiry along with testimony from scientists and survivors of extreme weather. Nine submissions [voluntarily shared](#) with the charity Business & Human Rights Resource Centre give a flavour of the industry arguments, however. Mining giant Rio Tinto urged cooperation, not confrontation. "We believe that an effective response to climate change is best achieved by companies, governments and society working together towards common goals, as demonstrated by our support for the Paris Pledge for Action," its environmental chief Matthew Bateson wrote to the committee.

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<http://www.climatechangenews.com/2016/10/27/carbon-majors-respond-to-climate-and-human-rights-inquiry/>

Suspended Philippine Nickel Miner Mounts First Legal Challenge to Govt Crackdown

A suspended Philippine nickel miner said on Wednesday (26/10) it has sued government environment agencies for a nearly four-month stoppage of its operations, in the first legal challenge to the state's environmental crackdown on the mining sector. The Philippines is the world's top nickel ore supplier and an environmental audit that has halted a quarter of its 41 mines plus the risk that 20 more may be shuttered has fueled a rally in global nickel prices. Benguetcorp Nickel Mines Inc's (BNMI) mine in

Zambales province, north of the capital Manila, is among 10 suspended for environmental infractions in a government clampdown on damage from mining in July and August. "Seeing that BNMI is left with no other viable administrative remedy, it is constrained to elevate to the Courts the matter of the unlawful suspension of its nickel mining operations," the company said in a statement. The company filed a "petition for certiorari with injunction to assail the suspension order" jointly issued by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Environmental Management Bureau and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources regional offices with a regional trial court in Pampanga province, said Anna Montes, spokeswoman for parent firm Benguet Corp.

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<http://www.jakartaglobe.beritasatu.com/international/suspended-philippine-nickel-miner-mounts-first-legal-challenge-govt-crackdown/>

'Duterte is greenest president since Cory'

President Rodrigo Duterte may be considered as the "greenest" president the country has ever had since former President Cory Aquino, an environment coalition said Monday. Alyansa Tigil Mina National Coordinator Jaybee Garganera said Duterte is living up to his campaign promises and has made very clear pronouncements particularly with regards to the mining industry. "We have seen the direct actions including the audit of the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) and the suspension. Quite frankly we are surprised that he has been delivering on his campaign promises but we also know that there are still a lot of reforms that needs to be done," Garganera said on Mornings @ ANC. Earlier this year, Duterte backed DENR Secretary Gina Lopez's nationwide audit on mining firms and told mining companies to comply with environmental rules or risk being shut down, saying the country does not need mining revenues.

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<http://news.abs-cbn.com/news/10/31/16/duterte-is-greenest-president-since-cory>

Lopez on legal challenge by miners: 'Do it.'

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it is unfazed by a legal battle with miners in the wake of facing its first court case that challenges the government's nationwide crackdown on illegal mining. "We're following the law. You're gonna file a case against us for following the law? Do it. We're not gonna lose," Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez said in an interview with reporters last week. Ms. Lopez was responding to a question, based on an industry official's statement, about another miner who may follow after BenguetCorp Nickel Mines, Inc. (BNMI), which went to court on the heels of the DENR order stopping its nickel project in Sta. Cruz, Zambales. Ronald V. Recidoro, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines' vice-president for its Legal and Policy division, had earlier said the miner, whose identity he declined to disclose, "has confirmed" plans to file charges against the DENR in connection with its September audit findings which has been

mounting up dissatisfaction among miners.

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<http://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Nation&title=lopez-on-legal-challenge-by-miners-&145do-it.&8217&id=135672>

Where do we go from here?

Four months in power and President Duterte is enjoying a 96-percent trust rating in Mindanao, according to the Pulse Asia survey results released last Oct. 11. It came as no surprise, the President being from Mindanao himself. For the first time, a Mindanaoan is occupying the highest seat in the land, and he has named fellow Mindanaoans to key positions in the national government. Despite his controversial rhetoric and his infamous war on drugs, the President is seen as someone capable of putting an end to the conflict in Mindanao, someone who genuinely understands the dynamics and volatility on the island, and, thus, capable of instituting long-term solutions for everyone. The 30 metal mines, either suspended or recommended for suspension, make up nearly three-fourths of the country's 41 metal mines and account for 55.5% of the country's total nickel ore production last year.

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<http://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Nation&title=denr&8217s-lopez-acknowledges-room-for-improvement-in-mine-audit&id=135760>

INDONESIA

Rights activists have urged the government to increase the protection of rights defenders amid mounting violence against them.

Activists of the Indonesian Forum for Environment (Walhi), Protection International (PI) and Arus Pelangi said their fellow activists across the country had experienced various abuses when fighting for people's rights. "Activists are always abused because they are at the forefront of human rights conflicts, so the opposing side always wants to shut them down," PI activist Cahyadi told *The Jakarta Post*, adding the government should protect activists. However, according to a survey from the Centre for Applied Human Rights at the UK-based University of York, the government is the most common violator against human rights activists. The survey stated that the "government" included the police, the military and regional government officers. Companies, particularly those related to environment and labor rights issues, come second, while fundamental religious organizations rank third, according to the survey.

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<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/10/25/government-still-lacks-protection-rights-activists.html>

Activists howl at palm oil bill

With Indonesia facing land and forest fires every year that are mostly man-made disasters that have degraded the health of its citizens as well as that of its neighbors, the government has vowed to improve the sustainability of its agroforestry sector, particularly the palm oil industry. The government plans to impose a moratorium on the issuance of new permits for oil palm plantations and to ban oil palm expansion through land clearing, one of the main causes of land and forest fires. According to data from the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi), from 439 companies involved in the 2015 forest fires, 308 of them were palm oil companies. But all of these plans may go out the window if the House of Representatives and the government approve the contentious palm oil bill, which critics say contains provisions that protect business at the expense of the environment.

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<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/10/17/activists-howl-palm-oil-bill.html>

More than 20 labour law violations by Indofood alleged in Indonesia

GOs are calling for a pair of Indofood subsidiaries to be suspended from the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. The company has denied the allegations of human rights abuses on its plantations in the archipelagic Southeast Asian country, the world's top palm oil producer. Indofood is an arm of the Salim Group and one of the world's largest palm oil companies. Amid allegations of widespread abuses on its plantations, including the use of child labor, three NGOs this week lodged a formal complaint against Indonesian palm oil giant Indofood, calling for two of its subsidiaries to be suspended from the industry's largest certification scheme. The complaint, signed by Rainforest Action Network (RAN), Indonesian labor rights advocacy group OPPUK and the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF), was filed with the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) on Tuesday. Citing numerous violations of the roundtable's principles and Code of Conduct, [the complaint](#) calls for Indofood subsidiaries PT London Sumatra and PT Salim Ivomas Pratama to be suspended from the RSPO "until transparent actions are taken" to resolve the issues.

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<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/10/more-than-20-labor-law-violations-by-indofood-alleged-in-indonesia/>

Borneo's Vanishing Forests: Palm Oil Farming

Ozy Aditya struggles with the steering wheel of his 4x4 pickup as he bounces between potholes. Following the Sungai Wahaua River, we are headed for the Wehea Nature Reserve in the Bornean province of East Kalimantan. Oil palm trees line both sides of the road. In the opposite direction, flatbed trucks rumble past hauling oversized logs the diameter of small cars. They are headed to mills

where their cargoes of ironwood and Menggaris trees will be turned into building materials and fancy furniture. Pulling off the gravel road we pause to inspect a staggered line of newly planted oil palms. The lack of scenery stretches in every direction. In his hand, Ozy cradles the rich crimson fruit of an African oil palm (*Elaeis guineensis*). "This is what it's all about, this one little nut," he says, "from it comes the most popular vegetable oil on the planet, and a lot of controversy."

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<http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/borneos-vanishing-forests-palm-oil-farming>

Company poised to destroy critical orangutan habitat in breach of Indonesia's moratorium

Sungai Putri is a beautiful natural forest area in West Kalimantan that is home to between 750 and 1750 orangutans. This makes it the third largest population of this Critically Endangered species in the province. Sungai Putri has extensive deep peat areas, up to 14.5 meters deep in places. A company named PT Mohairson Pawan Khatulistiwa apparently plans to clear more than half of their license area for conversion into an industrial tree plantation. There is this beautiful natural forest area in West Kalimantan, called Sungai Putri, which roughly translates as the River of the Princess. At about 57,000 hectares (141,000 acres), it is a sizable piece of forest enough to provide a home to between 750 and 1750 orangutans. This makes it the third largest population of this Critically Endangered species in the province. Sungai Putri has extensive deep peat areas, up to 14.5 meters (48 feet) deep in places. And it is covered with forest. Given that the Indonesian government is committed to protecting peat, forests, and orangutans one would assume that this area is safe. Well, as it turns out, it is not.

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<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/10/palm-oil-company-poised-to-destroy-critical-orangutan-habitat-in-breach-of-indonesias-moratorium/>

Land Status Hampers Oil Palm Replanting

The lack of awareness of land certificate ownership among oil palm farmers has hampered palm oil firms to carry out replanting programs in Indonesia. Reza Andriansyah, vice president of Sinar Mas Agro Resources and Technology (PT SMART), said that the issues with the legality of lands had been the biggest obstacle for companies to replant farmers' plantations supplying them with oil palms. "We take loans to finance the replanting program from banks requiring farmers to own land certificates. They even don't have certificates of land ownership issued by village heads," Reza said in Jakarta on Thursday, October 27, 2016. Reza called on the government, companies, academicians, and activists to raise awareness of the importance of land certificates among farmers. A study conducted by the Research Centre for Climate Change (RCCC) of the University of Indonesia shows that small-scale farmers are not concerned with the issues with sustainable oil palm.

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<http://en.tempo.co/read/news/2016/10/27/056815681/Land-Status->

DiCaprio's documentary highlights Mt. Leuser deforestation

Oscar-winning actor Leonardo DiCaprio's documentary *Before the Flood*, which revolves around climate change issues and includes his visit to Mount Leuser National Park in Aceh, has premiered in Los Angeles, California, and will be aired on the National Geographic Channel on Oct. 30. Directed by Fisher Stevens, *Before the Flood* reveals the condition of Leuser Ecosystem, a UNESCO world heritage site that covers thousands of hectares of protected forest in Aceh and North Sumatra, which is endangered due to high rate of deforestation. "The movie is important to inform people about deforestation caused by oil palm plantations, which drives climate change. We have to aggressively solve the deforestation crisis in places such as Leuser Ecosystem," Rainforest Action Network executive director Lindsey Allen said in a press release as reported by *Antara* news agency. **(Read also: [DiCaprio unveils climate change film 'Before the Flood'](#) and [Big banks support firms linked to deforestation](#)).**

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<http://www.thejakartapost.com/life/2016/10/25/dicaprios-documentary-highlights-mt-leuser-deforestation.html>

Ratification of Paris Agreement not enough : NGO

The decision of the House of Representatives (DPR) to ratify the Paris Agreement on climate change should be followed with policy to be implemented in natural resource management, environmentalists said. "Ratification is not enough as the country has the responsibility to meet its pledge, to meet its commitment of reducing 29 percent of greenhouse gas emission by 2030 and to prevent ecological disaster," the non governmental organization concerned with environment Wahana Lingkungan Hidup (Walhi) said in a statement here on Saturday. Walhi called on the government to gradually phase out the use of fossil energy such as coal in favor of renewable energy. In addition, the ratification decision should also be followed with a halt to expansion of mono-culture plantations such as oil palm plantations and industrial timber estates. Walhi blamed expansion of oil palm plantations and Industrial Timber Estates for deforestation and forest fires, which have devastated millions of hectares of the countrys tropical forests.

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<http://www.antaranews.com/en/news/107350/ratification-of-paris-agreement-not-enough--ngo>

MALAYSIA

'Stop intimidation, violence against Orang Asli'

Advocacy group for the indigenous people Jaringan Kampung Orang Asli Semenanjung Malaysia (JKOASM) has urged for an immediate stop to intimidation tactics and violence against the indigenous people who are blockading a logging trail. Their call comes after reports that a blockade by a group of Orang Asli along a logging trail deep in the interior of Gua Musang had been destroyed by loggers on Wednesday. "JKOASM is disappointed and strongly condemned this kind of violence because what have been done is extremely inhumane and goes against their human rights as the rightful owners of that area as well as Malaysian citizens," said JKOASM chairperson Tijah Yok Chopil in a statement today. It is, after all, the duty and responsibility of the Orang Asli to preserve and defend the forests from any destruction, trespassing and logging, she said. She also said that what happened at Gua Musang shows that outsiders, including the government and police, look down on the Orang Asli and have no respect for them. Commenting on what happened at Gua Musang, she said that releasing a shot to threaten or intimidate the Orang Asli is a crime and the police should investigate this issue.

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<https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/357565#ixzz4Ra25xaKr>

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

A complaint lodged earlier this year about alleged abuses by a palm oil company in Indonesian Papua has raised questions over the credibility of the industry's largest certification scheme in investigating member violations. In April, indigenous rights NGO Pusaka wrote to the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) with detailed allegations that PT Nabire Baru — a subsidiary of Goodhope Asia, which is owned by Sri Lankan palm oil giant Carson Cumberbatch — had violated "both legal regulations and the customary law" of the Yerisiam Gua people, as well as the RSPO's own principles and criteria, which ban unsustainable practices like the conversion of virgin rainforests and land grabbing that aren't necessarily illegal in countries where palm oil is produced. Central to the complaint were claims that Nabire Baru took communal land belonging to the indigenous group in Papua's Nabire district without a collective decision making process.

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<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/11/complaint-against-a-palm-oil-company-in-papua-held-in-limbo-by-rspo/>

INDIA

Jharkhand: One killed in police firing as tribal anger over land ordinance grows

One person was killed and several others were injured in Jharkhand's Khunti on Saturday when police fired on protesters trying to join a rally against the government's alleged attempt to dilute two British-era laws safeguarding tribal land, officials said. Several policemen was also injured when hundreds of villagers clashed with security personnel who tried to stop them from marching to Ranchi, 35 kms away, to join a rally by a conglomerate of tribal groups. The growing tribal anger in Jharkhand has echoes of the nationwide protests by farmers against the Narendra Modi government's controversial bill that aims to ease India's laws governing land acquisition for industries.

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<http://www.hindustantimes.com/ranchi/jharkhand-tribal-killed-three-others-hurt-in-police-firing/story-9agsCOBijr0xDHKjOLMo1I.html>

The High Court in Jammu and Kashmir has again prolonged the arbitrary detention of Kashmiri human rights defender Mr. Khurram Parvez

On 25 October 2016, the Jammu and Kashmir High Court heard the case against Mr. Parvez filed under the Public Safety Act. Mr. Parvez's family had filed a petition on 13 October 2016 challenging his detention, to which the State failed to respond. However, instead of releasing Mr. Parvez, the High Court granted the State another three weeks to respond, sending Mr. Parvez back to Jammu's Kot Balwal Jail, 300 kilometres away from his home, family, and legal counsel in Srinagar. The Court has set the next hearing date for 14 November, meaning that Mr. Parvez risks spending at least 20 more days in arbitrary detention. On 14 September 2016 Mr. Parvez was stopped from travelling to Geneva to participate in the United Nations Human Rights Council on orders from the Intelligence Bureau, and was arrested 2 days later at his home in Kashmir under Sections 107 and 151 of the Criminal Procedure Code and denied access to legal counsel.

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<http://www.omct.org/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/india/2016/10/d24019/>

Kashmiri human rights defender Khurram Parvez arbitrarily arrested and denied due process rights

On September 16 at 12:30 am, police officers came to Khurram Parvez's home in Srinagar in Indian-administered Kashmir, arrested him without presenting a warrant, and took him to the Kothi Bagh police station, where he remains in arbitrary detention. He has not been allowed access to a lawyer, and the police have provided no formal document of arrest or reason for his detention. The evening prior his arrest, a group of police personnel headed by the Kothi Bagh Station House Officer came to Mr. Parvez's home and asked for him. Mr. Parvez was not at home at the time, but spoke to the Officer by telephone and was informed that the Superintendent of Police, Sheikh Faisal, wished to meet him. Mr. Parvez agreed to meet with the Superintendent the following day. He was nevertheless arrested without explanation several hours later after arriving at his home.

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<https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/kashmiri-human-rights-defender-khurram-parvez-arbitrarily-arrested>

Planting problems

Forest development corporations fell rich forests to raise plantations, undermining people's rights and biodiversity. It's time India introduced guidelines to assess their impacts. With complete disregard for people's rights, the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd (FDCM) felled thousands of trees in Brahmapuri forest division early this year. It felled the trees despite protests by the residents of 22 villages located in and around the forest. FDCM did stop felling in June after the monsoon arrived. But by then, it had already cleared 385 hectares (ha) of the old-growth forest to raise teak wood plantations. As a mark of protest, the residents refused to provide labour for planting teak, and FDCM had to hire labour from other districts.

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<http://millenniumpost.in/NewsContent.aspx?NID=331222>

Govt unveils satellite surveillance to curb illegal mining

In a path-breaking move, the mines ministry on Saturday came out with mining surveillance system (MSS), a pan-India surveillance network using latest satellite technology, to check illegal mining. Launching the system, Mines Minister Piyush Goyal hoped the technology will ensure sustainable utilisation of the country's mineral resources. "MSS will trigger an alarm whenever there is an instance of illegal mining outside permitted areas. Karnataka, which saw large instances of illegal mining in the past, stands to gain tremendously from this technology," he added. This technology will help design planned development of mining as also provide complete data of labourers working in the sector online, which will lead to better safety standards, the minister noted. MSS is a satellite-based monitoring system, which aims to check illegal mining activity through automatic remote-sensing detection technology.

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<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/piyush-goyal-unveils-satellite-surveillance-to-curb-illegal-mining/article9224543.ece>

Drones the new weapon in India's crackdown on illegal mining

A satellite-based mining surveillance system was launched last month, and the ministry is now exploring the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, to curb instances of illegal mining, said a notification dated Nov. 1. Drones can be used to monitor illegal mining activities, check for activity at

night and to track illegal truck movements, said Prithul Kumar, a director at the ministry of mines, in the note. They can also monitor whether reclamation has been done as committed when a mine is closed, and calculate the extent of the green cover, it said. Drones are increasingly being used around the world to check illegal activities and to survey damage to the environment. In Panama, indigenous people are using drones to monitor deforestation on their lands. In India, Uttarakhand state began using drones recently to check illegal quarrying, while western Maharashtra state has recently deployed drones to check illegal sand mining. Illegal mines in the country often hire child workers and migrant workers who are poorly paid and have few protections, activists say.

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<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-mining-drones-idUSKBN12X1FJ>

Oil palm should not be expanded in Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Ruchi Soya Industries to plant 25,000 hectares of oil palm in four districts – East Kameng, Papumpare, Lower Subansiri and West Siang. This brings the total area earmarked for oil palm in the state to 45,000 hectares (or 450 sq. km.). Oil palm is a highly productive crop – more than any other oil crop in the world – yielding up to 6 tons of palm oil per hectare of cultivation. Palm oil is also the cheapest vegetable oil in the world, and is used extensively for cooking and the production of consumer goods like cosmetics and soap. As such, expanding oil palm cultivation in India will be important for India's vegetable oil security. However, expanding oil palm in Arunachal Pradesh is a risky proposition. First, according to crop suitability maps of the United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), no areas in Arunachal Pradesh are suitable for cultivating oil palm.

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<http://www.arunachaltimes.in/oil-palm-should-not-be-expanded-in-arunachal-pradesh/>

AUSTRALIA

The Road to a Treaty

Our nation's future lies in settling the demons of our past. A Treaty with Australia's First Peoples is the best path to get us there, writes Jeff McMullen. If you make the long journey to Possession Island, that jewel in the turquoise sea off the tip of Cape York, the folly of our past and the path to a brighter and just future is as clear as those crystal waters. It was on Bedanug, as the Kaurareg people had called that island for thousands of years, that Lt James Cook and his trigger-happy Marines, hoisted the English flag, fired a volley from the Endeavour's cannon and thereby claimed half a continent for King George III without ever carrying out the Royal orders to negotiate with the First Peoples of this land. From that day in 1770 – through the violent dispossession of the Frontier Wars and the failure to negotiate treaties with the First People who never surrendered the ancient rule of traditional law and custodianship over their country – Australians have continued to deny the full merit of Indigenous law that has existed here for 60,000 years or more.

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<https://newmatilda.com/2016/10/27/the-road-to-a-treaty/>

Australian Government must re-build trust of civil society

United Nations independent expert Michel Forst today called on the Government of Australia to urgently dispel civil society's growing concerns about the 'chilling effect' of its recent laws, policies and actions constraining the rights of human rights defenders. "I was astonished to observe mounting evidence of a range of cumulative measures that have levied enormous pressure on Australian civil society," said the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders at the end of his first fact-finding visit to the country. Recognizing Australia's traditional safeguards of constitutional democracy, rule of law and free media, Mr. Forst noted that his initial expectation of his official visit was to "encounter only laudable implementation of the State's obligations under international human rights laws, aimed at ensuring a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders." Instead, the expert found a number of detrimental measures which include a growing body of statutory laws, at both federal and state levels, constraining the rights of defenders.

READ MORE

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1610/S00073/australian-government-must-re-build-trust-of-civil-society.htm>

UN human rights advocate calls for state to scrap anti-protest laws

A SENIOR UN human rights advocate has called on the State Government to rescind its anti-protest laws. Michel Forst, the UN's Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, visited Hobart earlier this month as part of a national tour. "From my discussions with the Tasmanian Government, it has become clear that the Government had prioritised business and government resource interests over the democratic rights of individuals to peacefully protest," he said. "I reminded the Government that human rights defenders have a legitimate right to promote and protect all human rights, including the right to a healthy environment, regardless of whether their peaceful activities are seen by some as frustrating development projects. "I therefore recommend that the laws criminalising peaceful protests are urgently reviewed and rescinded."

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<http://www.themercury.com.au/news/politics/un-human-rights-advocate-calls-for-state-to-scrap-antiprotest-laws/news-story/eff454014c094ae6b6c8b2a883463c10>

Fear, censorship and retaliation': United Nations rapporteur slams Australia's human Rights Record (Watch Video)

Australia lacks adequate protections for human rights defenders and has created "an atmosphere of fear, censorship and retaliation" among activists, according to a United Nations special rapporteur. Michel Forst, who released an end-of-mission statement on Tuesday after a fortnight in Australia, said he was "astonished" by numerous measures heaping "enormous pressure" on public servants, whistle-blowers and ordinary citizens increased secrecy provisions, especially with regard to immigration and national security, were hampering the ability of journalists and human rights defenders to hold public institutions to account, he said. The new metadata retention regime, which enjoyed bipartisan support, had "serious implications" for journalists and media outlets, Mr Forst said.

READ MORE

<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/fear-censorship-and-retaliation-united-nations-rapporteur-slams-australias-human-rights-record-20161018-gs4tt3.html>

Australia intentionally torturing refugees on Nauru, says major report

Mr Forst also condemned the secrecy requirements of the Australian Border Force Act, elements of which he said contravened human rights principles, including freedom of expression, and called for the laws to be reviewed. The special rapporteur reserved particular opprobrium for ministers' attacks on Australian Human Rights commissioner Gillian Triggs, who last year resisted enormous pressure from the Abbott government to resign over alleged political bias in a report on children's detention.

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<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/island-of-despair-australia-intentionally-torturing-refugees-on-nauru-says-major-amnesty-international-report-20161016-gs3sm4.html>

LATINA AMERICA

There Is an Epidemic of Assassinations Targeting Human Rights Defenders in Latin America

2015 marked the deadliest year for activists, particularly women and environmentalists fighting extractive industries Last year was the deadliest year for human rights activists in Latin America—particularly women and defenders of the Earth—according to a new report by Oxfam International, which suggests that governments co-opted by economic elites are partly responsible for driving this "unthinkable spiral of violence." Citing data from the independent investigative organization Global Witness, the report, *The Risks of Defending Human Rights* (pdf), found that of the 185 human rights defenders killed worldwide in 2015, 122 were murdered in Latin America. And this trend appears to be continuing, with 58 additional murders occurring in that region between January to May of this year. Even worse, those numbers do not include the recent assassinations of Brazilian environmental official Luiz Araujo, Honduran Campesino movement leaders José Ángel Flores and Silmer Dionisio,

nor the recent attack on Goldman-Prize-winning environmental activist Máxima Acuña de Chaupe in Peru.

READ MORE

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2016/10/25/human-rights-defenders-face-unthinkable-spiral-violence-latin-america>

New Oxfam report finds expansion of extractive industries is tied to rise of killings in Latin America.

On October 18, human rights defenders José Ángel Flores and Silmer Dionisio were murdered after they left a meeting of peasant farmers in the Bajo Aguán region of Honduras. Both were organizers with the Unified Campesino Movement of the Aguán (MUCA), whose former president Johnny Rivas said “death squads chasing peasant families fighting for land rights” were behind the assassinations. On September 18, indigenous environmental defender Máxima Acuña de Chaupe says she was attacked at her remote farm in the northern Andean highlands of Peru by private security under the employ of the Yanacocha mining company, a local subsidiary of the Denver-based Newmont Mining Corporation. Máxima has attracted international claim for her years-long resistance to the company’s campaign to transform her plot into the open-pit Conga gold and copper mine, and she says this latest incident is just one of many physical attacks she has endured.

According to a new briefing from Oxfam International, such attacks—many of them deadly—reflect a record-high surge of violence targeting human rights defenders across Latin America. This trend, Oxfam says, is “related to the expansion of extractive industries as a national revenue model for Latin American and Caribbean countries.”

READ MORE

<http://www.alternet.org/world/there-epidemic-assassinations-targeting-human-rights-defenders-latin-america>

Canada Mining Companies in Latin America Have Blood on Hands

A new report finds that the corporate social responsibility governing Canada's mining industry brings human rights abuses and death to Latin American communities. Canadian mining companies came under renewed criticism Monday for their role in dozens of deaths, hundreds of injuries, and their systemic criminalization of mostly nonviolent grassroots activists protesting their operations in Latin American countries over the past 15 years, a new report found. The report sheds further light on the notorious human rights and environmental track records of Canadian corporations extracting resources abroad.

READ MORE

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Canada-Mining-Companies-in-Latin-America-Have-Blood-on-Hands--20161024-0007.html>

The next frontier for palm oil expansion: Latin America

The palm oil boom in Latin America is threatening the rights of local communities and putting forests and ecosystems at risk – there is an urgent need for reforms to ensure social and environmental sustainability that places human rights front and center. For a long time sustainable palm oil advocates have focused their attention squarely on Southeast Asia, where much of the world's palm oil originates. The trail of devastating impacts on forests and communities that have resulted from the rapid expansion of palm production in this region has finally jolted a number of companies into action. Today major global brands and palm oil traders like Wilmar and Cargill have committed to ensuring that their palm oil supply chain is deforestation and exploitation-free, and over 90 percent of globally traded palm oil is bound by sourcing policies that aim to ensure socially and environmentally responsible production practices. But oil palm cultivation is now beginning to be scaled up in other continents, in particular Latin America, where production has been primarily for domestic use, but is now seeing a rapid expansion driven by galloping global demand.

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<http://politicsofpoverty.oxfamamerica.org/2016/10/the-next-frontier-for-palm-oil-expansion-latin-america/>

HONDURAS

Honduran land rights activists shot dead in latest attack

Hooded gunmen shot dead two land rights activists in Honduras, the government confirmed on Wednesday, the latest in a string of attacks on rights groups in the Central American country. Jose Angel Flores, 64, was president of the Aguan Unified Farmers Movement (MUCA), a group that opposes agriculture companies that grow African oil palm in a conflict over ownership and use of land. The other activist killed, Silmer George, was part of the same group. The two men died Tuesday evening after hooded men with rifles shot at them as they left a meeting in the city of Tocoa, 240 kilometers (149 miles) north of the capital, Tegucigalpa. Flores and George had received threats before. "Honduras has turned into a 'no-go zone' for anyone daring to campaign for the protection of the environment," Erika Guevara-Rosas, Americas director at Amnesty International, said in a statement. "How many more activists have to be brutally murdered before the authorities take effective action to protect them, or even be willing to talk about this crisis?"

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<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3852786/Honduran-land-rights-activists-shot-dead-latest-attack.html#ixzz4PhOB0OjN>

Honduras: Investigate Killings of Land Rights Leaders

Honduran authorities should carry out a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation into the killing of two land rights activists of the Unified Peasant Movement of Aguán (MUCA), Human Rights Watch said today. The government should take urgent steps to end impunity for attacks against land rights and environmental defenders.

READ MORE

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/10/21/honduras-investigate-killings-land-rights-leaders>

Activists' Murders Turn Honduras into 'No-Go Zone' for Environmental Campaigners

The brutal murders of two land rights activists in Honduras last night are the latest tragedies in a seemingly unstoppable wave of deadly attacks turning Honduras into a no-go zone for human rights defenders, said Amnesty International. José Angel Flores, 64, President of the Movimiento Unificado Campesino, was shot dead by a group of unidentified men in the department of Colón, northern Honduras, in the afternoon of 18 October. Another community leader, Silmer Dionisio George, was also shot in the incident and died at a local hospital hours later. "Honduras has turned into a 'no-go zone' for anyone daring to campaign for the protection of the environment. How many more activists have to be brutally murdered before the authorities take effective action to protect them, or even be willing to talk about this crisis?" said Erika Guevara-Rosas, Americas Director at Amnesty International.

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<http://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2016/10/19/activists-murders-turn-honduras-no-go-zone-environmental-campaigners>

EL SALVADOR

Pac Rim Mining loses suit against El Salvador

Last Friday, the World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes [declared without merit](#) Pacific Rim/OceanaGold's [\\$250-million lawsuit](#) against El Salvador. The investment tribunal rejected the company's claims of having lost potential profits as a result of not being granted permits for the El Dorado gold mining project in the Central American country. Thus, it was ordered to pay \$8 million in legal fees and costs to the Salvadoran government. "We congratulate ourselves and are thankful for the brave role played in this case by the National Prosecutor, the National Roundtable against Mining, and the communities of Cabañas, Chalatenango, and San Isidro. We are also thankful for the support we've received from different countries around the world that joined these

communities' fight against the mining industry," the communications secretary for the Salvadoran President, Eugenio Chicas, [told the press](#).

READ MORE

<http://www.mining.com/pac-rim-mining-loses-suit-against-el-salvador/>

There are No Winners in Pac Rim Mining Company vs El Salvador

Civil society groups worldwide that support Salvadoran communities and organizations working on mining and environmental issues reacted to today's decision by the ICSID. In 2009, Pac Rim Cayman LLC brought an "investor-state dispute settlement" (ISDS) case against El Salvador at the World Bank Group's arbitration venue the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). The company, now a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Canadian-Australian company OceanaGold, sued El Salvador for alleged losses of potential profits as a result of not being granted a mining concession for a gold project. The government of El Salvador did not issue the concession because the company failed to meet key regulatory requirements. "The fact that Pac Rim – now OceanaGold – could sue El Salvador when it has never had a license to operate, is an abuse of process," says Manuel Pérez-Rocha of the Institute for Policy Studies. "That these suits take place far from any transparent, independent court system undermines democracy in El Salvador, and around the world."

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<http://canadians.org/media/there-are-no-winners-pac-rim-mining-company-vs-el-salvador>

El Salvador Wins Dispute Over Denying a Mining Permit

The government of [El Salvador](#) won a long-running legal battle on Friday when an international arbitration panel ruled that it did not have to pay compensation to a mining company that was denied a concession to drill for gold. The case had been watched by antimining activists, who had pointed to it as a test of the rights of governments to make laws protecting their citizens' health and the environment against challenges from corporations. The panel, the [International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes](#), at the World Bank in Washington, accepted El Salvador's argument that the company, Pac Rim Cayman, did not meet all the legal requirements to receive a permit. The ruling was a relief to the Salvadoran government, which faced a demand for \$314 million in compensation from Pac Rim Cayman for the loss of expected profits from the mining venture.

READ MORE

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/15/world/americas/salvador-mining-dispute.html>

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

A national platform for the First Peoples of T&T

As the Santa Rosa First Peoples Community prepares for its Heritage Week from October 8 to 16 under the theme 'Re-Igniting the ancestral fires – Establishing Presence', Chief Ricardo Bharath Hernandez addresses the nation on several aspects of his community's continuing lobby for recognition of the rights of First People's presence here in Trinidad and Tobago today. "The Santa Rosa First Peoples Community, is the only organised area of Amerindian Survival in Trinidad and Tobago, and was recognised as such by the State in 1990. No historian, archaeologist or anthropologist can give an accurate time of the existence of the First Peoples in Kairi (Trinidad). There are differing dates—ranging from 6,000 —10,000 years, based on the scientific carbon dating of the remains of the First Peoples. Quite often, in recent times, a new discovery is made and different information is revealed about our First Peoples. Yet it is only 26 years ago, that the presence of First Peoples was acknowledged by the State, and 16 years since a day of recognition was granted. To date, this day is not a public holiday.

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<http://www.trinidadexpress.com/20161005/features/a-national-platform-for-the-first-peoples-of-tt>

NICARAGUA

Nicaragua Dispute Over Indigenous Land Erupts in Wave of Killings

The wailing came from a house perched along the river as people gathered outside. Two indigenous men had been abducted during a skirmish with nearby settlers, and no one knew where they were. "Why did they do this to you?" a sister of one of the men shouted, slumping over his neatly made bed and howling in her native Miskito tongue. A few days later, the men were found, decapitated — the latest in a series of Miskito Indian men killed in battles over land in [Nicaragua](#). Indigenous communities all over Nicaragua's Caribbean coast say they are under attack by settlers who have taken over their ancestral lands. [Continue reading the main story](#)

READ MORE

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/17/world/americas/nicaragua-dispute-over-indigenous-land-erupts-in-wave-of-killings.html? r=0>

BRAZIL

Xukuru-Kariri indigenous leader assassinated in Brazil

A Brazilian Indian leader at the forefront of his people's struggle to reclaim their ancestral land has been assassinated. João Natalício Xukuru-Kariri was reportedly stabbed to death outside his home.

Reports suggest that two men killed João, but their identities have not been confirmed. Seu João, as he was known, was heavily involved in the Xukuru-Kariri tribe's campaign to live on their ancestral land, a right enshrined in Brazilian and international law. Another Xukuru-Kariri leader told the Brazilian support group CIMI: "The region has a history of violence resulting from the land struggle. Seu João was a respected leader of our people." Land theft is the biggest problem the Xukuru-Kariri and other tribal peoples face. Around the world, industrialized society is stealing tribal lands in the pursuit of profit. But for tribal peoples, land is life. It fulfills all their material and spiritual needs. Brazil's Congress is currently debating a proposal to drastically weaken indigenous peoples' land rights, which, if implemented, would be catastrophic for tribes nationwide and would further worsen their plight.

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<http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/11472>

Violence Against Indigenous People Climbs as Land Conflicts Escalate

A new report finds that violence against Brazil's indigenous people continues to be high, with 137 killings in 2015, often due to land conflicts; Mato Grosso do Sul state had the most killings. Guarani Kaiowá mourning Clodiodi de Souza, shot and killed at the Yvu farm in June of 2016. The Indians say 100 angry, armed farmers attacked them. (Photo: Courtesy of CIMI). In August 2015, about a thousand Guarani-Kaiowá indigenous people invaded nine farms in the southern part of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul as part of a plan for the re-conquest of their ancestral lands known as Ñhanduru Marangatu—a claim officially recognized by Brazil's government a decade earlier, but including territory that has long been occupied by the region's European-descended large-scale farmers, who maintain that they hold legal title. After days of mutual accusations and tension, the Federal Supreme Court sided with the farmers and suspended approval of the indigenous claim. But the indigenous groups remained.

READ MORE

<https://psmag.com/violence-against-indigenous-people-climbs-as-land-conflicts-escalate-9fdcc6f54230#.v9p6u0xpz>

One year on, Brazil battles to rebuild after the Samarco mining disaster

"I didn't see it, I just heard it," says dairy farmer Clodoardo Carneiro. "It made a great noise. You could hear the bamboo breaking." Carneiro is describing the day of November 5, 2015, when a dam burst at a mine in Minas Gerais, Brazil. The flood of mineral waste – some 32 million cubic metres of water – surged over hills and crashed through the valleys, contaminating the River Doce and destroying Carneiro's home. One year on, the remains of houses stand as scarred shells, still encrusted with mud in what had been the town of Paracatu de Baixo. Trees in every direction are branded brown up to the level the sludge reached. For Carneiro, the past 12 months have been a process of slow, painful recovery. "It took my parents, my brother and I our whole lives to build this," he says. "We lost the fillet of our land, the gem of the earth – what was good is gone." Brazilian prosecutors have charged

21 national and foreign mining executives with manslaughter and other environmental crimes almost a year after a mine dam burst killed 19 people and polluted hundreds of miles of rivers and streams.

READ MORE

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/10/20/21-brazilian-foreign-mining-executives-charged-in-dam-burst.html>

VENEZUELA

In Venezuela, Indigenous Communities' Struggles With Mining Are Far From Over

It is Saturday night in El Playón. The Ye'kuana and Sanumá people are gathered inside the Öttö, a circular communal house, waiting for the representatives from the Venezuelan government. These people come from 24 of the 49 tribal communities located along [the Caura River](#), a tributary of the Orinoco River in southern Venezuela, and they have been summoned for the 20th Assembly of the indigenous association [Kuyujani Organization](#). They have already been talking for almost four days, discussing the problems that are currently affecting them within their ancestral home. The issue that concerns them the most is the creation of a National Strategic Development Zone along the Orinoco River and the threat it represents to them and their land. This new national zone comprises an area of 111,843.70 square kilometers, which is the equivalent of 12% of Venezuela's national land. The Venezuelan government maintains that the Arco Minero project that would take place here could be the answer to the country's out-of-control economic crisis (due to the fall in prices for petroleum).

READ MORE

<https://globalvoices.org/2016/10/21/in-venezuela-indigenous-communities-struggles-with-mining-are-far-from-over/>

Supreme Court Denies Injunction Request against Orinoco Mining Arc

Venezuela's Supreme Court Justice (TSJ) has thrown out an injunction request that would have temporarily halted the national government's contentious Orinoco Mining Arc project. On May 31 of this year, a group of former politicians and social activists filed an official complaint against the mega-mining enterprise with the country's highest court, claiming that the project would have devastating environmental and social consequences. Specifically their appeal asks the TSJ to rule on the legality and constitutional legitimacy of a decree signed by President Nicolas Maduro in February, which opens up nearly 112 square kilometres of the mineral-rich, Amazonian state of Bolivar to 150 national and transnational firms for the extraction of gold, iron, diamonds, and coltan. The plea also included a request for an injunction pending the court's final decision on the case.

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<https://venezuelanalysis.com/news/12761>

MEXICO

Residents in Rural Mexico Fight for Say in Mining Projects Operating Near Their Land

This town is located in Puebla's Sierra Norte, a mountain range that covers 68 municipalities in the central Mexican state. The area is mostly rural, and many indigenous people call it home. "Trucks would arrive but we didn't know what was up, what it was about," Lobato Martinez, 54, says. "They never told us 'We come for this, we come for that.'" Maria de los Angeles Alvarez Reyes, 31, a resident of Tlamanca, a town in Puebla state, says she began hosting meetings for people of her community to inform them about a mining company seeking to work in their community. Tecoltemic is not a unique case. In many instances, people who live in the vicinity of mining projects are the last to learn about them, according to a 2013 report from the Comision para el Dialogo con los Pueblos Indigenas de Mexico (CDI), which oversees public policy for the indigenous population in the country. In addition, they are rarely informed about the procedures used to extract metals and how this could affect their health, their activities and their properties, according to the report.

READ MORE

<http://www.bignewsnetwork.com/news/248940155/residents-in-rural-mexico-fight-for-say-in-mining-projects-operating-near-their-land>

COLOMBIA

DESPITE 'NO' VOTE, COLOMBIA'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES SAY THEY'LL IMPLEMENT PEACE ACCORD

Recently, the government finalized a peace accord with the leftist guerrilla group FARC, seeking to end over 50 years of armed conflict. On Oct. 2, the public voted against ratifying the deal, shocking the world with a "No" decision that won by a sliver margin of **50.25 to 49.75 percent**. For indigenous communities like the crowd in La María, that outcome was unacceptable. Colombian indigenous leaders say they'll move forward with the peace accord anyway, contending that their communities have borne the brunt of a conflict that has claimed an estimated **220,000 lives**, **81 percent** of them civilian. "Indigenous and Afro-Colombians cannot wait for a solution to this crisis while the Colombian government makes institutional adjustments," an official CRIC **statement** said on Oct. 4. Luis Fernando Arias, the president of the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia — ONIC, in Spanish — **said** in a radio interview the day before, "We believe that the victims of this conflict voted in favor of the accord, and this is legitimate." Both organizations called for continued U.N. security monitoring to uphold the bilateral ceasefire in effect as of Aug. 29. The unexpected outcome left the country in a vertigo of unknowns. The referendum was an all-or-nothing arrangement with "**no Plan B**," and polling before the vote **erroneously forecast** a safe approval victory. Now, it's unclear what will

become of the result of four years of negotiations in Havana to resolve the oldest armed conflict in the Americas.

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<https://intercontinentalcry.org/despite-no-vote-colombias-indigenous-peoples-say-theyll-implement-peace-accord/>

Rights for indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities are crucial for Colombia's peace

The Nobel Peace Prize, [awarded to Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos](#) for his efforts in ending a more than 50-year-long civil war, serves as a reminder that Colombia is taking a worthwhile journey toward peace. But how does a country find peace when more than three-quarters of its population has known nothing but war? The vote in Colombia on Sunday, which rejected the peace agreement Santos negotiated [by less than half a percentage point](#), shows that this is not an easy path to follow. Like many other Colombians who spent most of their lives living and working amid armed conflict and the atrocities of war, I celebrated this historic opportunity to reconstruct our country and to vote yes for peace. One of the most devastating aspects of the war for me was to see indigenous, peasant, and Afro-Colombian communities who spent their entire lives investing in and caring for their territories suddenly left with nothing.

READ MORE

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2016/10/07/rights-for-indigenous-and-afro-colombian-communities-is-crucial-for-colombias-peace/?utm_term=.541e0f2fcd83

Colombian authorities capture illegal mining capo

Following three failed attempts, navy forces operating in the town of Timbiquí, in Colombia's southwestern province of Cauca, apprehended a big fish: José Didier Cadavid Salgado, who is considered to be one of the major illegal mining capos in the country. According to a press release sent out by the National Prosecutor's Office, Cadavid Salgado was initially arrested for carrying false identification documents. However, while investigating him, authorities realized he was wanted for the crimes of conspiracy, illicit enrichment, financing terrorism, environmental pollution caused by illegal mineral resource extraction and other criminal liabilities for damages caused to the environment in the Pacific coast of the Cauca and Nariño provinces.

In detail, he is accused of paying millions of pesos to armed groups in order to "safely" operate his illegal mining business.

READ MORE

<http://www.mining.com/colombian-authorities-capture-illegal-mining-capo/>

Colombia mining upset: mayors allowed to veto unwanted oil and mining projects

Following a number of scandals in which Colombia's national authorities granted mining titles in precious nature reserves, the country's Constitutional Court ruled that mayors have the authority to overrule Bogota. Last week's ruling has plunged the locally active mining industry in an even bigger crisis that the global commodity slump had already put it in. The ruling implies that literally all of the government's granted mining titles can be vetoed by the mayor of the municipality where the activity is supposed to take place or already takes place. Without the mayor's permission, there will be no mining and ongoing oil or mining projects can be halted, the top court ruled. Until last week, the national government was the ultimate authority over mining titles, especially if they were considered of "national interest," but no more, local interests now weigh more.

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<http://colombiareports.com/colombia-mining-upset-mayors-allowed-veto-unwanted-oil-mining-projects/>

Kent study recommends solution to end unsustainable agricultural practices

A University of Kent study has suggested that rural areas can provide for both people and wildlife in biodiversity-rich tropical countries such as Colombia if agriculture is administered in the right way. Published in the journal *Land Use Policy*, Valeria Boron, of the University's Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), analysed expert and stakeholder opinion as well as policy documents to understand how to achieve wildlife conservation and overall sustainability in rural areas in Colombia. Currently agricultural sectors such as cattle ranching and oil palm cultivation are not improving social inequality issues and food security, but are rather creating unstable employment and threatening biodiversity, natural resources, and cultural heritage. Consequently, Colombia, now the world's fourth largest oil palm producer, is following other oil palm producing countries like Indonesia and Malaysia in experiencing a loss in wildlife. The study recommended that, in order to reconcile biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, a policy mix that combines both regulatory and non-regulatory approaches is needed.

READ MORE

https://eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2016-10/uok-ksr102416.php

PERU

Peru police kill protester near Las Bambas copper mine

Police in Peru killed a protester on Friday while trying to clear a road near the Las Bambas copper mine in Peru's Apurimac state. Clashes broke out when police tried to clear an estimated 200 protesters who had blocked an access road in the Challhuahuacho district of the Cotabambas province, home to Peru's largest copper mine which came online this year. The victim died from a

bullet wound to the head, presumably fired by Peruvian police. Peru's interior ministry issued a statement saying that 20 policemen were injured in the clashes, and that one of them could lose an eye after being hit with a rock.

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<http://perureports.com/2016/10/15/peru-protester-killed-las-bambas-protest-truck-routes/>

Peru scrutinizes pacts between police and miners after clash

Peru is scrutinizing paid security services that federal police provide to mining companies following a deadly protest by local residents that suspended exports from one of the world's biggest copper mines, the government told Reuters on Monday. The three-month-old centrist government of President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski is also talking with the Red Cross about setting up a program to teach police to manage protests better, Rolando Luque, director of the National Office of Dialogue in Kuczynski's Cabinet, said in an interview. The fatal shooting of a protester in clashes with police near MMG Ltd's Las Bambas copper deposit earlier this month derailed talks between the government and Quechua-speaking communities upset with the company's use of a local road. Protesters blocked all roads near the mine after the incident, disrupting exports and threatening to halt output. The government has said the police did not have permission to crack down on protesters. Authorities are investigating the death of the man, one of several dozen Peruvians killed in clashes with police in the past decade, most in poor provinces.

READ MORE

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-peru-mining-conflicts-idUSKCN12O2Q1?il=0>

Small oil palm plantations are having a big impact on Peru rainforest

A closer look at a deforestation "hotspot" in central Peru finds oil palm expansion to be the primary driver of forest loss. That's according to a [recent report](#) by [Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project](#) (MAAP), which analyzed high-resolution satellite imagery in one of several patches of deforestation spattering the central Peruvian Amazon. Earlier this year, MAAP identified several [deforestation hotspots](#) in Peru, each indicating an area where a high density of forest loss was detected in 2015. And a clear trend was evident: Most hotspots were found in the central Amazon, home to the country's highest deforestation rates, in addition to myriad endemic plants and animals. Since unveiling the hotspots in March, MAAP has used satellite imagery to investigate the likely drivers of deforestation in each area. Their [earlier analyses](#) pegged cattle ranching as the main reason behind forest clearance. Released last week, MAAP's latest analysis revealed another driver of forest loss in the region – oil palm development.

READ MORE

<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/10/small-oil-palm-plantations-are-having-big-impacts-on-peru-rainforest/>

ARGENTINA

The Wichí of Rivadavia Banda Sur

Thousands of kilometres from Buenos Aires, in the arid, low-lying floodplains of the Gran Chaco, this town of around 10,000 people is one of the poorest in Argentina. It has the look and feel of a frontier town. Houses are ramshackle: four dirt-brick walls and a tin roof, surrounded by armadillo-capped *palo santo* fences. Wood fuels everything, adding smoke to the dust-laden air. The roads are pot-holed, frequently impassable, and the main form of transport is a motorbike bought on credit. The poorest of the poor are the Wichí, an indigenous people who have occupied the northern part of Argentina for centuries. Stripped of their land and way of life during the 18th and 19th centuries, persecuted well into the 20th, the Wichí live somewhere between the old world and the margins of the new. Here, the unthinkable happens. Last year, three children died in a ten-day period: three from malnutrition (and this in Argentina, the “world’s granary”), and one from asthma because the ambulance she was in did not have oxygen.

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<http://www.argentinaindependent.com/socialissues/humanrights/the-wichi-of-rivadavia-banda-sur/>

Zijin, Shandong go after Barrick Gold’s Veladero mine in Argentina

According to sources familiar with the matter [quoted by Reuters](#), both Asian miners have held separate talks with the world’s largest gold miner by output to try negotiating a deal that could let them grab half the ownership of Veladero, located in the mining-friendly San Juan province of Argentina. The mine, one of the South American country’s largest gold operations, produced 602,000 ounces last year. Proven and probable mineral reserves as of December 31, 2015, were 7.5 million ounces of gold. Gold production in 2016 is expected to be 630,000-690,000 ounces at all-in sustaining costs of \$830-\$900 per ounce according to the company’s [website](#). According to *Reuters*’ sources, the Chinese companies value the high quality of the mine, its production capacity and the prospect for geographical diversification. Last month, the mine was [shut down for more than two weeks due to a cyanide spill](#), the second one registered at the mine in only a year.

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<http://www.mining.com/zijin-shandong-go-after-barrick-golds-veladero-mine-in-argentina/>

Argentinian province to launch mining referendum

Chubut is not only famous for being the first Argentinian province to [legalize medical marijuana](#). It is also known for having one of the largest silver, lead, and gold [reserves](#) in the world, as well as considerable amounts of uranium. But most of these mineral resources, particularly silver, cannot be exploited in the southern region due to a moratorium that bans open-pit mining and the use of

cyanide for metal recovery. The activities have been prohibited since 2003, when 82% of the population at the city of Esquel voted to approve provincial law 5001. But in times of recession, priorities shift. That's why the provincial government announced the possibility of launching a new referendum in 2017, with the idea of revisiting the topic. "We need to update our productive matrix because we are not garnering enough income from oil, cattle farming, and fishing activities," the minister in charge of coordinating the provincial cabinet, Víctor Cisterna, [told the press](#).

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<http://www.mining.com/argentinian-province-to-launch-mining-referendum/>

AFRICA

Indigenous women in Central Africa "increasingly vulnerable" when it comes to access to land

A wide-ranging discussion on the rights of indigenous women in Africa was held last Sunday at the 59th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human Rights and Peoples Rights. The panel, organised by the Commission's Working Group on Indigenous Populations, looked at different aspects, including access to services, barriers to participation in decision-making and harmful traditional practices. Particularly burning was the issue of tenure insecurity for indigenous women in the Congo Basin. Indigenous peoples living in the Congo Basin derive most of their resources from the forests they manage according to community customary law. However, due to land tenure insecurity and the rapid development of activities that impact on land ownership, such as extractive industries and agribusiness, indigenous peoples, with women in the front line, are increasingly vulnerable when it comes to access to land. Ms. Dorothee Marie Lisenga, Coordinator of the Coalition of Women Leaders for the Environment and Sustainable Development, spoke about the persistent impact of colonialism on the land laws of most countries in the Congo Basin.

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<http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/african-human-rights-system/news/2016/10/indigenous-women-central-africa-increasingly-vulnera>

ANGOLA

Angola: Switzerland - Angola Concerned About Intimidation Against Human Rights Defenders

The Speaker of the National Assembly, Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos, said Monday in Geneva, Switzerland, that Angola is concerned about the reports of intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders. The official said so while addressing the 135th General Assembly of the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU), opened on Monday. He defended that it is up to parliamentarians to make a clear distinction between human rights defenders and political activists, who are mostly holders of an agenda and own and well-defined interests. So, Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos stressed the need to reverse this gloomy picture that, according to him, may entail a change of the legal

provisions in order to make them compatible with the applicable human rights standards and through extensive monitoring of human rights rules and regulations. He also suggested some guidelines as the compilation and dissemination of information on the functioning of the parliamentary committees on human rights, implementation of the supervision of international treaties on human rights and the mobilization to combat child trafficking and child labour.

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<http://allafrica.com/stories/201610251021.html>

LIBERIA

Liberia: the growth of a new palm oil frontier

Global environmental watchdog Global Witness or GW says palm oil giant Golden Veroleum (GVL) has bulldozed religious sites in southeast Liberia and has paid police armed with assault rifles to protect its plantations in a new report called *The Temple and the Gun*. Liberia is one of the poorest countries in the world. Almost one third of the population is [under the age of 10](#) (pdf), and more than half cannot meet their basic needs. Food poverty is a major problem, particularly in rural areas, where insecure employment is staggeringly high. On taking office in 2006, Liberia's president, Harvard-educated technocrat Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, set about reversing the country's image following its 14-year civil war. From lawless pariah state to a respectable and stable land, Liberia was open for business and investors clamoured for deals. The government needed quick revenue, which could be generated through agricultural concessions, and jobs for unemployed youth, who could become a major security threat. Post-war Liberia was also a fertile ground for policy experiments by multilaterals, law and business professors, and consultants hired by the likes of businessman George Soros and Tony Blair – whose [Africa Governance Initiative](#) works to build capacity in government ministries – names that brought status and donor dollars.

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<https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2016/oct/20/liberia-africa-palm-oil-frontier-communities-land-gvl-plantations-sinoe-county>

Palm oil in Liberia: hope and anger in one of Africa's poorest countries – video

<https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/video/2016/oct/20/palm-oil-liberia-hope-anger-one-of-africa-poorest-countries-video>

In palm oil, Liberia sees economic boom — but forests may lose

Surrounded by heavily deforested neighboring countries, Liberia resembles a green island in satellite images — yet the future of this West African country's forests is by no means guaranteed. Liberia views palm oil development as a huge opportunity for economic growth and international trade. But

embracing the **booming industry** is not without its costs. Without proper oversight, the country's vast forests could be cut down and replaced by oil palm plantations, destroying critical natural resources and the benefits they provide for the communities who depend on them. Once mired in decades of civil war, in recent years a more peaceful Liberia has emerged as a conservation leader focused on sustainable economic growth. In this interview, Liam Walsh, technical director for Conservation International (CI)'s Liberia office, explains the opportunities and challenges that increased palm oil production poses for Liberia.

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<http://news.trust.org/item/20161028180944-eag6f/>

CAMEROON

Palm Oil Plantation in Cameroon: An Opportunity to Stop “The Wrong Project in the Wrong Place”

In anticipation of a crucial decision to be made by the Government of Cameroon on the renewal of a land lease for a controversial oil palm project, EIA releases today a video that shows how the large-scale project has negatively impacted the lives of thousands of community members, threatened biodiversity hotspots, and failed to meet development promises to local communities in the Southwest region of Cameroon. The video, “**The Wrong Project in the Wrong Place,**” is the result of a collaboration with local, national, and international environmental groups.

READ MORE

<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20161018006715/en/Palm-Oil-Plantation-Cameroon-Opportunity-Stop-%E2%80%9CThe>

CONGO

Activists urge Congo government to pass new mining code

Activists in the Democratic Republic of Congo are pressing the government to revive plans for a new mining code, claiming the country, which is Africa's top copper producer and the world's largest source of cobalt, needs the higher revenues a revised legislation would generate. Congo began reviewing the 2002 mining code in 2012 and last year it proposed hiking profit taxes to 35% from 30%, raising the state's free share of new mining projects to 10% from 5% and royalties on copper and cobalt revenue to 3.5% from 2%.

READ MORE

<http://www.mining.com/activists-urge-congo-government-to-pass-new-mining-code/>

'Catastrophic' decline in Eastern lowland gorilla blamed on mining for minerals used in mobile phones

The Eastern lowland gorilla, the world's greatest ape, has suffered a "catastrophic decline" in the restive Democratic Republic of Congo, blamed on mining for minerals used in mobile phones. Scientists said the numbers in the wild have dwindled three quarters in 20 years, to just 3,800 from 17,000 before civil war first broke out in 1996, and fear that without rapid intervention, the majestic creatures could disappear altogether in the next five years. Andrew Plumptre, of the Wildlife Conservation Society and the lead researcher on the gorilla count, said while they knew numbers had declined, the results came as a shock. "Back of the envelope' calculations had predicted a 30-50 per cent decrease," he said. "However, we received a major shock upon pulling together all the regional survey data: none of us were prepared for such a large decrease." He said the main reason appeared to be a surge in artisanal mining sites controlled by armed militias deep in the forest, making a living from the DRC's rich reserves of minerals such as gold and coltan, an essential ingredient in the manufacture of mobile phones.

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<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/20/catastrophic-decline-in-eastern-lowland-gorilla-blamed-on-mining/>

MADAGASCAR

Statement of United Nations Special Rapporteur John H. Knox on the conclusion of his mission to Madagascar.

Today, I concluded my mission to Madagascar, which began on 25 October. During my visit, I met with a wide range of people, including government ministers and officials, civil society organizations, academics, agencies of the United Nations, and the newly established National Human Rights Commission. I participated in meetings in Antanananivo, Moramanga, and Andasibe, and I visited the Andasibe Mantadia National Park. I would like to thank the Government for its invitation, and for the warmth and openness of everyone I met on this visit. My mandate was established in March 2012, when the United Nations Human Rights Council decided to appoint its first Independent Expert on the human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. In March 2015, the Council renewed the mandate for another three years and changed the title to Special Rapporteur. As the Special Rapporteur, I have been asked by the Council to study the relationship between human rights and the environment, and to promote the implementation of human rights obligations relating to the environment.

READ MORE

<http://reliefweb.int/report/madagascar/statement-united-nations-special-rapporteur-john-h-knox-conclusion-his-mission>

ZIMBAWE

Zimbabwe: Decent Work Policies Isolate Indigenous People

Zimbabwe's indigenous people and communities have continued to wallow in poverty because they have not benefited much from the country's various decent work initiatives. Decent work involves opportunities for work which are productive and deliver a fair income; security in the workplace and social protection for families; better prospects for personal development; and freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives. Decent work has been singled out by the International Labour Organisations (ILO) as a factor in promoting meaningful development in the indigenous communities. Despite being an ILO signatory, Zimbabwe has no coherent policy to tap into the indigenous and tribal communities.

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<http://allafrica.com/stories/201610060446.html>

SOUTH AFRICA

Gold mining and the abuse of environmental and human rights in South Africa

We know that mining abuses the environment and miners and residents' rights to water, health and a healthy environment. But maybe policy makers will hear this when it comes from Harvard Law School's International Human Rights Clinic. Its newly released report is entitled "[The Cost of Gold: Environmental, Health, and Human Rights Consequences of Gold Mining in South Africa's West and Central Rand](#)". Or at least it gives us something to organise around to hold the mines and the government accountable.

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<http://canadians.org/blog/gold-mining-and-abuse-environmental-and-human-rights-south-africa>

South Africa: Protect Residents' Rights from Effects of Mining *Government Response to Environmental and Health Threats Falls Short*

South Africa has failed to meet its human rights obligations to address the environmental and health effects of gold mining in and around Johannesburg, the Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic (IHRC) said in a new report released today. The 113-page report, *The Cost of Gold*, documents the threats posed by water, air, and soil pollution from mining in the West and Central Rand. Acid mine drainage has contaminated water bodies that residents use to irrigate crops, water livestock, wash clothes, and swim. Dust from mine waste dumps has blanketed communities. The government has allowed homes to be built near and sometimes on those toxic and radioactive dumps. Examining the situation through a human rights lens, the report finds that South Africa has not fully complied with constitutional or international law.

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<http://canadians.org/blog/gold-mining-and-abuse-environmental-and-human-rights-south-africa>

Conference highlights the economic, environmental challenges facing mining communities

Mining communities in Africa are often in remote areas, far from where decisions are being made on their behalf, Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa team leader Masego Madzwamuse said on Monday. Speaking at an event hosted by non-profit organisation Benchmarks Foundation, in Johannesburg, she stated that these communities were removed from the public discourse and narrative that shapes the development and outcomes that have a direct impact on their livelihoods. "In 2013, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) looked at annual revenues that can be generated by resource-rich countries, such as Mozambique, Guinea and Liberia, and found that, if resources were used responsibly, they could eradicate extreme poverty," she said.

READ MORE

<http://www.miningweekly.com/article/conference-highlights-the-economic-environmental-challenges-facing-mining-communities-2016-10-24>

Controversy surrounds South African coal mine

Atha-Africa Ventures' Yzermyn project, a 2.26Mt/year export underground coal mine in the Mpumalanga province, is creating controversy between the South African government and environmental activists. The Indian company has secured a mining right, an environmental authorisation, and an integrated water-use licence. The only step missing to kick-start operations is the approval the project needs from the Ministry of Environmental Affairs. The problem is that the mine sits in the Mabola protected area, declared as such in 2014. Three major rivers, the Vaal, the Tugela and the Pongola, converge there. Thus, the place is one of the top five sources of water for the region. According to a lengthy report published by the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, a water use licence for Yzermyn was granted by the Department of Water and Sanitation in July. This means that the mine can use 56,554 cubic metres of water a year from local wells. The permit also allows for dewatering the mining void and pumping some treated effluent directly into wetlands.

READ MORE

<http://www.mining.com/controversy-surrounds-south-african-coal-mine/>

NORTH AMERICA

USA

The United States Has Still Not Acknowledged It Committed Genocide Against Indigenous Peoples

The international Indigenous movement is becoming increasingly visible, but it has been developing since the early 1920s, when the Haudenosaunee (six Nations of the Iroquois federation) sent a representative, Cayuga leader Deskaheh, to Geneva, Switzerland, in 1923 to address the League of Nations. From the 1930s onwards, Muskogee Creek, Cherokee and Hopi representatives built ties with Indigenous Peoples in Central Mexico, where their peoples had originated. In 1940, The Interamerican Indian Convention was signed by the governments of the hemisphere, and the Interamerican Indian Institute was founded, which still exists today. In the 1950s, the newly established National Congress of American Indians in the United States and other Native activists actively sought ties with Indigenous Peoples in other parts of the world. But it was in 1974, with the founding of the International Indian Treaty Council by the militant American Indian Movement, and of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, that formal relations with the United Nations began.

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<http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/38095-the-united-states-has-still-not-acknowledged-it-committed-genocide-against-indigenous-peoples>

What Christians Can Learn From Standing Rock

To be married to our home places goes against every core value of my displaced, massively mobile, user-disposable Christian consumer culture that tells me everything is for sale, heaven is somewhere else, and a successful individual simply moves when the river gets polluted or the neighbourhood becomes tired. But place-based indigenous people understand what it means to be married to the land. In 1970, Taos Pueblo's successful quest to reclaim Blue Lake struck a nerve across the nation. Yes, it was about a specific place, but it was about all place-based indigenous people, in all places under threat. As President Nixon [stated](#) when he signed the bill that returned Blue Lake to Taos Pueblo, "It is more than just a land settlement: it is a symbolic turning point in the history of those who were the first Americans."

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<https://sojo.net/articles/what-christians-can-learn-standing-rock>

Columbus Day opposition recognizes indigenous rights

Current issues facing the Native American community have fallen quiet as the annual discussion regarding our nation's celebration of Columbus Day ensued once again on Oct. 10, featuring individuals debating whether or not we should commemorate the explorer's actions today. This argument is consistently brought up on social media, in politics and historical discussions; all while the descendants of Natives face conflicts both old and new. With economic, health and societal conflicts plaguing Native American reservations, Americans and their representatives need to consider what will help this group the most. Critics believe that the holiday ignores the Spanish-commissioned captain's horrific treatment of indigenous people and that it is wrong to celebrate the holiday. Our historical knowledge about Columbus increases every year. When United States president Benjamin

Harrison first recognized the 400-year anniversary of Columbus' landing in 1892, little was actually known about the explorations.

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<http://thelamron.com/2016/10/21/columbus-day-opposition-recognizes-indigenous-rights/>

A tension as old as the country

On the one hand, American Indian tribes are powerful, resilient communities, deeply steeped in tribal culture and ways of life, and continuing to live in their homelands and territories to this very day. As a matter of law, tribes have well-grounded and longstanding rights commemorated in treaties made originally with European nations and then with the United States. They also have rights that are established in the U.S. Constitution and in federal statutory law, which have long been recognized by the courts. In recent years, however, there has been somewhat of a retrenchment in federal courts, and especially in the Supreme Court, with respect to the recognition of tribal jurisdiction and tribal statutory rights that were enacted to remedy some of the past dispossessions American Indians endured.

READ MORE

<http://today.law.harvard.edu/legal-scholars-put-focus-native-american-rights/>

This is the future of pipeline protests: How a tiny campout grew into a global movement and why it's coming to Canada next

The Water Protectors of the Oceti Sakowin, Red Warrior and Sacred Stone spirit camps, near Cannon Ball, ND, set out that day to shut down construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline, a US\$3.8-billion project that aims to connect the Bakken oil fields with a transport hub near Patoka, Illinois. If completed, Dakota Access could handle some 570,000 barrels of oil per day. That's nearly half of North Dakota's entire daily production. But though much of the pipe is already in the ground, the project itself—like Keystone XL before it—is in jeopardy. While the world watches as their movement is live-streamed on social media, indigenous protesters have banded together with major environmental groups like the Sierra Club and 350.org to fight Dakota Access. For now, they've battled the pipeline's owners — which will likely soon include Canada's Enbridge Inc. — to a standstill.

READ MORE

<http://news.nationalpost.com/news/world/rise-of-the-spirit-camps>

Ongoing prejudice means Native Americans must constantly fight for their rights. That's what's happening over construction of a controversial oil pipeline.

What's going on in [North Dakota](#) is rooted in historical wrongs. The original damage can't be repaired, but it certainly shouldn't be compounded by contemporary harm. Indigenous people from all over the Americas have gathered in North Dakota to fight for their present and future. They have to fight because the attitude of entitlement and indifference to others that fueled European expansion across the continent is still alive. Protesters are blocking completion of the Dakota Access Pipeline, a crude-oil pipeline being built by Energy Transfer Partners. The [Standing Rock Sioux](#) say the pipeline will endanger the water supply for their reservation, and that it will pass through sites the tribe holds sacred.

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<http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/dakota-pipeline-fight-a-product-of-ignored-rights/>

The Human Right to Water at Standing Rock

As thousands of Indigenous people from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, other Native American tribes, and their allies continue their protest against the Dakota Access pipeline (DAPL), corporate media have continued to focus almost exclusively on the presidential election. Most media ignored last week's vicious attack on the Water Protectors, as they call themselves. The construction of the pipeline would violate the human right to peace, the right of Indigenous peoples to practice their cultural traditions, and several federal statutes. On October 27, more than 100 police from seven different states and the North Dakota National Guard, clad in riot gear and carrying automatic rifles, arrived in MRAPs [Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected military vehicles], Humvees and an armored police truck. They defended Energy Transfer Partners (ETP), the company behind the pipeline, and arrested 142 Water Protectors. That brings the total arrested since August to over 400. More than 40 people have been injured, and some have broken bones and welts from rubber bullets fired by officers.

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<http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/38251-the-human-right-to-water-at-standing-rock>

Community members demonstrate, pray in solidarity with Standing Rock protesters

More than 50 demonstrators gathered on Sproul Plaza on Wednesday afternoon in solidarity with protesters opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline, which, if built, could threaten the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's water and land. After 15 minutes of silent reflection and a half hour of speakers addressing the crowd, the protesters formed a circle, holding hands and lowering their heads. Sheri Welch, a member of Montana's Blackfeet tribe whose daughter is a UC Berkeley student, led the group in prayer. "You can't do a lot from here but pray and support," said Melissa Cunningham, who belongs to the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and works in the campus's billing and payments office. "We're sending money, we're sending winter gear. If that's all you can do, it still matters. The prayers still matter." Since March, thousands of Native Americans, environmental activists and their allies — including some UC Berkeley students — have gathered at the Standing Rock reservation in

North Dakota to oppose the ongoing construction of the pipeline, which is intended to carry hundreds of thousands of barrels of crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois each day.

READ MORE

<http://www.dailycal.org/2016/11/02/community-members-demonstrate-pray-solidarity-standing-rock-protesters/>

Are companies listening to Standing Rock?

Right now, at the northernmost point of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North Dakota, around 700 people are preparing for winter and the continued protest of the 1,172-mile Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) planned to connect North Dakota oil production sites to eastern Illinois. What's taking place there is more than your run-of-the-mill protest. The transport pipeline project, managed by Dakota Access, a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Crude Oil Co., skirts Standing Rock reservation land by a mile but cuts through the Great Sioux Nation treaty land. Protest leaders say that the construction of the pipeline will disrupt sacred sites and threaten drinking water, the nearby Missouri River and aquifers that serve the region. As a Native person working within the sustainability world, this protest strikes a personal chord. I have family on the Navajo reservation and am quite literally the product of Native rights and environmental activism: My parents met during Navajo and Hopi forced relocation and land-use protests in the late 1980s. Naturally, I had to dig deeper into what was going on up in Sioux territory to learn what the protested issues were all about.

READ MORE

<https://www.greenbiz.com/article/are-companies-listening-standing-rock>

Society of Indian Psychologists' Response to Pipeline Protest

As clinicians, educators and scholars, we find the treatment of the Standing Rock protesters in North Dakota to be reprehensible, and the continuing construction of a pipeline without their consent, under, near, around their waterways, a retraumatization of the people already suffering on the reservation. We support the Federal Government's Department of the Army, Department of Justice and the Department of the Interior's decision to withdraw approval for the pipeline construction and urging of consideration of nationwide reform to consider tribal views when doing these types of infrastructure projects. For 500 years, Indigenous lands and waterways have been usurped for governmental and corporate advantage. American Indians have borne the brunt of contamination and destruction of their traditional lands (or complete removal).

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<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/10/30/society-indian-psychologists-response-pipeline-protest>

New standoff in pipeline protest ebbs without violence

A standoff between Dakota Access pipeline opponents and law enforcement over a highway roadblock diminished Friday without incident, a marked contrast to the forced removal a day earlier of protesters occupying private property. As many as 50 protesters gathered early in the day behind heavy plywood sheets and burned-out vehicles, facing a line of concrete barriers, military vehicles and police in riot gear. But only a handful of people, some of them observers from Amnesty International, remained on the bridge by late afternoon after protest representatives told people to return to the main encampment. Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier described the protesters as "non-confrontational but uncooperative" and credited Standing Rock Sioux tribal members for helping to ease tensions on the bridge. Kirchmeier said tribal representatives were allowed onto the private property to remove teepees. Officers arrested one person on Friday, but no details were released. Standing Rock has waged a protest for months against the four-state, thousand-mile pipeline being developed by Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners to carry North Dakota crude to a shipping point in Patoka, Illinois. The tribe argues it's a threat to water and cultural sites, and encampments have grown to thousands at times as its cause has drawn support from Native Americans and others from around the country, including environmentalists and some celebrities.

READ MORE

<http://www.wflx.com/story/33503780/oil-pipeline-protesters-burn-vehicles-set-roadblock>

'Violent Repression of Peaceful Protests Against DAPL'

The conflict surrounding the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline escalated dramatically Thursday, October 27. Water protectors at Treaty Camp, a new frontline in the path of the pipeline along Highway 1806, were forced off the land in a dramatic and often violent manner by police. The large police action included armored, military vehicles, pepper spray, high-velocity bean bags and tear gas. Shortly after the disturbing confrontation Jill Stein, Green Party nominee for the Presidential Election, and running mate Ajamu Baraka released a statement condemning the actions being used in North Dakota: "The Stein/Baraka campaign is horrified and outraged at the militarized repression of water protectors at the Standing Rock reservation in North Dakota. Police and private security forces have engaged in violent actions against peaceful earth defenders who have come to protect the land and water from the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

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<https://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/10/28/stein-campaign-condemns-violent-repression-peaceful-protests-against-dapl-166261>

Freedom of Speech Threatened in Dakota Access Pipeline Protests

When the Bundy Brothers were being acquitted for their January occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, several activists and journalists were getting thrown behind bars for protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, a 1,772-mile long route that would transport 470,000 barrels of sweet crude oil daily across four states from North Dakota to Illinois. On Monday, Oct. 10, North Dakota's Morton County police arrested the actress Shailene Woodley for live-streaming an Indigenous Peoples' Day protest to her 40,000 Facebook followers. Following her release, Woodley penned an article titled "The Truth About My Arrest," published Oct. 20 in *TIME*. "We grow up

romanticizing native culture, native art, native history ... without knowing native reality," Woodley wrote. "It took *me*, a white non-native woman being arrested on Oct 10th in North Dakota, *on Indigenous Peoples' Day*, to bring this cause to many people's attention. And to the forefront of news publications around the world."

READ MORE

<http://oberlinreview.org/11458/opinions/freedom-of-speech-threatened-in-dakota-access-pipeline-protests/>

'Dakota pipeline is about big money, not indigenous people rights'

At least 141 Native Americans and other protesters were arrested in North Dakota in a clash with heavily armed US police officers. Demonstrators were camping on private grounds in an effort to halt the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline.

The Morton County Sheriff's Department said pepper spray and armored vehicles were used to scatter the protesters. The demonstrations against the construction of the pipeline have been going on for months, and at times have been dealt with violently by police. However, the issue has received little media attention. RT asked analysts why that could be. *"When it comes to people's rights, especially indigenous rights, and rights of people of color in this country, the rights of poor people, that the government – whether it's local governments, state governments, or the national government – often times they side with corporations, with finance capital, Wall Street. So I think that is what's going on right now. They are siding with this large company, this corporation,"* said Solomon Comissiong, founder of Your World News' Media Collective.

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<https://www.rt.com/op-edge/364576-protests-north-dakota-natives-pipeline/>

Oregon Occupation Unites Native American Tribes To Save Their Land

As the six-week trial of Ammon Bundy and his co-defendants wound its way to Thursday's startling conclusion, Bundy's supporters were a colorful presence outside the federal courthouse in Portland, Ore. They dressed in traditional cowboy attire and waved American flags at passing cars. Some even rode horses up and down the busy city sidewalk. A block away, Jarvis Kennedy watched all of this and rolled his eyes. "We don't claim to be victims, but we were," he said. Kennedy is a councilman with the Burns Paiute Tribe in Harney County, Ore. That's the home of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, which armed militants — led by brothers Ammon and Ryan Bundy — occupied [in protest](#) of the government's ownership of federal lands.

READ MORE

<http://kazu.org/post/oregon-occupation-unites-native-american-tribes-save-their-land#stream/0>

Battle against Nevada molybdenum mine goes to appeals court

A San Francisco court of appeal is expected to hear today from [Eureka Moly](#) (subsidiary of General Moly), the Bureau of Land Management, and two NGOs that oppose the proposed Mt. Hope mine near the southern town of Eureka, Nevada. Attorneys for the [Great Basin Resource Watch](#) and the Western Shoshone Defense Project will ask the three-judge panel to overturn a Reno federal district court's ruling that [upheld the permits](#) for the molybdenum mine in 2014.

The [activists say](#) the project will have a devastating effect on local water supplies, since it's expected to pump [7,000 gallons per minute](#) from the local aquifer for 41 years. They say water shortages are already happening in the area.

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<http://www.mining.com/court-battle-against-nevada-molybdenum-mine/>

Mining company plans to dump saltwater into Missouri River

NioCorp Developments Ltd., the mining company that wants to extract rare metals from a site near Elk Creek, is making plans to build a pipeline that will drain its underground mine of naturally occurring saltwater and pump it into the Missouri River. The plans have set off alarm bells for environmental groups and people who depend on the river for their livelihoods, like Scott Mansker, who organizes the world's longest non-stop river race on the river from Kansas City to St. Charles, Missouri. While no permit applications have been filed, NioCorp is getting its ducks in a row, meeting with state and federal regulatory agencies, as well as county elected officials. "We're taking a careful and measured approach here, making sure we talk to everyone before we start submitting applications," said Scott Honan, Niocorp's mining engineer.

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http://journalstar.com/news/state-and-regional/concerns-down-river-about-mining-company-plans-for-missouri/article_ca7d227d-887b-5582-9f00-7f5f618509c8.html

Drax Biomass inks 'unprecedented' agreement to protect forested wetlands from logging

Drax Biomass (DBI), a pellet manufacturer operating in the Southeast US, has signed an agreement declaring the cypress and tupelo stands found in forested wetlands, including the Atchafalaya Basin, to be off-limits for its timber purchases. Louisiana's famed Atchafalaya Basin is a popular destination for boaters, fishermen, and migratory birds. The "river of trees," noted for its magnificent cypress-tupelo swamps, has also been eyed by logging operations, some illegal, for mulch and lately for wood pellets. A collaborative effort between the bioenergy company and Atchafalaya Basinkeeper (ABK), a non-profit organisation dedicated to protecting and restoring the area's ecosystems, aims to provide greater protection for these and other valuable forested wetlands. DBI and ABK initiated the effort after company officials were alerted to the Basin's unique ecological value by Basinkeeper Dean

Wilson. In the months that followed, the two organisations worked together to agree on a set of sourcing practices that will strengthen environmental protection and promote sustainable use of forest resources. By committing to these sourcing practices on National Bioenergy Day, DBI and ABK hope to encourage other bioenergy companies to follow suit. "The irreplaceable cypress and tupelo stands are far more precious as habitat than as timber," said DBI president and CEO Pete Madden. "Drax Biomass is committed to sustainable procurement practices, and we believe this commitment should extend to the protection of ecosystems such as the Atchafalaya Basin."

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[http://www.bioenergynews.com/display_news/11230/Drax Biomass inks unprecedented agreement to protect forested wetlands from logging/](http://www.bioenergynews.com/display_news/11230/Drax+Biomass+inks+unprecedented+agreement+to+protect+forested+wetlands+from+logging/)

CANADA

Justin Trudeau continuing proud Liberal tradition of betraying Indigenous peoples

In the late 1980s, because of my Indigenous policy background, I was convinced by a close friend to get involved in efforts to create an Aboriginal Peoples' Commission within the Liberal Party of Canada. The Liberal Party already had a Women's and Youth Commission so the model to change the Liberal Party's constitution was already there. I agreed to get involved because the Mulroney era was a disaster. In 1986, a secret federal Cabinet document was leaked called the "Buffalo Jump of the 1980s," which recommended -- like the 1969 White Paper on Indian Policy -- the termination of Indigenous rights through various policy measures including off-loading federal responsibilities for "status Indians" onto the provinces.

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<http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/views-expressed/2016/10/justin-trudeau-continuing-proud-liberal-tradition-betraying-i>

MUSKRAT FALLS AND CANADA'S PROMISE OF RECONCILIATION

Any hopes that the governing federal and provincial Liberals might have had that the Muskrat Falls struggle would remain a remote and isolated matter of regional politics are rapidly evaporating. While the premier hides in his office, Muskrat Falls has escalated into a national struggle. While many protestors are opposed to the controversial and massively expensive hydro development in its entirety, what all agree upon is that the key demands of the [Make Muskrat Right](#) campaign, organized by the Nunatsiavut Government, are a bare minimum for the project to proceed. If they are not met, and the reservoir area is not cleared of all surface vegetation, there is a very real and credible likelihood of methylmercury poisoning of the region's waterways and food chain. And this in a region that relies heavily on food harvested from the land.

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<https://intercontinentalcry.org/muskrat-falls-canadas-promise-reconciliation/>

Historic land deal with Algonquin peoples signed by federal, Ontario governments.

The agreement in principle involves more than \$300M, roughly 36,000 square kilometres of land

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and her Ontario counterpart have signed a historic agreement with the Algonquins of Ontario that will eventually see wide swaths of eastern Ontario signed over to the Indigenous people as part of a modern treaty. The deal encompasses roughly 36,000 square kilometres, stretching from Ottawa to North Bay, including large parts of the Ottawa Valley. (Parliament Hill itself falls into the catchment area.) The ministers and representatives signed an agreement in principle, meaning the final details have yet to be worked out or ratified. A final deal could take another five years of negotiations, although the ministers were reluctant to provide a timeline.

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<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/ottawa-ontario-algonquin-agreement-in-principle-1.3809876>

EUROPE

Denmark

A time for cleaning up: The Danish government is violating agreements on indigenous peoples' rights by not dealing with American pollution in Greenland

Along the coasts and under the ice sheet of Greenland, extensive pollution has been left behind by the Americans over the 75 years where they have had military installations in our country. As an indigenous people and in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the people of Greenland have the right to conservation and protection of the environment of our lands, territories and resources. This right may be put to the test unless the question about the responsibility for clearing up after the American military camps and bases is resolved very soon. This can come as no surprise to the Danish government. In 2003, the Danish Environmental Protection Agency mapped various types of abandoned military facilities in Greenland that were likely to contain abandoned waste, environmentally harmful substances, oil or other pollutants. The mapping showed that there were more than 30 different installations of American military origin across Greenland.

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<http://arcticjournal.com/opinion/2627/time-cleaning>

NOTE: Previous issues of this monthly bulletin can be requested to CALG (Coalition against Land Grabbing), email: **calgpalawan@gmail.com**