



CALG

is member of the

The ICCA
Consortium

"Defending Commons' Land and ICCAs" June/July 2016 CALG Monthly Bulletin



📷 A summit of Guarani-Kaiowá leaders after the violent events of 14 June, when one of their community was killed and six others were injured. Photograph: Phil Clarke Hill

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

Dear Friends and supporters,

This illustrated edition includes news and updates for the months of June and July covering **eleven** Asian and Pacific regions: **Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, India, Tibet, Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea, and Australia**, in addition to **five** Latin America nations: **Peru, Brazil, Honduras, Argentina, Chile** and seven African countries: **Kenya, Uganda, Angola, Liberia, Gabon, Congo and South Africa**, as well as North America (**Canada**).

Since our previous bulletin edition in May, 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 victims of extra-judicial killings** and an additional one (in the Philippines) being incidentally hit by a bullet. Of these killings, **5 occurred in the Philippines, 1 in Sarawak (Eastern Malaysia), 2 in Brazil, 1 in Honduras**: almost half of the victims are women and virtually all cases are associated to conflicts being related to mining, dams and other forms of large scale land grabbing.



BULATLAT FILE PHOTO: Lumad and peasant protest against agribusiness plantations (Photo by Ronalyn V. Olea / Bulatlat)



In the **PHILIPPINES**, on July 1 **Gloria Capitan, 55**, President of “Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Mamamaya ng Lucanin” (SNML - United Citizenry of Lucanin) was shot and killed by two unidentified men riding a motorcycle. She was an indigenous environmental activist opposing to the construction and presence of coal stockpile facilities in Lucanin, Bataan province. In **Mindanao**, almost 10 days later (on **July 12**), security personnel of **RAMCAR cattle farm** fired at members of Sitio Inalsahan Indigenous Peoples Organization who were at their makeshift tent, killing three of the Lumad farmers who were then preparing to farm. On **July 30**, one indigenous pregnant woman died while at least seven other individuals, five of them minors, were wounded in a shooting rampage of a paramilitary group in the Tigwahanon community of Sitio Tibugawan, Barangay Kawayan, San Fernando, Bukidnon.

In **SARAWAK** (Eastern Malaysia), **Bill Kayong, 43**, a father of two, and a well-known defender of indigenous people's rights has been shot in the neck on 21 June by an unknown assailant. His death has sent shockwaves through the state, with the Malaysian federal police swiftly forming a special task force to find the killer.



Sarawak PKR chief Baru Bian (centre), with vice-chairmen See Chee How (left) and Ali Biju, in Kuching yesterday. Mr Baru says Bill Kayong was warned not to get involved in certain cases. Photo: Malay Mail Online

In **HONDURAS**, on **July 6**, the body of **Lesbia Yaneth Urquia**, a 49-year-old mother of three and member of the **Council of Indigenous People of Honduras (Copinh)** was found in a rubbish dump in Marcala about 100 miles west of the capital, Tegucigalpa. She had reportedly suffered a severe head injury. Yaneth had been trying to stop the hydroelectric project in Honduras's western La Paz department.



On 21 June 2016, dam workers found Nilce de Souza Magalhães' (above) body washed up on the river bank of Usina Hidrelétrica Jirau, a dam that she had publicly opposed.

In **BRAZIL**, on **June 21**, the body of human rights defender [Nilce de Souza Magalhães](#) was found drowned in the hydro-electric dam she spent three years fighting against. She was a fierce opponent of the Usina Hidrelétrica Jirau, a rock-fill dam in north-western Brazil. She disappeared in January 2016 but her body was only recovered this June, on the side of the dam's river bank. Her hands and feet had been tied with ropes and attached to large rocks that kept her body submerged under water

for six months.

On **14 June**, In the Brazilian State of Mato Gross do Sul, **Clodiode Rodrigues de Souza**, 26, a member of the Guarani-Kaiowa indigenous group has also been killed. The indigenous activist was shot dead and at least six others were seriously wounded when their camp was attacked by armed farmers.



Familiares choram no velório de Clodiode Aquileu Rodrigues de Souza, de 26 anos. /ANA MENDES (CIMI)

According to recent June report by campaign group Global Witness, **killings of environmental activists rose 20 percent in one year**. The group said there were 116 deaths worldwide in 2014,

including 29 in Brazil, 25 in Colombia and 15 in the Philippines. Brazil, remains the world's most dangerous country for land rights activists with at least 50 killings last year, according to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). In 2016 alone, Front Line Defenders has documented almost **30 killings of environmental, indigenous, and land rights defenders** in the country.

Globally, many murders, mass killings and cases of forced eviction remain undocumented and unrecorded mainly due to the suppression of monitoring efforts by civil society groups and the media, especially in the African continent. Little information is being circulated on how the ongoing conflict that is happening in **Syria** and **Iraq** is leading to massive displacement of smaller

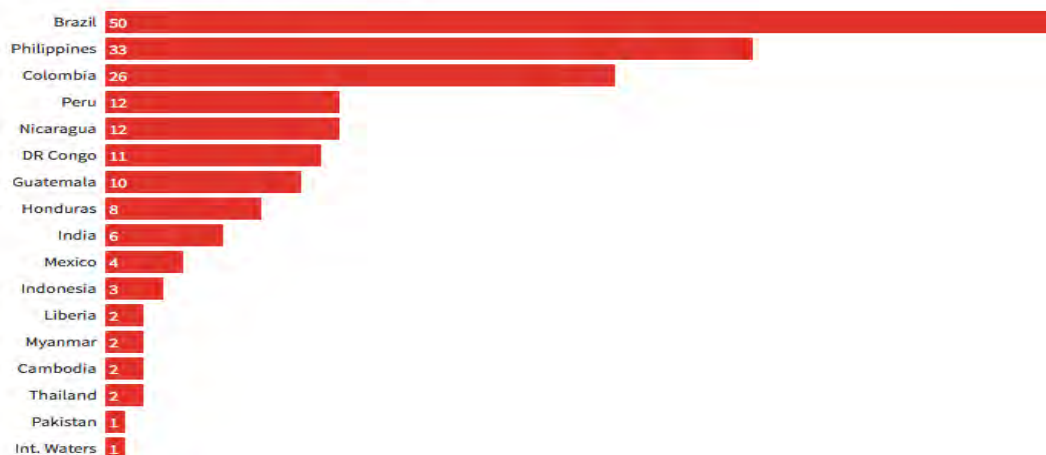


and very ancient religious minorities like the **Yazidis** and the **Sabeen Mandeans** and to the destruction of unique portions of their territories that have been sustainably managed by such groups over a long period of time.

A selection of interesting articles is found in our **General Topics** section. Some of them focus on the findings of the **new Global Witness report** ([On Dangerous Ground](#)). It states that 2015 was the deadliest year on record for the killings of environmental activists around the world.

KILLINGS IN 2015 BY COUNTRY

Global Witness documented 185 killings in 2015 in total.



In response to this report, a **“Joint Action for Land Rights”** has been launched by the European Union with the object of enhancing the protection of the rights defenders working on land and environmental issues. Another recent report by the **Minority Rights Group (MRG)** stresses how from Ethiopia, [China](#) and Iraq, the combination of armed conflicts and land dispossession is leading to severe and massive persecution of minority groups and the erosion of their cultural heritage.

One article, in this section, points out how the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are designed to stimulate action in areas of "critical importance for humanity and the planet" such as measures to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies free from fear and violence.

Another set of articles highlights the role of **International development banks**, calling them to use their investments only for projects that do not violate human rights or risk the lives of the activists who defend them. Of particular concern is a loophole in the **World Bank’s policy protecting indigenous communities**, which would allow governments around the world to displace locals in the path of agricultural development without restoring their livelihoods.

Another article analyses the position of other well-known European Banks. For instance, **Deutsche Bank (DB)** has released a [new corporate responsibility policy](#) explaining that the bank has begun to phase out the provision of finance to companies that practice **mountaintop removal (MTR) coal mining**. The updated policy indicates that they will decrease financing for the most significant MTR producers, without transparency around the timeline for finance reduction. As it is well-known, many banks and big financial institutions tend to neglect most of their obligations towards human rights and the environment.

One article here spotlights the positive role of **three small but powerful funders supporting human and environmental rights defenders**. The Issue of indigenous rights to land and territories and its relevance for the success of climate change initiatives have been recently brought up and discussed in Rome (Italy) on July 18-22 by the [United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation’s Committee on Forestry \(COFO\)](#).



Photo courtesy of Asociación Lupuna

An outspoken opposer of oil drilling in the Ecuadorian Amazon, Indigenous Sápara activist Gloria Ushigua's life is under extreme threat.

Another interesting set of articles in this session focuses on the **socio-ecological impact of oil palm expansion** globally. For instance, in June, a **delegation of indigenous people from Indonesia, Liberia, Colombia and Peru, headed by Forest Peoples Programme (FPP)** has done a tour of European capitals to give policymakers and investors first-hand testimony of what they said were escalating human rights and environmental abuses linked to the rapid spread of palm oil cultivation.



Half of all tropical deforestation since 2000 has been caused by illegal clearance of forests for commercial agriculture, according to NGOs Conservation International and Fern. Photo: iStock

A new [study](#) published in the journal *PLOS ONE*, examines **past deforestation and potential future deforestation and biodiversity impacts associated with oil palm plantations in 20 countries** across the world. The study used satellite imagery to evaluate where oil palm plantations replaced forests from 1989 to 2013, pointing out that the largest areas of vulnerable forest are in Africa and South America.

A new paper published in the journal [Conservation Letters](#) suggests that if the **governments of tropical African countries** were to enact mandatory policies regulating which forests can be cleared and how much remaining forest must be set aside for conservation, they could largely offset the emissions created by converting the land to palm oil plantations.

A group of scientists has recently called on **EU businesses and governments to support greener palm oil** and to do more to improve the sustainability of the industry. Meanwhile **WWF Singapore** has announced that five firms in Singapore have banded together to tackle deforestation and haze pollution by pledging to use **certified sustainable palm oil** in their products. The firms have formed the [Singapore Alliance for Sustainable Palm Oil](#). However it is very unlikely that this will lead to any positive change, given the failure of voluntary global standards like the **Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)**, in reducing deforestation associated with the production of agricultural commodities. The new study published in the journal [Conservation and Society](#) looks at how effective NGOs' participation in the RSPO scheme truly is. The study concludes that **conservation NGOs might be better off working outside the RSPO**. A counter-argument is also being provided by one of the articles in this section suggesting that not all business efforts at conservation are necessarily a form of green washing.

To begin with, we would like to bring to your attention to the **Philippines**, where the new administration of **President Rodrigo Duterte** is seriously addressing mining issues, as no one of his predecessors has done it before. The simple fact that **Gina Lopez** (the ABS-CBN TV Channel director and a staunch anti-mining opponent) has been appointed **DENR secretary** signals that

Philippines is perhaps facing an epochal change, and that Pres. Duterte (in spite of all the criticism he has received in relation to his fight against drug) is really challenging the economic and political status quo of his country, putting it upside-down. Not only he appointed



Representatives and supporters from Greenpeace, Healthcare Without Harm Asia, Health Justice Philippines and the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice show their opposition to coal fired-power plants with the release of the report *Coal: A Public Health Crisis: Deaths and diseases attributed to coal use in the Philippines*. Photo

Gina Lopez as DENR secretary but he has also appointed **Raphael Mariano**, the chairman of the farmers' militant group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (*KMP*) as **DAR Secretary**.

The intention behind these moves really sounds as 'CHANGE', and hopefully as a real move forwards and away from the political stagnation that has couched the Philippines from the Edsa Revolution onwards.

As the readers will notice, most of the articles on the Philippines highlight the **tremendous move that new Environment Secretary Gina Lopez** is making to undergo **extensive review of mining firms** following complaints from indigenous people and farmers. This has already led to the suspension and revocation of several mining permits nationwide with more mining operations to be likely suspended in the coming weeks. As a result, Indigenous people have seen their hopes rising and feel that that Duterte presidency might finally bring peace, prosperity and justices to their communities.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez (Photo by Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment)

In neighboring **Sarawak (eastern Malaysia)**, all attempts to successfully reconciling environmental and indigenous rights concerns with the economic benefits derived from palm oil production appear to have failed. Surely, the recent killing of Billy Kayong, an indigenous land rights defender has casted an ominous light on Dayak people's decades of long struggle for land recognition. Meanwhile, the large company **BLD Plantation Bhd** is soon going to expand its oil palm estate area by more than 12% to 32,200ha.



MONGABAY

A peatland planted with oil palm burns in Riau during the 2015 fire and haze crisis. Photo by Rhett A. Butler

In **Indonesia**, instead, the government is discussing the possibility of issuing a **five-year moratorium on new palm oil plantation concessions** through a presidential regulation. In principle, this moratorium would aim at safeguarding a healthy and sustainable environment and at reducing global criticism on Indonesia's weak governance after the devastating forest fires on Kalimantan and Sumatra and the spread of toxic haze to other parts of Southeast Asia between June and October 2015.

While Sumatra forest has been largely devastated by oil palm expansion, a **wildlife reserve in Riau Province** has just been declared the country's newest national park. In spite of these new moves, evidence indicates that other Indonesia's outer islands that have peat lands are at risk of sinking due to the aggressive expansion of palm oil plantations. Meanwhile, in **Sumatra**, an **indigenous**



The Orang Rimba have lived in the forests of Sumatra for generations, but now they are under threat

© Survival

hunter-gatherer tribe has been recently attacked by oil palm plantations guards and their possessions burned as part of an eviction from a palm oil plantation on their ancestral land. Virtually, the Indonesia government has signed over most of their ancestral lands to palm oil, timber and other plantation companies. Similar threats are also being faced by the **indigenous people of the Mentawai Islands**, about 150 kilometers (93 miles) off the west coast of Sumatra.



Student-led demonstrations helped show that the Mentawai peoples would not accept the leasing of their traditional lands to a timber company. Photo by Yayasan Citra Mandiri Mentawai.

Interestingly enough, an investigation into two Sumatran plantations operated by Indonesian food giant **Indofood**, a **joint venture partner with Pepsi Co**, has found evidence of numerous **human rights abuses** including the use of **child labor**. According to another article **oil palm estates have fostered gender inequalities** in traditional indigenous societies where the relationship between men



A worker on a palm oil plantation in Sumatra. Photo by Rhett A. Butler

and women was traditionally egalitarian.



Traditionally egalitarian gender norms in East Kalimantan have begun to change in recent decades. Photo: Moses Caesar/CIFOR



Photo credit: Alexandra Salmon-Lefranc Gennai

In **Thailand**, the ongoing pattern of harassing environmental and women human rights defenders persists. In 2014, in the country, 21 killing of Women Human Rights Defenders and Villagers Opposing Coal Mining have been reported. **Since 2010, the community members of Ban Haeng have been vocal in their opposition to the proposed coal-mining project in their area.** In the absence of

due process and genuine community consultation, the people living and farming the area have organized into the Rak Ban Heng Conservation Group. Despite community resistance, a mining concession was granted to Green Yellow Co. Ltd. in August 2015 by the Ministry of Industry.

On October 22, 2015, 386 villagers filed a complaint at the Chiang Mai Administrative Court, requesting the court to revoke the concession permit and to issue a temporary injunction against mining operations in the village. As the exploratory concession expires in August 2016, the tensions between the corporation and the State on the one hand and the community on the other continue to rise. Elsewhere in the country, the government has used various tactics to push the land activists out of Klong Sai Pattana to give out their land to oil palm enterprises. Today, with Thai politics in turmoil after a decade of troubled elections, protests, two coups and now military rule, land rights campaigners fear the right to access information will become even more difficult.

In neighboring **Cambodia**, the number of companies involved in Economic Land Concessions (ELC)-related conflicts is alarming, as a report by the **NGO Forum on Cambodia** has recently disclosed. **More than 150 companies operating in 18 provinces have been involved in such conflicts.** As of now, **only 42 of the 158 companies have resolved their conflicts**, which **affected 35,604 families.** The NGO Forum reported that 72 ELCs were found to be overlapping protected areas including protected forests in 2010. **The Beng Per Wildlife Sanctuary** had the highest number of ELCs – 13 – overlapping it in that year, while the Phnum Prech Wildlife Sanctuary had the highest rate of coverage by ELCs, with nearly **35 percent of the total protected area has been given to land concessions.**



Demonstrators protest in Phnom Penh against continued land conflicts with ELCs across the country. KT/Chor Sokunthea

CALG welcomes the good news being recently shared by the **Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)** and the **Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO)**, about the suspended sentences and subsequent **release of Sim Somnang, Tri Sovikea, and San Mala, members of the organization Mother Nature**, a local environmental group known for its



efforts to stop illegal sand dredging and the construction of a **hydropower dam in Koh Kong Province**. The released human rights and environmental defenders had been initially sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment and the payment of a two million riel (about US\$500) fine as well as a 100 million

riel (about \$25,000) compensation payment to the sand dredging company Direct Access.

In bordering **Laos**, especially in the southeastern province of **Attapeu**, **timber extraction** followed by **mining** has already caused **dramatic environmental damages** and seriously adverse consequences on local communities. As a result, **Lao prime minister Thongloun Sisoulith has ordered** officials in a heavily-polluted southern province of the country **to reject proposals for new mining projects** in their area. Such order, unfortunately, is coming a bit late. In fact many villagers are already abstain from using rivers, as well as vegetables and mushrooms growing along their banks, because of the high level of chemical substances found in the water. It is common now for children swimming in rivers to developed rashes on their skin.



Mining brings money into Laos, but at great cost to the environment.

Similarly, in **Myanmar**, local communities are calling for a suspension on current and new mining concessions. A seminar on **“Community Action for Mining and Customary Land Rights”** was held during June 20th to 22nd, 2016 with participants from **Kachin, Kuki, Karen, Karenni, Chin, Taarng, Mon, Arakan** and **Shan ethnicities** from different States and Divisions. One of the results from this seminar was the formation of **the Myanmar Mining Watch Network (MMWN)** and a strong appeal to the government to solve the problem for those who have lost the lives and been injured because of mining.

India is one of the regional highlights of this June/July bulletin. Here indigenous claims for land are increasingly being dismissed while **mining concessions are expanding at an alarming rate**. **Eight out of 10 claims for land title by forest dwellers** under the Forest Rights Act **were rejected** last year, as shown by data from the tribal affairs ministry. **Amnesty International India** has denounced that **Mining operations** by India's state-owned **Coal India Limited**, the world's largest coal producer, are **shutting out indigenous Adivasi communities from decisions that affect their lives**. The report, ***“When Land Is Lost, Do We Eat Coal?”: Coal Mining and Violations of Adivasi Rights in India*** traces how coal India subsidiaries, central government ministries and state government authorities in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha **failed to ensure meaningful consultation with Adivasi communities on land acquisition**, rehabilitation and resettlement, and the environmental impacts of mines, seriously affecting their lives and livelihoods.



Al Jazeera producer Nilanjan Chowdhury and cameraman Maurya Gautam walk through the Chaal coal mine [Elizabeth Puranam/Al Jazeera]

Coal accounts for more than 60 percent of India's electricity capacity, and the government plans to nearly double annual coal output by 2020, opening a new mine nearly every month. Recently also the Meghalaya cabinet has approved a proposal made by the Mining and Geology department to exclusively follow up with different ministries of the Centre to ensure that coal mining resumed in the state at the earliest. Meanwhile in **Goa**, government has asked District

Collectors to take stern **action** against those trying to hamper mining operations in the state. **There have been various protests against resumption of mining operations** in Goa, where the Supreme Court has lifted a ban on such activities. The **ongoing social unrest** in various parts of the country in addition to the drastic measures taken against communities opposing mining has not gone unnoticed to United Nations human rights experts. They have recently **urged India to repeal FCRA law** (The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act). According to the experts this is being

The three experts said the Narendra Modi government was misusing the legal provision to silence groups that are critical of the Centre's ways.



misused by the Indian government to "silence" **groups that are critical of the Centre's ways**". Specifically, the experts: Michel Forst, UN Special Rapporteurs on Human rights defenders, David Kaye, UN Special Rapporteurs on freedom of expression, and Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteurs



According to data, Eight out of 10 claims for land title by tribals and forest dwellers under the FRA were rejected by state authorities last year. (HT File Photo)

on freedom of association – said the **government's crackdown on NGOs** with the help of the Act is not in accordance with international norms on human rights. Two other articles, in this bulletin, provides additional insights also on the environmental and social impact of both **Illegal limestone and sand mining in India**

TRIBALS GET A RAW DEAL

A study by Rights and Resources Initiative estimates tribals hold legal titles to less than 5% of the land they use

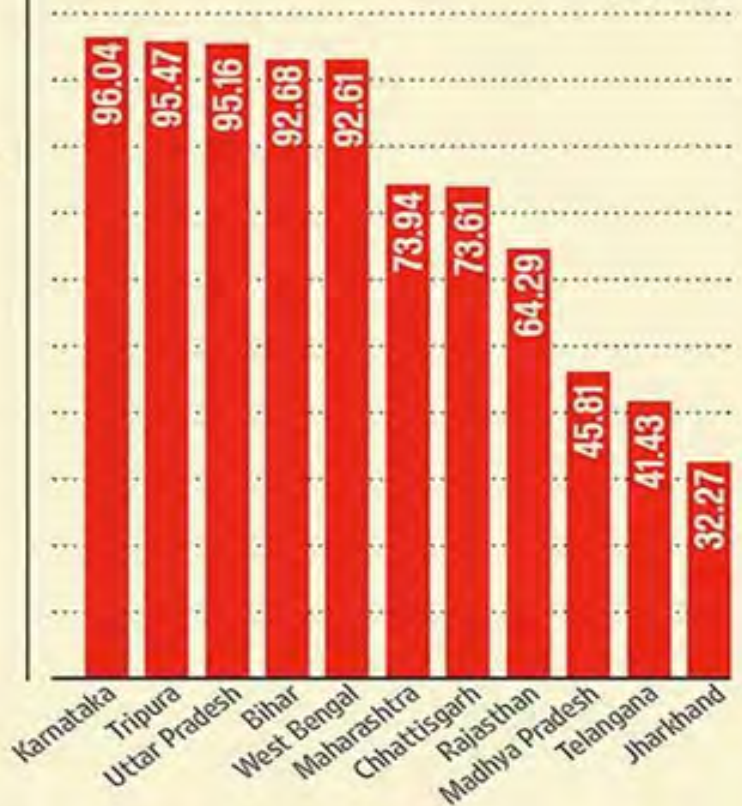
REJECTION OF FRA* CLAIMS HAS SPIKED IN THE PAST TWO YEARS

(All numbers in percentage)



STATES WITH HIGHEST RATE OF REJECTIONS IN 2015-16

(All numbers in percentage)



*Forest Rights Act

Source: Ministry of Tribal Affairs (Data calculated from May to April for each year)

Tibetan protests against mining have occurred in **southwestern China's Sichuan province** where mineral extraction could severely affect a sacred mountain. As of now, all work related to the project has been "temporarily halted," due, probably, to the **strength of local resistance** and coverage of the protests by international media.



Map showing location of Chuchen county in Sichuan's Ngaba prefecture.

The **price paid by protesters** has been high, with **people being randomly beaten up by police** and some of them suffering serious injuries; imprisonment of protesters has also taken place. Tibet has become an important source of minerals needed for China's economic growth, and **Chinese mining operations in Tibetan areas** have often led to **widespread environmental damage**, including the

pollution of water sources for livestock and humans and the **disruption of sacred sites**.

Bangladesh is amongst those countries that has been frequently featured in CALG monthly bulletins due to the **deterioration of indigenous peoples' rights** and access to land and natural resources. Recently, fearing **torture and harassment allegedly by forest officials**, around **187**



Indigenous people from Bangladesh and an armed BGB member during a BGB-BSF meeting on the border in Habiganj yesterday. Fearing torture allegedly by forest officials, the indigenous people tried to trespass but were caught and brought back. Photo: Mintu Deshwara

Bangladeshi indigenous men, women and children of five villages under **Kalenga Reserve Forest in Habiganj** tried to cross into India but they were stopped by the Indian Border Security Force

(BSF) and brought back to Bangladesh. Elsewhere in the country (Moulvibazar district) **indigenous Khasi families** are likely to lose their homestead, following the signing of the **land boundary agreement between Bangladesh and India**. As part of the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement (LBA), Bangladesh will give India 2,777 acres of adversely possessed land and get 2,267 acres in exchange. The land is in the bordering areas of India's Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, and West Bengal states and its



Environmentalists accompanied by indigenous Khasi people form a human chain in front of Moulvibazar Press Club yesterday demanding withdrawal of the eviction notice earlier served by the authorities to some 700 Khasi people living in two villages commonly known as Nahar Punjee in the district. Photo: Star

inhabited by several indigenous communities.



A youth working at the betel leaf garden. Photo: Mintu Deshwara

Also in **Papua New Guinea** the violations of indigenous peoples' rights appear to be never ending. Violence continues at the **Porgera gold mine**, while victims of historic cases of shooting, rape and injury are still demanding justice. According to local NGOs, over the years, in **Enga Province**, ninety people have been shot dead just for trespassing a mining concession of a **Canadian-Chinese joint venture**. **Eighty-eight people sustained injuries**, either they were injured, tortured or illegally detained at the hands of security personnel. The remainder, **78 of them have been missed out**, they were women rape victims who have missed out from the remedy. Furthermore, in Papua rainy highlands, a **huge open-pit mine**, with its tons of toxic tailings full of sulphides and heavy metals is likely to cause severe poisoning of the **Sepik River** and its tributaries with incommensurable adverse consequences on intact local cultures and pristine ecology.

More encouraging news come, instead, from **Australia** where the Federal Court has **formally recognized the Indigenous people of central Queensland as the traditional owners of the land**. The **Darumbal people** filed a native title application for land covering most of central Queensland almost two decades ago. The present agreement recognizes the **Darumbal people's right to hunt, fish, gather, teach and conduct traditional ceremonies on the land**. The determination area covers almost 15,000 square kilometers. Almost concurrently, elsewhere in the country, other aboriginal communities, such as the **Kenbi of Northern Territory** have been given titles to their **ancestral land**.



Malcolm Turnbull on the Cox Peninsula outside Darwin yesterday where he handed over the land title deed to traditional owners. Picture: Jason Edwards.



📷 Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has handed over a land claim title deed to the Larrakia people.

Moving to the **Latin America continent** the overall context underpinning the struggle of local human rights, environmentalists and indigenous peoples defenders is quite diversified, complicated and particularly worrisome. **More ‘defenders’ were murdered in Latin America in 2015 than anywhere else in the world**, with anti-mining causes costing the most lives, a [report by Global Witness shows](#). Another annual report by **Civil Society Watch** has documented serious violations of the freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly in 109 countries over the course of 2015, **14 of which are in Latin America**.

Recently, the **United Nations** and the **European Union** have condemned the murder of environmental **indigenous activist Lesbia Yaneth Urquia, killed in Honduras** just four months after award-winning environmentalist Berta Caceres was shot. **Violence in Honduras has increased since the 2009** ouster of President [Manuel Zelaya](#). A right-wing government that came in after licensed hundreds of infrastructure projects like mines and hydroelectric dams in environmentally sensitive areas.

There is no indication that the struggle against large dams in Honduras would stop in the near future as other outstanding indigenous leaders and activists have taken up and are continuing Berta’s struggle. In fact, **on June 9, Ana Mirian Romero, a 29-year-old indigenous Lenca woman** and mother of five from the department of La Paz, Honduras, has been recognized by the **European human rights organization Front Line Defenders** in a ceremony in Dublin, Ireland. Romero has been awarded the organization’s annual award for Human Rights Defenders.



On June 9, Ana Mirian Romero, a 29-year-old indigenous Lenca woman and mother of five from the department of La Paz, Honduras, was recognized by the European human rights organization Front Line Defenders in a ceremony in Dublin, Ireland. Romero was awarded the organization’s annual award for Human Rights Defenders for her work struggling for the recognition of indigenous lands and against the corporate destruction of the environment in Honduras.

In **Peru**, authorities are facing huge challenges in their **battle against an army of illegal gold miners** who have carved a toxic path through the country's rainforest, one of the most biologically diverse places on earth. According to an in-depth [report by The New York Times](#), a force of marines and rangers sent in the past days to raid the **Tambopata reserve**, in the country's southern Amazon, has already been outnumbered, and the devastated areas keep growing. **Deforestation caused by gold mining is also expanding to northern Peru.** The **Regional Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Peruvian Amazon in northern Peru**, better known as ORPIAN, claims **illegal mining threatens the nearly 70,000 residents of the indigenous Awajun and Wampis communities living in the Santiago region.** President of ORPIAN, Edwin Montenegro, [believes](#) illegal mining is on the rise in the region and is not being monitored. Meanwhile, **Gregorio Santos, a fiery anti-mining activist** and former governor of a gold-rich region in Peru has been freed from jail and is now accusing the government for locking him up for two years in order to keep him from power.



Peruvian marines briefly held a man found during a raid on an illegal gold mining camp.

Tomas Munita for The New York Times

In addition to gold mining, **oil palm plantations are also playing a heavy tool in the deforestation of Peruvian rainforest.** Local oil palm companies profess to uphold sustainability and business 'best practice', in line with RSPO and IFC standards, while local communities on the ground keep complaining about the total indifference of such companies towards their rights and ancestral domain claims.



Ucayali Plantation in Peru. Photo courtesy of the Forest Peoples Programme.

In the neighboring **Brazilian Amazon**, a **mega-dam might soon fuel new land speculations.** The proposed **Tapajos dam**, in the heart of the Amazon, will lead to a wave of deforestation as **remote**



Around 100 federal and military police evicted the Apy Ka'y Guarani community, whose ancestral lands have been destroyed for industrial-scale farming.

areas of the world's largest rainforest are now opened to agriculture. The impact, on the local **Munduruku indigenous people** would be devastating. As of now, **hydroelectric power plants produce about 80 percent of Brazil's electricity**, and supporters say dams help combat climate change by producing renewable energy. About **one third of the territories claimed by Brazil's indigenous people**

have not been formally allocated to them through official titles, leading to frequent conflicts in some rural areas. One of such conflicts is taking place in the state of **Mato Grosso do Sul** where an indigenous activist of the of the **Guarani-Kaiowa** indigenous group has been shot dead and five other adults and a child were hospitalized when their camp was attacked by armed farmers.



Guarani leader Damiana Cavanha after the eviction from Apy Ka'y



📷 Land occupied by the Guarani-Kaiowá community in Mato Grosso do Sul. Photograph: Phil Clarke Hill

In **Colombia**, mining has been included as one of the component of the Country so called “**six-pillar strategy** “. At the same time, **Colombia’s Constitutional Court has passed a resolution to suspend mining in almost two-thirds of the country’s strategic mining development areas**. Indigenous organizations in the country are observing these apparently contradictory moves, trying to understand whether and to what extent mining will continue to affect their lives in the years to come.



📷 Indigenous reservation in Guaviare, Colombia, where armed conflict has caused decades of displacement.
Photograph: Leonardo Muñoz/EPA

In **Argentina**, mining extraction is setting a very negative record. Toronto-based mining giant, [Barrick Gold](#) has been accused of **spilling cyanide solution into five Argentina rivers**, shortly after firing an engineer who raised serious safety concerns about the mining operation responsible for the contamination. Court documents obtained by *National Observer* allege that **Barrick, the**



Raman Autar is a former engineer for Barrick Gold, originally from New Zealand. He is suing the corporation for more than \$10.5 million. Photo courtesy of LinkedIn.

largest gold producer in the world, abruptly dismissed senior engineer **Raman Autar in 2014** to “escape publication” of critical health, safety and environmental violations he found at the [Veladero mine](#), one of the world’s largest gold mines. The spilling might seriously affect the environment as well as the health and livelihood of various downriver communities.

In **Chile**, local communities and their environment are not only being affected by copper mining, the country's second-largest industry, but also by logging. **Twenty-five attacks by saboteurs claiming to represent Chile's Mapuche** were registered in the first five months of 2016 by forestry subcontractors' union Acoforag. Latin America's **two largest forestry firms Empresas CMPC and Empresas Copec subsidiary Arauco** have been among the worst affected. Behind the attacks -- according to politicians and law enforcement authorities -- are **two small, mysterious groups who say they want an autonomous Mapuche state**. At the same time, in the southern Araucania region, **the percentage of land now used for forest plantations has risen to almost 20 percent of all surface area**. Around 600,000 Mapuche live in Chile, concentrated in Araucania and Bio Bio, lush and hilly provinces roughly 400 miles (640 km) south of the nation's capital Santiago.



A logging truck on the Araucania region's main highway, passes by a sign warning that reads: 'Area video surveillance the 24 hours' to would-be hijackers that the road is video-monitored near in Ercilla city, south of Chile, June 7, 2016.

REUTERS/GRAM SLATTERY

In the **African continent**, detailed information on the extra-judicial killings of environmental and human rights activists is very difficult to obtain. In this respect, the situation in **Ethiopia** appears to be critical. While the majority of these violations have often received little attention at the international level, few cases of partial justices have, indeed, occurred on sporadic occasions. For instance, in 2010, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights ruled that Endoris' expulsion was a violation of their human rights and ordered that the Endorois' land be restored to them. **The Endorois people, a traditional pastoralist community, were removed from their land by the Kenyan government in the 1970s** to make way for a national reserve. They were moved to

more arid pastures where their cattle died in great numbers. The relocation spelt the end of their prosperity. Although the Endorois case has resonates across borders, it has not been seriously taken into account by other African countries nor it has encouraged them to pass more equal and improved land laws. Not surprisengly, **the South African Parliament** has recently passed **the Expropriation Bill**, which now awaits the president's signature. It offers the government a means through which to expropriate property in the public interest or for a public purpose. The Bill is faced with much opposition but local communities and their representing organizations.



Liberia is surely in the top list of those African countries, which are selling out precious natural resources to land speculators and agribusiness firms, in complete disregard of community pre-existing and ancestral land rights. Particularly, **Liberia is faced with much embarrassment as a result of the infamous Private Use Permit (PUP) saga**, which saw a substantial amount of the country's precious forests given out illegally to logging companies by top government officials and community leaders. This is **opening the country to massive oil palm expansion** with two major oil palm companies: **the Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL)** and **Sime Darby**, being allowed to carrying out logging activities within their concession areas.

Unfortunately, other African countries appear to be following Liberia's path. Recently, in **Uganda**, authorities in Kalangala Town Council have finally succumbed to pressure and given part of the degazetted Buggala Central Forest Reserve land to the district leadership. **Buggala Island**, the largest out of the 84 islands, covers 29,000 hectares, 10,000 of which were allocated for oil

palm trees. In just two years, the island has **lost close to 800 hectares of the forest cover to illegal loggers and palm oil growers.** Farmers on Bugula Island, the second largest in Lake Victoria, are now locked in a legal battle to save their land from further conversion by agribusiness firms. **The Bungala farmers' case is one of many conflicts over land in the East African country,** which lacks a nationwide tenure system, making it difficult to prove ownership.



Liberia Rain Forest

Also, in **Angola**, the government is selecting new provinces to plant palm trees. According to government sources, the country is also cooperating with institutions from the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia to swap genetic material with Angola to improve palm stock in the country. A new trend sees the **production of oil palms expanding from Southeast Asia to Central Africa**. In light of this expansion, a study conducted by **Duke University** has revealed that conversion of the tropical forests in Africa into monoculture palm plantations can severely affect the emission of climate-warming carbon.

In **Democratic Republic of Congo**, evidences indicate that **Illegal gold trade** is still benefiting armed groups, foreign companies and that International regulations have failed to revert this trend as, a [new report by Global Witness](#) shows.



While international regulations have succeeded in limiting the export of conflict minerals, illegal gold trade continues to support warlords. (Image by [Fairphone](#) / [Flickr Commons](#))

In **Kenya**, Masai communities are completely dissatisfied with the **World Bank's accountability mechanism, the Inspection Panel (IPN)**. In 2010, the World Bank approved a \$330 million loan for the **Kenya Electricity Expansion Program**, to increase the capacity of electricity supply and access to electricity in Kenya. The program, co-financed by the **European Investment Bank (EIB)**, included expansion of existing geothermal production as well as new construction of a 140 megawatt power station — Olkaria IV. In a January statement during the Powering Africa Summit, the [Narasha Community Development Group](#) expressed concerns that over **1,000 people, mostly indigenous Maasai, were directly affected and an estimated 2,000 people indirectly affected** by the programme in the Greater Olkaria Geothermal Area.

This bulletin ends with an update on recent events in **Canada**. The government has given the go-ahead for a **mining company to drain an entire lake in the Northwest Territory** and relocate all of its fish. Once mining is done, the company plans to re-flood the lakebed and put the fish back. Though the plan may seem absurd at first blush, **it's actually the second time the mining company has relocated fish from a lake in order to expand its open pit Meadowbank gold mine** — a practice by mining companies that's become surprisingly common in northern Canada.



Canadian Press

First Nations reiterate call for unity and partnership on the 149th Canada Day, July 1, 2016.

A controversial **hydroelectric dam project in Labrador sub-Arctic Canada** is also threatening the land of the local **Innu people**. The firm, **Nalcor Energy**, is building two dams to produce the [Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project](#). This is wrongly being described, as a renewable and relatively benign way to meet the ever-growing energy needs of industrialized societies.



On **July 1, Canada Day** the Indigenous Peoples nation-wide have reiterated their **call for reconciliation and unity**. **Canada Prime Minister** has vowed to work with **Indigenous Peoples** on an equal footing, and the announcement that the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** would be made into law.



Photo by Vince Fedoroff

DEAL REACHED - Justice Minister Brad Cathers, Doris Bill, the chief of the Kwanlin Dū'n First Nation, and Premier Darrell Pasloski announce the enactment of the Land Titles Act, 2015, at Kwanlin Dū'n First Nation council chambers on Tuesday. Rod Snow left

Meanwhile, in **Yukon, Kwanlin Dū'n First Nation** citizens will soon be able to obtain mortgages to develop on their land, and home improvement loans, without surrendering aboriginal rights and title. The agreement between the Kwanlin Dū'n First Nation government and the Yukon government allows the First Nation to register its land at the Land Titles Office, an option not previously available for settlement lands in the territory.

ONLINE ARTICLES AND WEB LINKS

GENERAL TOPICS

2015 Was Deadliest Year for Grassroots Environmental Defenders

185 killings, 40 percent of those murdered were from indigenous groups, says Global Witness report.

I recently received an email alert that the life of Indigenous environmental and human rights defender Gloria Ushigua was at risk. The report outlined the “escalating intimidation of and harassment against” Ushigua, the coordinator of the Sápara women’s organization, Ashiñwaka, who has been defending her community’s land against private and state-owned companies seeking to exploit oil deposits in Sápara territory in the Ecuadorian Amazon. The worst hit countries in 2015 were Brazil, with 50 murders, followed by the Philippines where 33 activists were killed, and Colombia, which witnessed 26 killings. Conflicts over mining were the number one

cause of killings in 2015, with agribusiness, hydroelectric dams, and logging also key drivers of violence. More often than not the victims of this violence are grassroots activists and Indigenous leaders like Ushigua, who are fighting to save the only homes they know. The report says that in 2015, nearly 40 percent of those killed were from indigenous groups.

READ MORE

http://www.earthisland.org/journal/index.php/elist/eListRead/2015_deadliest_year_for_grassroots_environmental_defenders_global_witness/

3 environmentalists killed every week in 2015

In 16 countries surveyed in a report by Global Witness, 185 activists were killed, making 2015 the deadliest year for environment and land campaigners since 2002. “The environment is emerging as a new battleground for human rights,” the report said. The reported killings rose nearly 60 percent from 2014. Brazil fared worst with 50 activists murdered, followed by the Philippines with 33 deaths, and 26 in Colombia, the report said. “A major reason behind the big jump in killings is impunity, people know they can get away with these crimes,” Billy Kyte, campaigner at Global Witness, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. “Increasingly, communities that take a stand are finding themselves in the firing line of companies’ private security, state forces and a thriving market for contract killers,” Kyte said. “For every killing we document, many others go unreported.”

READ MORE

<http://en.prothom-alo.com/environment/news/109011/3-environmentalists-killed-every-week-in-2015>

The Environment: Latin America’s Battleground for Human Rights

2015 was the deadliest year on record for the killings of environmental activists around the world, according to a new Global Witness report. The report, [On Dangerous Ground](#), found that in 2015, 185 people were killed defending the environment across 16 countries, a 59 percent increase from 2014. “The environment is becoming a new battleground for human rights,” Global Witness’ Campaign Leader for Environmental and Land Defenders Billy Kyte told IPS. “Many of these activists are being treated as enemies of the state when they should be treated as heroes,” he continued.

READ MORE

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2016/06/the-environment-latin-americas-battleground-for-human-rights/>

Leaving No One Behind: Land and environmental defenders at the heart of sustainable development

The phrase "leaving no one behind" is used no fewer than six times in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development agreed by global leaders as a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. While certainly a compelling phrase, as Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, Secretary General of CIVICUS, warned in the foreword of this year's State of Civil Society Report, civil society needs to be in the vanguard of shaping and delivering this 'Leave No One Behind' agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) are designed to stimulate action in areas of "critical importance for humanity and the planet" such as measures to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies free from fear and violence; to ensure that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature, and to create a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity. The Agenda's text itself acknowledges that the reality is currently very different, something that [Peace Brigades International](#) (PBI) has observed first-hand. PBI provides unarmed protection to human rights defenders, with a focus on those who defend land and environmental rights.

READ MORE

<http://news.trust.org/item/20160728133450-5w2pg/?source=gep>

'Human, land rights defenders vital to any democracy'—EU

A European Union-backed project aimed at enhancing the protection of rights defenders working on land and environmental issues was launched on Wednesday. The launch of "Joint Action for Land Rights" came following the release of a report from Global Witness claiming that 33 out of 185 environmental rights defenders killed last year were from the Philippines making it second to Brazil in terms of number of slain defenders. Jerome Riviere, first secretary of the EU delegation to the Philippines, reiterated the union's support for the initiative, noting that human rights and land rights defenders are "vital to any democracy."

READ MORE

<http://globalnation.inquirer.net/141613/human-land-rights-defenders-vital-to-any-democracy-eu#ixzz4FcicVFGM>

Live Q&A: How can we better support the rights of indigenous people?

In the last fortnight two deaths have brought the challenges facing indigenous people across the world into sharper focus. In Honduras, environmental and indigenous activist Berta Cáceres, who had campaigned to protect her community's territory from the impact of hydroelectric dam, was [murdered at her home](#). In far north Western Australia, [a 10 year old aboriginal girl](#) took her own life - the youngest of 19 indigenous people to do so in the area since December. According to UN estimates, there are over 370 million indigenous people living across 90 countries worldwide.

Despite the fact that in 2007 a [UN declaration](#) enshrined minimum standards for the survival, rights, dignity and wellbeing of indigenous people, many argue there is still a long way to go to realising them. [Survival International argues](#) their land ownership rights are not properly respected anywhere.

READ MORE

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/mar/11/live-q-a-how-can-we-better-support-the-rights-of-indigenous-people>

Mass killings, forced evictions threaten indigenous, minority groups to point of 'eradication' - rights group

Mass killings, forced evictions and conflicts over land put indigenous and minority groups at risk of being eradicated from their ancestral lands, a human rights group said on Tuesday. From Ethiopia, [China](#) and Iraq, the combination of armed conflicts and land dispossession has led to the persecution of minority groups and the erosion of cultural heritage, according to a report by the Minority Rights Group (MRG). Carl Soderbergh, MRG director of policy and communications, said while discrimination against ethnic or religious minorities is not new, the level of targeted abuse is getting worse. "The conflict that's happening in [Syria](#) and Iraq right now is leading to the massive displacement of smaller and very ancient religious minorities like the Yazidis and the Sabeen Mandeans," said Soderbergh, lead author of the 'State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2016' report.

READ MORE

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-rights-indigenous-idUKKCN0ZS00T>

July 4th: No Time for Celebration for Indigenous Peoples in US

Without Indigenous resistance, the intended genocide of the Native people by the settlers would have completely succeeded. The Anglo-American settlers' violent break from Britain, from 1775 to 1783, paralleled a decade of their search and destroy annihilation of Delaware, Cherokee, Muskogee, Seneca, Mohawk, Shawnee, Miami and other nations' villages and fields, slaughtering the residents without distinction of age or gender and overrunning the boundaries of the 13 colonies into unceded Native American territories. July 4 symbolizes the beginning of the "Indian wars" and "westward movement" that continued across the continent for another century of unrelenting U.S. wars of conquest. That was the goal of independence for both the seasoned killers of the so-called "revolutionary army" and the militias using extreme violence against Indigenous noncombatants to subjugate and expel.

READ MORE

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/opinion/July-4th-No-Time-for-Celebration-for-Indigenous-Peoples-in-US-20160703-0008.html>

Three Small But Powerful Funders Fighting for the Rights of Indigenous People

Earlier this year, human rights activist Berta Cáceres—a Honduran environmental activist and indigenous leader—was senselessly murdered. Cáceres' killing not only brought the plight of human rights defenders to the forefront of the larger global dialogue on human rights, but also shined a brighter light on people and groups fighting for the rights of indigenous people around the world. While the big funders in this space tend to get all the attention, we wanted to take a moment to spotlight what several smaller players are up to. Three small but powerful funders in this field are the Global Greengrants Fund, the Angelica Foundation and the Mize Foundation. Here's a closer look at what these organizations are all about.

READ MORE

<http://www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2016/7/27/three-small-but-powerful-funders-fighting-for-the-rights-of.html>

Global call to development banks: don't fund projects that violate human rights

International development banks should ensure their investments do not violate human rights or risk the lives of the activists who defend them, a group of global campaigners said on Thursday. The Coalition on Human Rights in Development, representing 150 human rights and environment groups including Oxfam, Greenpeace and Bankwatch, signed a petition urging banks and funders to think about risks to people's rights before approving projects. The petition is directed at international financial institutions including the World Bank and regional banks in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas as well as newer institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the BRICS New Development Bank.

"International Financial Institutions (IFIs) should also ensure that their activities do not cause or contribute to human rights violations, including taking necessary measures to identify and address human rights risks in all of their activities," the petition states. Major development banks have long touted the importance of public participation for effective development, the organisations said.

READ MORE

<http://news.trust.org/item/20160714171054-kapty/>

Deutsche Bank Continues Lack of Transparency on Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining

Today, Deutsche Bank (DB) released a [new corporate responsibility policy](#) explaining that the bank has begun to phase out the provision of finance to companies that practice mountaintop removal (MTR) coal mining. The updated policy indicates that they will decrease financing for the most significant MTR producers, without transparency around the timeline for finance reduction. While this policy is a positive move for the bank, it remains incremental in nature, relies on the trend of decreasing MTR production overall, and “the view that MTR is likely to be phased out in the near to medium-term future.” This ignores the fact that Deutsche Bank is the biggest banker of MTR, and currently finances Blackhawk, a coal company that has ramped up production at MTR mines over the past year. Deutsche Bank remains badly out of step on the issue of coal financing, as most of its US and European peers are ending financing for the entire coal mining sector, not just for MTR producers. This measure falls well short of what is necessary to meet the global goal to keep climate change to 1.5 degrees. In December Deutsche Bank signed the “Paris Pledge for Action,” committing the bank to accelerate the transformational changes needed to reduce global warming to within acceptable limits. Yet today’s policy affirms the bank’s continuing support of the coal sector, stating the bank believes “Coal power is still necessary.” The bank, along with other financial institutions, must act quickly to transition away from financing fossil fuels, starting with an immediate halt to investment in the coal mining industry and coal-fired power production.

READ MORE

http://www.ran.org/deutsche_bank_continues_lack_of_transparency_on_mountaintop_removal_coal_mining

World Bank Allows Tanzania To Sidestep Rule Protecting Indigenous Groups

A loophole in the World Bank’s policy protecting indigenous communities could allow governments around the world to displace locals in the path of agricultural development without restoring their livelihoods. Last year, after fierce protests from human rights groups, the World Bank retreated from a proposal that would have allowed its borrowers to sidestep its rules for protecting indigenous communities. Now the World Bank’s board has granted a massive agribusiness project in East Africa a waiver that exempts it from following the bank’s Indigenous Peoples Policy—sparking fears that the development lender is making an end run to resurrect a policy that it abandoned in public.

READ MORE

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/world-bank-allows-tanzania-to-sidestep-rule-protecting-indigenous-groups_us_57607769e4b09c926cfd6b1c

Defending Human Rights in Development

Development banks should respect human rights in their investments around the world and ensure their activities are not putting human rights defenders at risk, the Coalition on Human Rights in Development said today in a joint petition signed by 154 development, human rights, and environment groups.

READ MORE

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/14/defending-human-rights-development>

How to stop deforestation? Give indigenous people rights to, and control of, land

Indigenous people are better than governments at preventing forests from being cut and should be seen as a solution, not a barrier to protecting them, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People said on Tuesday. Indigenous peoples and communities have claims to two thirds of the world's land but are legally recognized as holding only 10 percent, according to think tank World Resources Institute (WRI). Without title deeds, indigenous communities may find their land is taken over for major development projects such as palm oil plantations and

READ MORE

www.postguam.com/the_globe/world/how-to-stop-deforestation-give-indigenous-people-rights-to-and/article_8e537476-4e70-11e6-9ec1-8b420c564081.html

Indigenous People Must Lead World to Sustainability

Rebecca Adamson's decision to close [First Peoples Worldwide](#) by year's end is an opportunity for other organizations to take over innovative and compelling projects intended to restore to Indigenous Peoples their rightful position of leadership in today's troubled world. Adamson, Cherokee Nation, tells ICTMN, "Whether we like it or not the simple truth is that Indians have to become leaders beyond their own communities. We have to get out there and we have to start leading now. There's no choice." What we see in today's Western societies, she says, "is fear-based — a scarcity of resources and individuals with insatiable appetites. When you look at an indigenous economy that's survived for tens of thousands of years you see [an assumption] of prosperity and a kinship-based sense of [enoughness](#). In one economy you hoard and you compete and you beat your competition down. In the other economy you share and you collaborate. One of them will sustain and be sustainable and the other won't."

READ MORE

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/07/21/indigenous-people-must-lead-world-sustainability-165220>

ACTIONS NEEDED TO ENSURE THE INCLUSION AND VISIBILITY OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGS

Inclusion of the legal recognition of indigenous peoples and their rights in the national action plans to achieve sustainable development. This action will be transformational as securing the rights of indigenous peoples – particularly their rights to lands, territories and resources – will ensure the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, cultural diversity, sustainable resource management and will contribute significantly to food security and conservation of the environment. To demonstrate, 50% of the world's land-base is the customary land of indigenous peoples but only 10% is legally recognized, which is a key factor in the marginalization of indigenous peoples. Most of indigenous lands have fallen into the hands of few families, states and corporations. We therefore need to reach out to these land-owners – including the 1% that controls the global wealth – for the distribution of economic power, and dismantling the structures that have resulted in this grave inequality and human rights violations.

READ MORE

<http://aippnet.org/actions-needed-to-ensure-the-inclusion-and-visibility-of-indigenous-peoples-in-the-implementation-of-the-sdgs/>

Fast-track Development Threatens to Leave Indigenous Peoples Behind

Fast-tracked development often means that indigenous people and their territories get run over and their rights are not taken into consideration, Roberto Borrero, from the International Indian Treaty Council and Indigenous Peoples Major Group, said here Friday. The High Level Political Forum currently taking place at the UN includes many discussions on “private partnerships” and “fast-tracking” development in order to “leave no one behind,” worrying indigenous leaders that development will continue to ignore the rights of indigenous peoples, pushing them behind further. “If priorities have been given to these relationships with businesses, and there are not special measurements to gauge their impacts on indigenous peoples and their violations of human rights, then we will be left behind,” says Roberto Borrero, from the International Indian Treaty Council and Indigenous Peoples Major Group. Up to 50 percent of global land is customary land of indigenous people, but only 10 percent is legally recognized. Joan Carling, Expert Member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and Secretary-General of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), says these actions against indigenous land is a key factor why indigenous people are marginalized and remain vulnerable.

READ MORE

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2016/07/fast-track-development-threatens-to-leave-indigenous-peoples-behind/>

Activists from Indonesia, Liberia, Colombia and Peru to EU tells of palm Horror

A delegation of indigenous people from Indonesia, Liberia, Colombia and Peru did a tour of European capitals last month to give policymakers and investors first-hand testimony of what they said were escalating human rights and environmental abuses linked to the rapid spread of palm oil cultivation. The delegation, which visited the Netherlands, Germany, Brussels and London during the 10-day tour, said that members of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) frequently flout the voluntary group's requirement to respect community land rights, and are involved in human rights abuses and destructive plantation development. At a press conference in London, Tom Griffiths of UK NGO Forest Peoples Programme, which sponsored the tour, said while the RSPO is beginning to crack down on malpractice by its members, it has a long way to go before all RSPO members' palm oil is conflict-free. "The key message of the mission is that these [palm oil] operations should be suspended until land rights are secured and proper protections are in place," he said.

READ MORE

<http://gnnliberia.com/2016/06/24/activists-indonesia-liberia-colombia-peru-eu-tells-palm-horror/>

154 NGOs call on development banks to ensure activities are not putting human rights defenders at risk

International financial institutions (IFIs), including the World Bank, African, Asian, European, and Inter-American Development Bank, should respect human rights in their investments around the world and ensure their activities are not putting human rights defenders at risk, demands a joint petition signed by 154 development, human rights, and environment groups. Development banks should respect human rights in their investments...and ensure their activities are not putting human rights and environmental defenders at risk, said SOMO in a joint petition signed by over 150 development, human rights, and environment groups...Major development banks have long touted the importance of public participation for effective development. But the space for safe and effective participation in development processes has been rapidly shrinking as governments criminalize activities by environmental and human rights activists, adopt restrictions on civil society groups, and allow intimidation and attacks by private businesses or security forces to go unpunished.

READ MORE

<https://business-humanrights.org/en/154-ngos-sign-petition-calling-on-development-banks-to-respect-human-rights-in-investments-and-ensure-their-activities-are-not-putting-human-rights-and-environmental-defenders-at#c139104>

Peer-Reviewed Study Finds High Tropical Deforestation from Oil Palm Production

A new [study](#), published in the journal *PLOS ONE*, found high levels of oil palm-driven deforestation over a 25-year period in Southeast Asia and South America, but relatively low levels in Mesoamerica (Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean) and Africa. Three of the countries studied—Ecuador, Peru and Indonesia—had the greatest levels of observed deforestation within sampled sites, with more than half of the oil palm grown on land deforested during the study period. The study by researchers at Duke University and the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) is the first to examine past deforestation and potential future deforestation and biodiversity impacts associated with oil palm plantations in 20 countries across the world. The study used satellite imagery to evaluate where oil palm plantations replaced forests from 1989 to 2013.

READ MORE

<http://www.ucsusa.org/press/2016/peer-reviewed-study-finds-high-tropical-deforestation-oil-palm-production#.V5pE5Y7Wqu4>

Forests, species on four continents threatened by palm oil expansion

As palm oil production expands from Southeast Asia into the Americas and Africa, vulnerable tropical forests and species on four continents face increased risk of loss, a new study finds. The largest areas of vulnerable forest are in Africa and South America. But because forests in all 20 countries studied contain high concentrations of different mammal and bird species at risk of extinction, conservation efforts need to incorporate localized solutions tailored to each region.

READ MORE

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/07/160727172011.htm>

Scientists call on EU businesses, govts to support greener palm oil

While Europe has shown early leadership in pushing the palm oil sector toward less damaging practices, European politicians and business leaders need to do more to improve the sustainability of the industry, says a body representing hundreds of conservation scientists from dozens of countries. In a declaration issued at the conclusion of its annual meeting — held this year in Montpellier, France, the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC) called for specific measures to strengthen the market for “responsibly sourced” palm oil, including greater supply chain transparency, incentives and mandates for certified palm oil, increased engagement between governments in consuming and producing countries, and adoption of zero deforestation procurement policies.

READ MORE

<http://www.eco-business.com/news/scientists-call-on-eu-businesses-govts-to-support-greener-palm-oil/>

5 firms form alliance to promote sustainably produced palm oil to fight haze

Five firms in Singapore have banded together to tackle deforestation and haze pollution by pledging to use certified sustainable palm oil in their products, conservation organisation WWF Singapore said on Monday (June 27). The firms have formed the [Singapore Alliance for Sustainable Palm Oil](#), whose primary goal is to get more manufacturers and retailers to use sustainably produced palm oil, and give consumers here environmentally-friendly options for the many products which contain palm oil. WWF Singapore is leading and supporting the alliance. The founding members of the alliance are consumer goods giant Unilever, local manufacturer Ayam Brand, food and beverage firm Danone, home furnishing retailer Ikea and Wildlife Reserves Singapore.

READ MORE

<http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/environment/five-firms-form-alliance-to-promote-sustainably-produced-palm-oil-to-fight>

US investors ploughing billions into palm oil, claims report

Some of the US' leading institutional investors, including pension funds, are potentially fuelling environmental and social harm by ploughing billions of dollars into the palm oil industry through opaque financial arrangements, a new report claims. Large investment firms are lagging behind commitments made by consumer brands such as [Nestlé](#), [Unilever](#) and [McDonald's](#) by failing to identify whether they are investing in palm oil, which palm oil companies they are involved with, or to hold them accountable over deforestation and land grabbing, the Friends of the Earth US (FoE) [report](#) states. Burgeoning demand for the cheap vegetable oil, [increasingly from China and India](#), is putting pressure on rainforests that are cleared to make way for the crop. According to the FoE report, BlackRock, the Vanguard Group, JPMorgan and Fidelity Investments have almost \$13bn in holdings in palm oil between them.

READ MORE

<https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2016/jul/26/palm-oil-us-investors-deforestation-land-grabs-pension-funds-banks-forest-fires-climate-change#img-2>

Forest conservation can offset emissions from palm oil expansion in Africa: Study

Industrial oil palm oil plantations in Southeast Asia have caused regional greenhouse gas emissions levels to spike and led to widespread deforestation and loss of biodiversity. So as global demand

continues to grow, driving oil palm development into Central Africa, researchers are looking for ways to prevent the same scenario from playing out all over again. A new paper published in the journal [Conservation Letters](#) suggests that if the governments of tropical African countries were to enact mandatory policies regulating which forests can be cleared and how much remaining forest must be set aside for conservation, they could largely offset the emissions created by converting the land to palm oil plantations.

READ MORE

mongabay.com/2016/07/forest-conservation-can-offset-emissions-from-palm-oil-expansion-in-africa-study/

Can palm oil be sustainable?

Land used for palm oil production could be nearly doubled without expanding into protected or high-biodiversity forests, according to a new study published in the journal *Global Environmental Change*. The study is the first to map land suitable for palm oil production on a global scale, while taking into account environmental and climate considerations. "There is room to expand palm oil production and to do it in a sustainable way," says IIASA researcher Johannes Pirker, who led the study. Palm oil production has expanded massively, from 6 million hectares in 1990 to 16 million in 2010, an area about the size of Uruguay. The oil, which is used for cooking and as a food additive, now accounts for about 30% of all vegetable oil used worldwide. Palm oil is controversial, in particular because much of this expansion came at the expense of biodiversity-rich tropical forests, which were cut to make room for new plantations. But oil palm farming has also contributed to lifting millions of people out of poverty in Indonesia and Malaysia, the top palm oil producing countries. And an important share of palm oil producers are small-holder farmers who rely on the commodity as their primary income.

READ MORE

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/07/160721104617.htm>

Study concludes conservation NGOs might be better off working outside the RSPO

Agricultural expansion into tropical forests is an important driver of biodiversity loss — which scientists say has already become so severe [across 60 percent of the Earth's land surface](#) that it may already threaten ecosystems' ability to sustain human life. Voluntary global standards like the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), established in 2004 as an association of private stakeholders within the palm oil supply chain, are one of the chief tools being employed to reduce deforestation associated with the production of agricultural commodities. Conservation non-governmental organizations (NGOs), palm oil producers, and other players in the industry have all promoted the RSPO's efforts, but a new study published in the journal [Conservation and Society](#) looks at how effective NGOs' participation in the RSPO scheme truly is. "So far researchers have demonstrated that the emergence of certifications for global commodities, such as RSPO, can be

qualified as a new capitalist instrument, promoted by dominant economic players and major NGOs, and operating at the expense of local people,” the study notes.

READ MORE

<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/07/study-concludes-conservation-ngos-might-be-better-off-working-outside-the-rspo/>

Not all business efforts at conservation are green washing, says expert

Conservation opportunities exist in business, and scientists can help companies that want to do the right thing, argued Indonesia-based conservation scientist Erik Meijaard at a major scientific conference here last week. Dr Meijaard had given his opening keynote address for the four-day Conservation Asia 2016 conference a somewhat provocative title: Integrating business and conservation. The way forward or a slide into greenwashed oblivion? His conclusion, informed by over 20 years of experience: “I don’t think it’s all greenwashing. I think there’s a lot of greenwashing, companies that don’t care at all about environmental and social responsibilities, but there are examples of companies trying to do things differently and it’s important to work with these companies.

READ MORE

<http://www.todayonline.com/daily-focus/not-all-business-efforts-conservation-are-greenwashing-says-expert>

REGIONAL TOPICS

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

THE PHILIPPINES

Second most dangerous

The year 2015 was “the deadliest year on record for killings of land and environmental defenders, people struggling to protect their land, forests and rivers,” Global Witness said in its report. It said conflicts involving mining, agribusiness, hydroelectric dams and logging were the cause of most of the killings. Specifically, Global Witness said “one of the root causes of conflict in the highly militarized Mindanao region” was “the encroachment of agribusiness and mining interests in indigenous peoples’ lands without their consent.” It said those who oppose such projects are “finding themselves in the firing line of private security companies, state forces, and a thriving market for contract killers.” Were the five Manobo leaders reported killed by the military’s Special Forces in Pangantucan, Bukidnon, on Aug. 18, 2015, fighting for their community’s rights and interests? The military said the five men were communist insurgents, but the NPA said they were

civilians. Was Condez killed in 2013 because of his spirited defense of the Ati's right to a 2.1-hectare beach front property in Boracay?

READ MORE:

<http://opinion.inquirer.net/95343/second-most-dangerous#ixzz4GTv9zsrN>

PH deadly for environmentalists

The Philippines is not only the second most dangerous place for journalists, it is also the second deadliest country for environmental activists. Global Witness said on Monday it had documented 185 killings of environmental activists around the world last year, nearly 60 percent more than in 2014 and the highest since it began collecting data dating back to 2002. In a newly released report, the London-based advocacy group said Brazil topped the 16-country list with 50 environmental defenders slain in 2015, followed by the Philippines with 33 and Colombia with 26. The group says 116 were slain worldwide in 2014.

READ MORE

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/791731/ph-deadly-for-environmentalists#ixzz4GUE89aUr>

Aquino's legacy | Indigenous peoples mark loss of land, homes, lives

In the last days of the Aquino administration in June, 230 Higaonons were forced to leave their communities in Langolong, Misamis Oriental province, from June 5 to 24. They trekked four kilometers from their ancestral homes to the Langolong municipal gym, to escape soldiers of the Phil. Army's 58th infantry battalion that had encamped in their area "for peace and development." The Lumád "bawets" (evacuees) proceeded to bring their issue to the provincial capitol in Cagayan de Oro City, where government and military officials finally sat with them in a dialogue, to ensure their security in their communities and facilitate [their return home, which pushed through June 24](#). The Higaonons' journey speaks much about how indigenous peoples fared in the past six years under President Aquino. The Lumád of Mindanao particularly suffered massive, repeated and prolonged evacuations as the Aquino administration pushed the entry of extractive projects in their communities, accompanied by militarization and armed attacks by paramilitary groups. The so-called 'development' projects of the Aquino administration had grave implications not only on the way of life of the Lumad but on the country's environment and the lives of future generations of Filipinos.

READ MORE

<http://bulatlat.com/main/2016/06/30/aquinos-legacy-indigenous-peoples-mark-loss-of-land-homes-lives/>

Don't be greedy, Piñol tells agri traders

"In the ideal world, farmers are supposed to make money producing food, the traders bring it to the market, making a little profit for the effort, and the consumers enjoy affordable food. All three of them end up smiling and happy. That is not the case in the real world, however," said Piñol in a statement. "I understand your business but do not be too greedy. Stop squeezing the farmers and fisherfolk dry and making life hard for the consumers," he warned traders. Piñol lamented that the food supply chain in the country today is "controlled and even to some extent manipulated by the merchants and the traders." "It is the trader who determines how much the price of farmers produce is and it is still the trader who dictates the cost of the food in the market," he said.

READ MORE

<http://www.mb.com.ph/dont-be-greedy-pinol-tells-agri-traders/#ejtyDEwd3TRBKuv0.99>

More mining firms to undergo review over alleged violations

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez has bared a new list of mining companies that would undergo extensive review following complaints from the indigenous people of Mindanao. Lopez had a dialogue with the Lumads of Mindanao Sunday afternoon to hear their sentiments. "I met with them and they wanted to stop large-scale mining in their provinces. And they were very explicit to the names [of the companies]," she said. In a phone interview with The STAR, Lopez said the Lumads revealed eight mining firms that are allegedly committing environmental and social violations.

READ MORE

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/07/26/1606869/more-mining-firms-undergo-review-over-alleged-violations>

President Duterte: Review, amend, suspend or revoke environmental permits

Since global warming is among the top priorities of his administration, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has directed Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Regina 'Gina' Lopez to review all permits granted to mining, logging and other environment-sensitive activities. "Go ahead. Amend, suspend or revoke environmental permits if warranted," the President told Lopez during his first State of Nation Address (SONA) Monday. President Duterte stressed the agency's need to ensure industry compliance with government standards. Likewise, he warned the industries affecting the environment to comply with these standards.

READ MORE

<http://www.update.ph/2016/07/president-duterte-review-amend-suspend-or-revoke-environmental-permits/7979>

More Philippines nickel exports to be halted

Nickel Asia claims to be the country's largest producer of lateritic nickel ore. The company later put out a statement indicating that it had not received an official order from the secretary. While no mining currently takes place, the company does have permission to transport stockpiles that were accumulated in the past on Manicani Island. "There is therefore no operation to suspend and the only activity that may be halted is the disposal and removal of the stockpiles," said Nickel Asia, indicating that in the first half of the year 100,000t (wet) had been exported from Manicani island.

This compares to the 8.5Mt (wet) shipped out in total by Nickel Asia subsidiaries in the same period, according to the company. The country's new president, Rodrigo Duterte, has pledged to shut down any mining operations that don't adhere to stringent new environmental laws.

READ MORE

<http://www.mining-journal.com/world/asia/more-philippines-nickel-exports-to-be-halted/>

Gov't suspends 2 more mining firms in Palawan

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez revealed on Wednesday, July 27, that the government has suspended the mining operations of Berong Nickel in Palawan, and two mining sites of Citinickel in Española and Narra, Palawan. Director Leo Jasareno of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau said Berong Nickel caused the siltation of a river in Palawan, while Citinickel had cut trees without a permit. These, he said, are just some of the companies' major violations. A total of 6 mining firms have been suspended since Lopez assumed office, including the [4 companies](#) earlier issued with a Writ of Kalikasan by the Supreme Court:

READ MORE

<http://www.rappler.com/nation/141082-more-mining-firms-suspended-palawan-lopez>

Lopez vows cancellation of Oceana Gold permit in Nueva Vizcaya

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez promised to cancel the permit given to Australian mining firm OceanaGold Philippines Inc. to extend its explorations in a remote town in Nueva Vizcaya province. In a phone interview, Nueva Vizcaya Governor Carlos Padilla quoted Lopez saying she would ask Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Director Leo Jasareno to act on the cancellation the extension of the exploration permit of the OceanaGold to stop the "suffering" of the communities in Didipio village in Kasibu town.

READ MORE

<http://www.rappler.com/nation/140737-gina-lopez-cancel-oceanagold-permit-nueva-vizcaya>

Philippines: Victory! Oceana Gold Pulls Out Drilling Operation after People's Barricade

Oceana Gold Philippines Inc. pulls out their drilling operations in Sitio Camgat, Brgy. Didipio, Kasibu Nueva Vizcaya last Saturday, June 18, three days after anti-mining residents barricaded the entrance to the site. The Barangay Council and anti-mining residents under DESAMA and SAPPKMI decided to stop the barricade after OGPI pulled-out their equipment in the area stating that the victory of the people is only temporary. "We will maintain to be vigilant towards the company's dirty tactics of sneaking in drilling equipment in the area. Last time, they sneaked in their equipment when the community was busy attending a wedding and a funeral," said Erenio Bobola, chairperson of SAPPKMI.

READ MORE

<http://iva.aippnet.org/philippines-victory-oceana-gold-pulls-out-drilling-operation-after-peoples-barricade/>

Ampucao calls for mining application revocation

A barangay in the mining town of Itogon supports the call of council of elders and the community members for the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples for the revocation and withdrawal of consent of mining application of two companies in the area. Officials of Ampucao led by Barangay Chairman Eddie Amuasen passed a resolution strongly supporting and endorsing the statement of the council of elders, surface claimants and community residents for the office of the NCIP and MGB-DENR to deny the application of the Omico Corporation and the Macawili Gold Mining and Development Company, Inc. (MGMDCI). Barangay Resolution No. 25 series of 2016 entitled "Revocation of consent as contained in a Memorandum of Agreement dated October 17, 2006 between the Indigenous Peoples and Landowners of Ampucao, Itogon and Omico Corporation."

READ MORE

<http://www.sunstar.com.ph/baguio/local-news/2016/07/21/ampucao-calls-mining-application-revocation-486654>

DENR thumbs down Tampakan mine project

The \$5.9-billion Tampakan project in South Cotabato, dubbed as potentially the country's biggest foreign investment and believed to be one of the largest gold prospects in the world, will not materialize as Environment Secretary Gina Lopez remained firm in her decision not to allow operations even before it has started. "I really don't like Tampakan at all. There's no way I would ever allow (an open pit mine the size of 700 football fields) on top of agricultural lands," Lopez said in a press conference. "There will be no Tampakan mine operations under my term."

READ MORE

<http://www.philstar.com/business/2016/07/28/1607247/denr-thumbs-down-tampakan-mine-project>

Ex-Pangasinan gov pleads 'not guilty' to graft over black sand mining –

Former Pangasinan governor Amado Espino Jr. on Thursday entered a "not guilty" plea for his graft cases in connection with the alleged illegal black sand mining activities in Lingayen Gulf in 2011. "Not guilty, you honor," Espino told the justices of the Sixth Division after the information of the cases were read to him by the clerk of court during his arraignment. Espino is facing two counts of violation of Section 3 (e) of Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act. The cases stemmed from his alleged issuance of mining permits to two companies in 2011 despite their failure to secure environmental clearances and business permits.

READ MORE

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/573684/news/nation/ex-pangasinan-gov-pleads-not-guilty-to-graft-over-black-sand-mining#sthash.xvL6TF8J.dpuf>

Mining in PH: What Gina Lopez, Duterte have said

Since President Rodrigo Duterte [appointed](#) Gina Lopez secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, mining has become one of the most talked about issues in the country. (READ: [Investors in mining panic over Gina Lopez appointment](#)). During their term, the Dutertes [banned mining](#) in Davao City. Meanwhile, Lopez, a known anti-mining advocate, has been involved [in spats with big mining companies](#) because of her strong statements against mining. Coming from the Aquino administration, which created an executive order that stressed the need to raise government's share in mining revenues and which [imposed a moratorium on new mining contracts](#), what possible changes could be seen in this sector in the next 6 years?

READ MORE

<http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/140668-mining-ph-gina-lopez-duterte>

Philippines' House Speaker wants Congress to license new miners

The Philippines' newly elected House Speaker said on Monday he wants new mining companies to get a legislative license before they are allowed to operate in the country as part of efforts to protect the environment. Pantaleon Alvarez, a close ally of President Rodrigo Duterte, also said he will revive a proposed measure that will require miners to process their ores locally before they are shipped overseas to help create jobs domestically.

READ MORE

<http://townhall.com/news/politics-elections/2016/07/25/philippines-house-speaker-wants-congress-to-license-new-miners-n2197396>

Poverty indicators still a point of contention for DENR, miners

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez has affirmed her position that mining communities are associated with high poverty rates, after the industry pushed back last week with their own apparently contrary poverty statistics. "I am holding my ground. What the numbers show me is that wherever there is mining the people are poor. The communities around suffer. There is an adverse impact on agriculture, fishery resources, and the health of the community. This is validated by studies," said Ms. Lopez in a mobile message. She cited studies conducted by universities in Bicol, Palawan, and Mindoro to support her assertion. Ms. Lopez also noted that a study by the former head of the National Economic and Development Authority, Arsenio M. Balisacan found that some areas that host mining operations have poverty incidences twice the national average of 26.3%, as of the first half of 2015.

READ MORE

<http://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Economy&title=poverty-indicators-still-a-point-of-contention-for-denr-miners&id=13>

Lopez vows probe on mining abuses in Mindanao

Environment Secretary Regina "Gina" Lopez vowed to investigate reported abuses by mining companies in Mindanao, and warned erring operations of penal repercussions for their acts. Lopez made the announcement in front of more than 3,000 Mindanao activists who joined a national march to and gathering outside the Batasang Pambansa to hear the first State of the Nation Address of President Rodrigo Duterte. "This is my commitment, the DENR will investigate the mining firms who broke the law," Lopez said, and if they did, "first they will be suspended, then they will pay the damages" to the communities affected. The investigation for the mining firms in Mindanao, according to Lopez, "should not just be technical but also, social, environmental". Mindanaoans cheered at her announcement and shouted "panagutin! (be held accountable)".

READ MORE

<http://davaotoday.com/main/environment/lopez-%E2%80%8Bvows-probe-on-mining-abuses-in-mindanao/>

DENR to suspend abusive mining firms

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Tuesday assured the indigenous peoples of Mindanao (Lumad) that it will shut down mining operations violating environmental laws and regulations. Environment Secretary Gina Lopez urged the Lumad to submit proposed development plans for areas which have been affected by destructive mining activities. During a dialogue at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) in Manila, Lumad representatives complained about the new open pit mines and tailings ponds constructed in their areas, which have severely affected their livelihoods. They also appealed to Lopez to halt illegal logging and encroachment in watershed areas, and stop militarization in their communities, which they claimed were related to the plan of large-scale mining companies to set up new businesses.

READ MORE

<http://www.manilatimes.net/>

Philippines will not allow Tampakan mine to operate as open-pit - minister

The Philippine minister in charge of mining said she will not allow the \$5.9 billion Tampakan gold and copper mine in southern Mindanao island to operate as an open-pit site and vowed to shut more operations causing environmental destruction. The Tampakan project is the biggest stalled mining venture in the Southeast Asian country, failing to take off after the province where it is located banned open-pit mining in 2010. Commodities giant Glencore Plc quit the project last year. "I will not allow the Tampakan project," Regina Lopez told reporters, as long as it is planned as an open-pit mine. She said all permits given to the project will be reviewed "but we will observe due process". Officials at Sagittarius Mines Inc, owned by local investor Alcantara Group, which has control of Tampakan, did not immediately respond to requests for comment. A staunch environmentalist, Lopez said the government has suspended operations of seven domestic mines for failure to meet environmental regulations.

READ MORE

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-mining-idUSKCN1070DX>

Lopez vows to stop mining in Sarangani

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez vowed to stop issuing new and renewing existing mining permits in Sarangani province as long as she is head of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The DENR, prior to Lopez's appointment, had given a permit to 88 Kiamba Mining and Development Corp. to explore copper, gold and silver deposits in Sarangani and the nearby province of South Cotabato. Kiamba is headed by Mohamad Aquia, former head of the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group in Mindanao and said to be a close ally of Sen. Emmanuel Pacquiao. Constancio Paye Jr., MGB Central Mindanao director, confirmed that the exploration permit was the first to be issued in the region since former President Aquino issued a national mining policy through Executive Order No. 79.

READ MORE

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/798557/lopez-vows-to-stop-mining-in-sarangani#ixzz4FcULpf6n>

Gina Lopez tells Chinese miners to do better or go home

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez told Chinese mining operators to get their acts together or go home to China. "If they don't get their act together, I'll tell them to go home," Lopez said over DZMM radio Saturday during the program of Henry Omega-Diaz. Lopez said the Chinese people were essentially very spiritual but now what they are seeing is "pera, pera, pera." "They've become very materialistic. All they think of is money and they're bullies, and it's not good at all," she said. "Our people's well being is more important than the money you make. If you want your money, go home bye bye," she said.

READ MORE

<http://www.update.ph/2016/07/gina-lopez-tells-chinese-miners-to-do-better-or-go-home/7625>

Lopez trains eye on Mindanao mining

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez is now training her eyes on mining operations in Mindanao. In a press briefing in Quezon city on Wednesday, Lopez said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) audit and impact assessment on mining operations, which began earlier this month, covered six mining sites in Surigao. She said the assessments would hopefully be concluded this week. The rest of the mining operations in Mindanao will be audited next week, Lopez said. Lopez said the DENR was focusing on Mindanao "because the President is from there, and I would like to ensure that, at the very least, in Mindanao their social injustice will be minimal," Lopez said. Lopez also prioritized Surigao after members of indigenous people's groups met with her earlier this week and aired their grievances against mining operations in their areas, particularly Sagittarius Mines Inc. in Tampakan, Sultan Kudarat province; SR Metals Inc. in Tubay,

Agusan del Sur province; and Greenstone Mining and Taganito Mining, both in Surigao del Norte province.

READ MORE

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/800264/lopez-trains-eye-on-mindanao-mining>

Antimining group sees hope rising

ALYANSA TIGIL Mina, a national coalition of mining-affected communities and their support groups, congratulates and extends its support to Gina Lopez as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Her recent appointment by President Duterte is a clear signal that change is indeed coming in the mining sector. The alliance first worked with Lopez in 2011, after the death of Palawan broadcaster and antimining advocate Gerry Ortega sparked the formation of the Save Palawan Movement and its No to Mining in Palawan campaign. Lopez spearheaded these initiatives as managing director of the ABS-CBN Foundation. She has since become our ally in other campaigns not just on mining but also climate change and other social and environmental issues.

READ MORE

<http://opinion.inquirer.net/95711/antimining-group-sees-hope-rising#ixzz4Fcy9wzPa>

Southern Philippines leaders hopeful of Duterte gov't

Hope that Duterte presidency to bring peace, prosperity to neglected Mindanao, its indigenous people including Muslim Moro. Leaders of the Philippines' conflict-ridden south have expressed hope for peace and bright economic prospects for the long neglected region under the government of President Rodrigo Duterte, who has appointed officials from Mindanao island to top national posts. Duterte, who served 22 years as the mayor of southern Davao City before becoming the country's first leader from Mindanao, has proposed to amend the constitution to grant regions -- and their indigenous peoples -- more federal autonomy. He has also made overtures toward several armed Muslim groups and a communist insurgency operating in Mindanao, a mineral-rich but impoverished region where indigenous peoples -- including the Muslim Moro -- have long felt oppressed by what they see as Imperial Manila.

READ MORE

<http://aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/southern-philippines-leaders-hopeful-of-duterte-gov-t/615748>

IP group backs call for peace

International Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self Determination and Liberation global coordinator Beverly Longid said a solidarity statement will be sent to President Rodrigo Duterte backing him in his call for peace. "It is with glad hearts, then, that we welcome the statement of President Rodrigo Duterte to include our sister and brother indigenous peoples in the peace process between the Government of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines," Longid said. Longid hopes the resumption of the peace talks will lead to a lessening and eventual disappearance of violations of civil and political rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines. "We also hope an agreement on economic, social and cultural rights be signed and the rights to self determination, land and life of indigenous peoples be upheld therein," added Longid.

READ MORE

<http://www.sunstar.com.ph/baguio/local-news/2016/07/21/ip-group-backs-call-peace-486660>

IPs alarmed over continuing killings

Indigenous peoples (IPs) have expressed alarm over continuing killings among their ranks, including the death of a farmer in Kalinga allegedly by members of the Army's 50th Infantry Battalion. Rei Paulin, of the Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Defenders (IPHARD) Philippines, said the recent victim was Joaquin Cadagcan, who was reportedly shot by a soldier from the 50th Infantry Battalion on July 9 while on his way back to his village coming from a night watch for wild pigs destroying their crops. Also on July 12, Remar Mayantao, Rogen Suminao and Senon Nacaytuna, all members of Sitio Inalsahan Indigenous People Organization, who have been asserting their right to their ancestral land, were reportedly killed by guards from Tagbani Security Agency. Tagbani Security Agency, according to Katribu party-list, was hired by RamCar Inc., which is located at the ancestral land of the Higaonon tribe in Barangay Lupiagan, Sumilao, Bukidnon.

READ MORE

<http://www.manilatimes.net/ips-alarmed-over-continuing-killings/275148/>

Relatives of executed Philippine land rights activists hope campaign for justice will gain ally in President Duterte

When 18-year-old Michelle Campos last saw her father, Dionel, they had little time to chat. He was busy with an uncle's wake and Michelle was caught up celebrating her school foundation day. "The only thing papa told me was to do well in school," she told the *South China Morning Post*. "No matter what happens, I should continue my studies." The next day during class, news reached her that her father had been killed. The gruesome details she learned later. Before dawn on September 1, 2015 some 20 heavily armed men swooped on the village of Diatagon in Surigao del Sur. Two community leaders were singled out for execution. Dionel was one of them. He was shot

in the face, the back of his head blown off. Michelle's uncle, Juvello Sinzo, a tribal chief, was also shot dead after his bones were broken. Later, the school director Emerito Samarca was found dead, his throat slashed from ear to ear.

READ MORE

<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/1985305/relatives-executed-philippine-land-rights-activists-hope>

Lumad killings to take center stage in intl rights confab in Davao

Some 200 visitors from 25 countries worldwide will attend a conference on human rights, focusing on the killings of the indigenous peoples (IPs) or Lumads in Mindanao. In a courtesy call at the City Council on Tuesday, Dr. Angie M. Gonzales of the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP) said they chose Davao City as the venue of the conference to highlight the plight of the Lumad people. "As you very well know the killings and the attacks of the communities, especially in the communities, had become very rampant in recent years so it was a conscious decision to hold this conference in Davao," she said. Gonzales said the conference is a gathering of organizations, movements, institutions and individuals "in solidarity of the Filipino people's struggle, to assert their rights as a people and achieve just and lasting peace."

READ MORE

<http://davaotoday.com/main/human-rights/lumad-killings-to-take-center-stage-in-intl-rights-confab-in-davao/>

VM Pulong, global rights activists decry attack Vs Lumad leaders in Dava

Acting City Mayor Paolo Duterte has called on the Davao City Police Office to conduct a thorough probe on the violent attack against two Lumad leaders here on Friday last week, July 15. Armed men riding in tandem killed the secretary of a Parent-Teachers Association of a Lumad school here while his companion, a tribal leader was critically wounded in an attack on Friday afternoon in Barangay Manuel Guianga, Tugbok District here. The victims were identified as Herme Alegre, 28, secretary of the Salugpungan School PTCA and Danny Diarog, 31, vice chairperson of the Kahugpungan sa Lumad and the tribal chieftain of Sitio Kahusayan. Both are Bagobo-Klata tribe members. Alegre was declared dead on arrival by the attending physician while Diarog is in critical condition. In a statement on Monday, July 18, Duterte condoled with the family of Herme Alegre, 28 especially to his three young children. "My prayers and thoughts are with you in this difficult time and moment of sorrow. However, while probe is being done, let me encourage everyone to observe sobriety and calm and to refrain from blaming certain individuals or groups or making speculations as these may only stir up more distrust and tension," Duterte said.

READ MORE

<http://davaotoday.com/main/human-rights/vm-pulong-global-rights-activists-decry-attack-vs-lumad-leaders-in-davao/>

On eve of rights forum in PHL, global activists slam latest murder of lumad school leader

Some 160 foreign delegates have warned - ahead of an International Conference for People's Rights in the Philippines (ICPRP) - of further militarization and human rights violations as another Lumad leader was reported killed. The ICPRP is convening the first-ever global human rights meet in the Philippines under the Duterte administration from July 23 to 24. According to ICPRP spokesman Bishop Felixberto Calang, "The delegates are currently spread out in 10 hot spots in the country to see for themselves the ongoing development aggression and the continuing militarization in communities." said. The global activists urged President Rodrigo Duterte, who comes from Davao, the venue for the global forum, to order a quick, thorough inquiry into the assassination of a Lumad school leader and the wounding of a tribal chief.

READ MORE

<http://interaksyon.com/article/130444/on-eve-of-rights-forum-in-phl-global-activists-slam-latest-murder-of-lumad-school-leader>

Philippines: Assassination of environmental activist Gloria Capitan

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources, including the Medical Action Group (MAG), the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA) and the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), about the assassination of Ms. **Gloria Capitan**, 55, President of "Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Mamamaya ng Lucanin" (SNML - United Citizenry of Lucanin) and environmental activist opposed to the construction and presence of coal stockpile facilities in Lucanin, in the Mariveles neighbourhood, Bataan province. According to the information received, on July 1, 2016, at around 7:30 p.m., Ms. Gloria Capitan was shot and killed by two unidentified men riding a motorcycle. The two assailants had been waiting near the entrance to the family's business establishment in Purok 2, Barangay Lucanin, Mariveles municipality, Bataan province. One of the men entered the establishment and shot her four times in the neck and arm, in front of her cousin and two of her grandchildren, one of who was also hit by a bullet shell and sustained minor injuries. Ms. Gloria Capitan was first transported to a small clinic in Lucanin and later transferred to MAHESECO Multipurpose Cooperative Hospital in Mariveles. She died of multiple gunshot wounds shortly before arriving at MAHESECO hospital.

READ MORE

<http://www.omct.org/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/philippines/2016/07/d23846/>

Anti-coal activist murdered in the Philippines

On July 1, two gunmen on motorcycles shot and killed anti-coal activist, Gloria Capitan, inside her karaoke bar in Mariveles, Bataan in the Philippines. Capitan, 57, sustained three gunshot wounds, two in the neck and one in the arm, local media [reported](#). Her eight-year-old grandson reportedly suffered injuries from a stray bullet that grazed his arm. Capitan was a president of Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Mamamayan ng Lucanin, a community-based organization, and she led her community in a series of protests against pollution from an open coal storage facility close to her neighborhood, and demanded its permanent closure. The storage facility is run by Sea Front Shipyard Services, Inc, a subsidiary of Limay Bulk and Handling Terminal. Capitan also fought actively against the expansion of coal plants in Bataan province.

READ MORE

<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/07/anti-coal-activist-murdered-in-the-philippines/>

Army nabs 4 hunters in Abra - rights group

A human rights group in Abra province slammed the military for “abducting” four hunters from an indigenous people’s community in Barangay Bangilo, Malibcong town recently. Many residents of the town belong to the Banao, Gubang and Mabaka tribes. Fr. Demetrio Batay-an, chairman of the Abra Human Rights Movement, said the four were among five hunters from Bangilo who were apprehended by troops of the Army’s 27th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army on June 25. One of the hunters managed to flee and alert the community to what happened. Batay-an said they immediately sought the help of Malibcong Mayor Romando Bacuyag, who contacted battalion commander Colonel Thomas Baluga and got confirmation that the four hunters were in military custody. Baluga said the hunters were taken into custody because they were armed, adding they would be charged with illegal possession of firearms.

But Batay-an said it is normal for hunters to be armed when pursuing their main form of livelihood.

READ MORE

<http://interaksyon.com/article/129808/army-nabs-4-hunters-in-abra---rights-group>

Autonomy: The Precious Resource for Filipino Women

The mining industry is having dire consequences for women in the Philippines, encroaching on their land and causing domestic conflict. Filipina activist Judith Pasimio is encouraging indigenous women to stand up for their natural resources and human rights.

READ MORE

<https://www.newsdeeply.com/womenandgirls/autonomy-the-precious-resource-for-filipino-women/>

Some of the world's largest carbon producers have been summoned by an international human rights investigation into the impact of climate-warming pollution on the Filipino population.

Dozens of international companies have been ordered to respond to a petition that accuses them of breaching human rights in the Philippines through the impacts of climate change. The Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHR) has sent a letter to 47 "carbon majors" including Shell, BP, Chevron, BHP Biliton and Anglo American. The companies are accused of breaching people's fundamental rights to "life, food, water, sanitation, adequate housing and to self-determination", via the impact of greenhouse gas emissions being released into the atmosphere. The companies have 45 days to respond to the complaint that could become the first official investigation of its kind to be launched by a government body. A [65-page petition](#) prepared by Greenpeace and other groups requesting the investigation argues that "climate change interferes with the enjoyment of the Filipinos' fundamental rights." The petition asks companies to develop plans to protect the rights of vulnerable people who are impacted by climate change.

READ MORE

<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2016/07/28/carbon-emitters-accused-disrupting-human-rights-philippines>

Should the Philippines ratify the Paris Agreement?

One good thing about our new president is that he frequently makes bold statements about important topics, prompting all of us to try to understand that topic which otherwise would have been ignored. This past week, it was the turn of the Paris Agreement on climate change. President Duterte was quoted as saying that he would not honor the agreement because it would stymie our industrialization. A few days later, he was more circumspect and asked the Senate to review the agreement carefully. In his State of the Nation Address yesterday, President Duterte made it clear that he believed global warming was real and that it must be addressed. He stressed, though, that the world must solve the problem fairly.

READ MORE

<http://thestandard.com.ph/opinion/columns/eagle-eyes-by-tony-la-vina/211576/should-the-philippines-ratify-the-paris-agreement-.html>

SONA 2016: CHR welcomes Duterte vow to 'protect human rights

Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Chairperson Chito Gascon welcomed President Rodrigo Duterte's vow to protect human rights of Filipinos during his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Monday, July 25. Gascon told Rappler that it's a big deal that Duterte did not dismiss the importance of human rights. "*Sa kabuuan, mahusay at maganda ang kanyang paninindigan para sa pangangalaga ng karapatang pantao,*" the CHR chairperson said. "*Hindi niya sinabi na walang halaga ang human rights, at malaking bagay po iyan.*" (Overall, his commitment to protect human rights is great. He did not say that human rights are not important and that's a big deal.) During his first SONA, Duterte emphasized that his administration will be "sensitive to the State's obligations to promote, and protect, fulfill the human rights of our citizens, especially the poor, the marginalized and the vulnerable." (FULL TEXT: [President Duterte's 1st State of the Nation Address](#)). The President added that social justice will be pursued, "even as the rule of law shall at all times prevail."

READ MORE

<http://www.rappler.com/nation/140963-duterte-sona-2016-philippines-chr-human-rights-killings-drugs>

'Huwag kang papatay' campaign launched

An official of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines-Episcopal Commission on Laity (CBCP-ECL) made this statement during yesterday's launch of the "Huwag Kang Papatay" or Thou Shall Not Kill campaign amid the reported extrajudicial killings in line with the government's intensified campaign against illegal drugs. "You cannot do something good by committing something evil. You cannot get rid of crime if you will commit another crime. Killing is a crime," said CBCP-ECL chairman Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Pabillo. "Since May, 400 people have been killed, or about 20 people a day. That is a big crime statistic," he said.

READ MORE

<http://www.philstar.com/news-feature/2016/07/26/1606756/huwag-kang-papatay-campaign-launched>

FULL TEXT: Duterte's 2016 State of the Nation Address

Rodrigo Duterte, who has spent only a month as president, delivered his first State of the Nation Address before a joint session of Congress on Monday. The speech lasted for about an hour and a

half as Duterte went off script several times to tell anecdotes, crack some jokes, comment on the contents of the speech and pause as the crowd applauded.

READ MORE

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/07/25/1606702/full-text-dutertes-2016-state-nation-address>

Duterte calls on Armed Forces to go after illegal loggers, miners

President Rodrigo Duterte in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) called on the Philippine military to conduct operations to curb illegal mining and logging in the country. "In the area of environment, the military is directed to intensify its support role against illegal logging, illegal mining... and other destructive practices that aggravate the devastation of our natural resources," Duterte said. "I have to protect the country... The interest of the country must come first," he added. Duterte also defended the appointment of [anti-mining Regina Paz "Gina" Lopez](#) as the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), saying that she was a "crusader" of the environment.

READ MORE

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/575006/news/nation/duterte-calls-on-armed-forces-to-go-after-illegal-loggers-miners#sthash.8H1jbGf3.dpuf>

EASTERN MALAYSIA

Palm oil: The bigger picture

The hot debate over oil palm plantations won't be cooling any time soon, which begs the question: How can Malaysia reconcile environmental concerns with the social and economic benefits derived from palm oil production? Between them, Malaysia and Indonesia produce 80% of the global supply of palm oil, which is found in a vast range of everyday products, including cooking oils, margarine, bread, soap, vitamin supplements, greases, lubricants and candles. Demand for the environmentally-friendly and versatile oil is set to soar by 50% over the next 10 years, and manufacturers in Europe are lining up to use palm oil in their cars as a clean and cheap alternative biodiesel. What's more, the palm tree requires up to 10 times less land than what's required by other crops such as soya, rapeseed and canola to produce the same tonnage of vegetable oils. So why the fuss, despite the obvious – and numerous – benefits of palm oil production?

READ MORE

<http://www.star2.com/culture/books/2016/06/17/palm-oil-the-bigger-picture/#i6VMaigycO39YUaw.99>

Malaysia land rights activist murder suspects charged in court

Two men were charged in a Malaysian court on Friday over the killing of an indigenous land rights defender, in a case which has cast a spotlight on tribespeople's decades-long struggle for recognition. The duo were respectively charged with the murder and abetting in the murder of Bill Kayong in the city of Miri, in the eastern state of Sarawak last month, police said. Kayong - a Dayak, one of the many indigenous tribes in Sarawak - was shot dead in broad daylight in his pick-up truck, prompting outcry from activists linking the murder to his fight for tribal land rights. Police have refused to confirm whether there were any links to land disputes. "Their motive will be known once the trial commences," Miri deputy police chief Stanley Ringgit told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. He said police were still hunting for three other suspects. Indigenous land rights have been a contentious issue in Sarawak, part of the vast island of Borneo which is shared between Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei. Activists have long blamed the rapid expansion of palm oil plantations, rampant logging and a wave of dam-building for causing environmental damage and displacing indigenous people.

READ MORE

<http://news.trust.org/item/20160715123206-j1f3c>

Suspects in murder of Malaysian land rights activist charged

Two men were charged in a Malaysian court on Friday (July 15) over the killing of an indigenous land rights defender, in a case which has cast a spotlight on tribespeople's decades-long struggle for recognition. Mohamad Fitri Pauzi, 29, and Lie Chang Loon, 37, were respectively charged with the murder and abetting in the murder of Mr Bill Kayong in the city of Miri, in the eastern state of Sarawak on June 21, police said. Mr Kayong — a Dayak, one of the many indigenous tribes in Sarawak — was shot dead in broad daylight in his pick-up truck, prompting outcry from activists linking the murder to his fight for tribal land rights.

READ MORE

<http://www.todayonline.com/world/asia/suspects-murder-malaysian-land-rights-activist-charged>

Defending indigenous people may have led to activist's death: PKR

The Sarawak chapter of opposition Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) suggested yesterday that the fatal shooting of one of its leaders, native-rights activist Bill Kayong, may be related to his fight to defend the customary rights of the indigenous people. "Kayong was involved in helping many longhouse residents having disputes over land (encroachment) with plantation and timber companies," said Sarawak PKR chief Baru Bian. Kayong, 43, was shot in the neck on Tuesday by an unknown assailant with a shotgun while stopped at a Miri intersection in his white pick-up truck. Kayong had stood for election, unsuccessfully, as a PKR candidate in last month's Sarawak state election. He was found slumped in his Toyota truck, which still bore the PKR election logo. He will be buried tomorrow. His death sent shockwaves through the state, with the Malaysian federal police swiftly forming a special task force to find the killer. Kayong, a father of two, was well-known for championing issues related to native customary land. As the secretary of Sarawak Dayak

Association (Pedas), he had often fought for longhouse residents faced with land encroachment by timber and plantation firms.

READ MORE

<http://www.todayonline.com/world/asia/defending-indigenous-people-may-have-led-activists-death-pkr>

BLD to expand oil palm estate in Sarawak to 32,200ha

BLD Plantation Bhd will expand the company's oil palm estate area in Sarawak by more than 12% to 32,200ha following the completion of the proposed acquisition of Pekan Semangat Sdn Bhd for RM155.22mil cash. Pekan Semangat's 70%-owned subsidiary Agrogreen Ventures Sdn Bhd owns about 5,000ha of oil palm plantation in Stungkor, Lundu district in southern Sarawak. The trees have ages between one and five years. Agrogreen Ventures owns two parcels of land in Stungkor measuring a total of 5,442ha. BLD has oil palm estates, mostly in Sibu and Miri divisions, totalling 28,700ha as of end-2015 with 91% of the trees in the maturity stage. Executive chairman Datuk Henry Lau Lee Kong said BLD's consultants were currently conducting a due diligence exercise on the proposed acquisition. "Hopefully, the proposed acquisition will be completed by mid-August," he said after the company's AGM. BLD would be buying Pekan Semangat from Loi Heng Sewn, Lau Yong Lee, Albert Hong Hin Kay and Dr Ngoi Sing Shang.

READ MORE

<http://www.thestar.com.my/business/business-news/2016/06/17/bld-to-expand-oil-palm-estate-in-sarawak-to-32200ha/>

Probe timber firms hiring thugs: NGOs

Twelve indigenous people's organisations urged the police to investigate parties involved in land rights dispute which led to the assassination of PKR politician Bill Kayong. Condemning the killing, the organisations called for investigation specifically on companies they claimed to have employed thugs in the guise of security personnel to look after their plantation estates. The group said in a joint statement issued that they were extremely shocked, angered and saddened by his untimely demise. The 43-year-old Miri PKR branch secretary was reportedly shot Tuesday morning at the traffic light next to eMart, Senadin. The late Kayong was an activist and politician who was very vocal on indigenous land rights issues in Sarawak. He was the special assistant to the MP of Miri, Dr Michael Teo and Secretary General of Persatuan Dayak Miri (Pedas). During the last State Elections, he stood as a Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) candidate for the N71 Bekenu State constituency but lost. He was also very active in Malaysia's Bersih movement. "We condemn such heinous crime and urge the police to investigate thoroughly and expediently to bring the assassin and whoever ordered the assassination to justice. This is not the first time that this sort of crime has happened in Miri City," the group stated.

READ MORE

<http://www.dailyexpress.com.my/news.cfm?NewsID=110806>

INDONESIA

Indonesia's Palm Oil Moratorium Includes Existing Concessions

Several days ago we reported that Indonesia plans to issue a five-year moratorium on new palm oil plantation concessions in August 2016 through a presidential regulation. This moratorium aims to safeguard a healthy and sustainable environment and may also aim at reducing global criticism on Indonesia's weak governance after the devastating forest fires on Kalimantan and Sumatra as well as the spread of toxic haze to other parts of Southeast Asia between June and October 2015. A government official now says the moratorium also covers existing concessions.

READ MORE

<http://www.indonesia-investments.com/news/todays-headlines/indonesia-s-palm-oil-moratorium-includes-existing-concessions/item7017>

Criteria Set For Oil Palm Moratorium

According to a Kontan news article yesterday, Indonesia's Ministry of the Environment and Forestry (KLHK) has identified as much as 3.5 million hectares (ha) of plantation land which will be included in a moratorium on oil palm expansion. Of this number, approximately 950,000 ha are said to have been revoked by the authorities.

The moratorium would reportedly apply on:

- 1) Plantation land that had been left undeveloped/idle
- 2) Converted forest land that had illegally been classified or exchanged for oil palm planting
- 3) Plantation land that had been illegally transferred from an original licence holder
- 4) Plantation land located within areas classified as forest
- 5) Plantation permits that were given on land with still-productive forest cover

READ MORE

https://www.dbs.com/aics/templatedata/article/generic/data/en/GR/072016/160719_insights_criteria_set_for_oil_palm_moratorium.xml

Indonesia declares national park in top palm oil-producing province

A wildlife reserve and surrounding areas on Indonesia's main western island of Sumatra were declared the country's newest national park on Friday, part of the festivities for World Environment Day. Zamrud National Park is located in the Siak district of Riau province, whose vast peat swamp zones have been widely drained and dried for oil palm and pulpwood production, creating the conditions for the annual fires that envelop the region in a toxic haze.

During September and October last year, the fires released more carbon than the entire EU. The peat-rich Zamrud spans 31,480 hectares and is home to two major lakes — Pulau Besar Lake and Bawah Lake — and to 38 kinds of bird, including 12 protected species, [according to government data](#). Rare mammals like the Sumatran tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*) and sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*) also live there.

READ MORE

<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/07/indonesia-declares-national-park-in-top-palm-oil-producing-province/>

Ecological impacts of palm oil expansion in Indonesia

Palm oil is the most widely used vegetable oil in the world and is a major feedstock for biodiesel and renewable diesel globally. Indonesia is the world's leading producer of palm oil, supplying approximately half of the commodity worldwide, and is itself driving increased palm oil consumption through a domestic biofuel policy. While the oil palm is a highly efficient crop, there are severe environmental and social consequences of this rapidly expanding industry. New palm oil plantations often replace forests in Indonesia, including carbon-rich peatland that is home to the native orangutan. Highly biodiverse tropical forests in Indonesia are being destroyed at a faster pace than in Brazil and other regions in the world. More than 60% of Indonesian rainforest species are endemic to that region – iconic species such as the orangutan are replaced with rats and other pests when native forest is converted to oil palm plantations. Deforestation drives climate change through the release of carbon when trees and other plants are cut down. In particular, the drainage of peat soils in Indonesia for palm establishment is associated with massive greenhouse gas emissions. Because of the extensive emissions associated with palm oil expansion, the carbon savings are far outweighed by the losses. Deforestation and peat drainage also lead to wildfires, resulting in hazardous air quality for residents of Indonesia and nearby countries. Fertilizers, pesticides, and palm oil processing wastes cause water pollution. In addition, traditional landowners and indigenous peoples may suffer human rights abuses from the palm oil industry.

READ MORE

<http://www.theicct.org/ecological-impacts-of-palm-oil-expansion-indonesia>

RI's outermost islands sinking under palm oil expansion

Indonesia's outer islands that have peatlands are at risk of sinking due to the aggressive expansion of palm oil plantations. This has prompted the government to try and restore the damaged peatland areas on the islands.

The Peatland Restoration Agency (BRG), tasked with restoring damaged peatland for the next five years, said the country's outer islands were on the agency's list of priority areas to be restored.

In Riau Islands, there are some islands, listed as outer islands, that have peatlands such as Tebing Tinggi, Bengkalis and Rangsang, according to BRG planning and cooperation deputy head Budi Wardhana. “We know that palm oil expansion has been massive. Therefore, the islands that I mentioned are at risk. Bengkalis Island, for instance, is supposed to have 65 percent of its area protected, but there are so many palm oil plantations there, whether concessions or managed by local people on a small scale,” he said.

READ MORE

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/06/22/ri-s-outermost-islands-sinking-under-palm-oil-expansion.html>

Backwards from gender equality: Oil palm’s impact on Dayak women

[Indonesia](#) has witnessed massive changes in her lifetime, as waves of migration, logging and oil palm development have transformed Indonesian Borneo. Now 65 years old, the Dayak woman settled in Long Segar in East Kalimantan when she was a child. “My younger siblings and I were carried in a big basket when we were moving here,” she says. “We traveled by boat ... then walked along the river to reach this place.” Then, it was tropical forest. There were no roads, and it was two days by longboat from the provincial capital, Samarinda. Pe Ligit’s father cleared some land to plant rice, built their house, and helped establish a community. They lived from agriculture — and from the forest, where they hunted and fished, and gathered rattan and bamboo. Long Segar hadn’t changed much by 1979 when anthropologist Carol Colfer, now a Senior Associate at the [Center for International Forestry Research \(CIFOR\)](#), first arrived in the community to research interactions between people and forests in Kalimantan. One of the first things she noticed was the relationship between men and women — it was much more egalitarian than parts of North America at the same time.

READ MORE

<http://blog.cifor.org/42181/backwards-from-gender-equality-oil-palms-impact-on-dayak-women?fnl=en>

Indonesia: Tribe attacked in palm oil plantation

Members of the nomadic Orang Rimba tribe in [Indonesia](#) have been attacked and their possessions burned as part of an eviction from a palm oil plantation on their ancestral land. [The Orang Rimba](#) are a nomadic hunter-gatherer tribe who have been dependent on and managed their forest home in Sumatra for generations. Although a [national park was created](#) to protect local wildlife and – unprecedented in Indonesia – the tribe, the Indonesian government has signed over most of their ancestral lands to palm oil, timber and other plantation companies. As a result many Orang Rimba are forced to live in plantations, collecting palm oil seeds and hunting wild boar. For collecting the seeds, the tribe have been accused of theft by the company operating in the area, even though the oil palm is on Orang Rimba ancestral land and the tribe do not regard such foraging as theft. One Orang Rimba man said: “That is our ancestral land. Our life and death are in that land. How can it be that we are forbidden? It’s forbidden for children to take the seeds which

have fallen from the palm oil trees. How can it be forbidden? They planted palm oil trees all over our land.”

READ MORE

<http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/11340>

PepsiCo products in Indonesia tainted with worker abuses, report finds

An investigation into two Sumatran plantations operated by Indonesian food giant Indofood, a joint venture partner with Pepsi Co, has found evidence of numerous human rights abuses including the use of child labor. The [report](#) released earlier this month, titled *The Human Cost of Conflict Palm Oil*, alleges that investigators from two Indonesian NGOs — the Rainforest Action Network (RAN) and labor group OPPUK — along with the International Labor Rights Forum, found that child labor, exposure to hazardous chemicals, below minimum-wage payments, a reliance on temporary workers and the use of company-backed unions were all employed by the plantations. “Simply put, this report reveals that Indofood is violating the fundamental rights of workers on its palm oil plantations, as PepsiCo watches on. Both companies must act without delay to address the egregious worker exploitation exposed on Indofood’s plantations,” Robin Averbeck, senior campaigner with RAN, said in a statement.

READ MORE

<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/06/pepsico-products-tainted-with-worker-abuses-in-indonesia-report-finds/>

Exploitation, child labor found in Indonesia palm oil linked to PepsiCo: charities

Food and beverage giant PepsiCo's affiliate in Indonesia has been linked to child labor, worker exploitation, unethically low wages and hazardous working conditions, activists said. A two-month investigation found "a disturbing system of abuse" on palm oil plantations run by a subsidiary of food manufacturer Indofood, which produces PepsiCo's snacks in Indonesia under a joint venture partnership. The report, based on interviews last year with 41 workers at two plantations on the island of Sumatra, was jointly released by San Francisco-based Rainforest Action Network (RAN), Indonesian labor rights group OPPUK and Washington-based International Labor Rights Forum. "PepsiCo must require that Indofood work rapidly to investigate and address the labor violations outlined in this report," RAN spokeswoman Emma Lierley told Thomson Reuters Foundation in an email. PepsiCo said its chief executive had written to Indofood in the light of the findings detailed in the report.

READ MORE

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-palmoil-rights-idUSKCN0Z11V8>

Fires begin to appear en masse as Indonesia's burning season gets going

Satellites on Wednesday recorded 145 fire-linked hotspots over Indonesia's main western island of Sumatra, down from 245 on Sunday, according to the country's disaster management agency. It's a far cry from last year's crisis, when thousands of forest and peatland fires raged across the archipelagic country during the extended dry season brought on by El Nino, sending toxic haze pollution billowing across the region. But the uptick in hotspots signaled this year's burning season may already be getting underway. The province with the most hotspots on Wednesday, with 64, was Riau, whose vast peat swamp zones have been widely drained for palm oil and pulpwood production. The dried peat is highly flammable, and fires set by planters to clear land cheaply often spread out of control.

READ MORE

<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/07/fires-crop-up-in-sumatra-as-burning-season-gets-going/>

Orangutan Green Team guides buying land to protect Borneo's wildlife from palm oil threat

A small group of Indonesian tour guides are buying up forest lands in a bid to protect wildlife, including sun bears and orangutans, in the world's top palm oil-producing country. With the help of money from tourists, the 28 local guides, known as the Orangutan Green Team, are buying land along the river opposite Kalimantan's Tanjung Puting National Park, in the heart of Borneo. Leaving the port at Kumai, tourists board their traditional river boat or klotok, gliding through the wide river before turning down narrower dark brown river through the national park.

READ MORE

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-07-24/indonesia-orangutan-conservation-river-guides/7652966>

Riau Police drops probe into 11 firms linked to forest fires

Riau Police reportedly have dropped investigations into 11 companies allegedly involved in forest fires in 2015, underlining the poor law enforcement of last year's catastrophe that claimed five lives. The 11 companies were among 18 accused of having been involved in the fires. While two other companies have seen their cases brought to court, six other companies are still being investigated. Following the termination of the 11 investigations, the Riau Forest Rescue Network (Jikalahari) environmental group has called for the dismissal of the Riau Police chief. Jikalahari coordinator Woro Supartinah said a termination of investigation (SP3) on the cases was issued in January. But, it was only unveiled recently when some environmental activists visited Riau Police headquarters seeking an update on the cases.

READ MORE

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/07/20/riau-police-drops-probe-into-11-firms-linked-to-forest-fires.html>

Timber plantation licenses canceled as Mentawai fight off another threat to their traditional lands

It was [reported just last month](#) that the Mentawai peoples, who live on Indonesia's Mentawai Islands about 150 kilometres (93 miles) off the west coast of Sumatra, were facing a new threat to their traditional territories: a company called Biomas Andalan Energi had received a principle approval letter to create timber plantations on a total of 200 square kilometers (77 square miles) of primary rainforest and indigenous lands on the biggest island of the Mentawai archipelago, Siberut. But Indonesian authorities have now cancelled the licenses altogether, citing problems with the environmental impact assessment prepared by Biomas Andalan Energi, the [Rainforest Foundation Norway \(RFN\) reports](#). By the time that decision was handed down, RFN adds, the initial permit had expired, making it impossible for the company to obtain the necessary permits to start operating. Student protests reportedly helped add to the pressure on Indonesian officials to cancel the timber licenses. Mentawai students held demonstrations in opposition to the timber company's plans in order to show that they would not accept the destruction of their forests or the leasing of their ancestral lands.

READ MORE

<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/07/timber-plantation-licenses-canceled-as-mentawai-fight-off-another-threat-to-their-traditional-lands/>

THAILAND

Thailand: Women Human Rights Defenders and Villagers Oppose Coal Mining and Demand Climate Justice

This statement originates from the solidarity activity held at Ban Haeng, Lampang on June 9, 2016 organized by Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), Protection International (PI) and Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) which was attended by more than 100 villagers, the community-based Rak Ban Heng organisation and human rights defenders from nine (9) countries[1]. WE, the undersigned members of Asia Pacific civil society, representing different constituencies, movements and organisations, express our solidarity with the Ban Haeng community opposing the coal mine in Tambon Ban Haeng, Ngao District, Lampang and condemn the threats and harassment committed against the villagers and community organisers in the area. Since 2010, the community members of Ban Haeng have been vocal in their opposition to the proposed coal mining project in their area. In the absence of due process and genuine community consultation, the people living and farming the area have organized into the Rak Ban Heng

Conservation Group. The group aims to ensure the conservation of the forests, natural resources, the environment, community and traditional culture and values. The community is steadfast in opposing the lignite mining because of the destructive nature of the project which is expected to have a huge impact on the health and livelihood of the community.

READ MORE

<http://iva.aippnet.org/thailand-women-human-rights-defenders-and-villagers-oppose-coal-mining-and-demand-climate-justice/>

After violent struggle for land, Thai campaigners face challenge to community farming

In Klong Sai Pattana, a rural community carved out of an illegal oil palm plantation by land rights campaigners, new arrivals are given a one-year trial run at being farmers. If the newcomers pass the year-long test in organic farming and sustainable development, they are permitted to stay. If not, they move on and their plot in Surat Thani province in southern Thailand is passed on to the next applicant in line. Klong Sai Pattana's leaders say the rules - honed over two decades of violent struggle for land and shaped by land rights movements from countries including Mexico and Brazil, to India and Indonesia - are essential to preserving harmony. They argue a government push to evict them - and to redistribute to outsiders the state-owned land that they fought for - could result in a failed community. "It's not as if we can live with 'random' people. What if bad elements come in? The people live here together through order and discipline," Prateep Rakangthong, a 61-year-old leader of Klong Sai Pattana, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Villagers who can't accept and live with this order can't live with us," Rakangthong said.

READ MORE

<http://news.trust.org/item/20160726010151-asmvw/>

Thai land rights campaigners' most powerful weapon? Access to information

A long a mud road deep inside oil palm and rubber plantations in the southern Thai province of Surat Thani, handwritten signs tag grim evidence of a struggle for land that began two decades ago, and then turned violent and deadly. One sign points to the area illegally used by a palm oil company. In a grove of banana trees, a sign for "bunker" indicates a low, palm-leaf camouflaged mud hut built six years ago for women and children to sleep in while men patrolled forests ringing with gunfire. Further on is a ruined, one-room shack with bamboo floors and rusted roofing, marked as the home of Somporn Pattaphum, born 1957, died 2010. Somporn was the first of four people from Klong Sai Pattana who were killed by unidentified gunmen. "He was sitting at this house next door when he was shot," said Khuan Panmuang, a fellow land rights defender from a

nearby village. "They keep his home in case his children want to join them here." These landmarks are just some of the evidence collected by villagers since Thailand's 1997 constitution granted the right to access official information - for the first time allowing people to demand documentation for murky land deals across the country.

READ MORE

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-thailand-landrights-idUSKCN0ZU00U>

Thailand reaffirms Dawei plans, but does Myanmar?

"The governments of Thailand and Myanmar reaffirmed that the Dawei megaproject will create thousands of jobs and improve the livelihoods of people along the border," according to Thailand's caretaker Prime Minister Gen Prayuth Chan-ocha. Prayuth was speaking at a joint press conference in Bangkok on Friday. Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi also addressed reporters, but made no mention of her administration's commitment to the Dawei Special Economic Zone (SEZ) or other mutual business or trade interests. The pair also declined to take questions after the press briefing. Perhaps Suu Kyi's silence speaks louder than the Thai leader's enthusiasm for the beleaguered industrial zone, which is slated to be built on Myanmar's western coast. While the Thai business sector is anxiously looking for signals from the new Myanmar government that it backs the project, Suu Kyi may be taking her time to assess the deal, as well as several other controversial contracts granted to foreign investors by her predecessors in power. Uncertainty surrounds the Dawei SEZ. A key foreign economic advisor to Suu Kyi's government has expressed skepticism over the controversial project.

READ MORE

<http://www.mizzima.com/business-opinion/thailand-reaffirms-dawei-plans-does-myanmar#sthash.gv2pFJHb.dpuf>

CAMBODIA

NGO Releases its Report on Land Concessions

More than 150 companies operating in 18 provinces have been involved in Economic Land Concession-related conflicts since ELCs were established more than 20 years ago, according to an annual report by the NGO Forum on Cambodia, which was questioned by a government official. Only 42 of the 158 companies have resolved their conflicts, which affected 35,604 families, the 33-page report said. By the end of last year, an additional 50 companies were said to have partly resolved conflicts. The 158 companies represent an overwhelming majority of the 267 that were granted ELCs by the government between 1995 and 2011, when the practice of issuing ELCs was discontinued by a sub-decree. The total land-area granted as ELCs throughout Cambodia was 1,532,783.65 hectares. The province with the most ELCs is Kratie, with 54 companies being granted 277,600.44 hectares of land there. Kampong Thom and Monduliri provinces each have

28 ELCs covering 101,108.71 hectares and 177,745.13 hectares of land respectively. The NGO Forum reported that 72 ELCs were found to be overlapping protected areas including protected forests in 2010. The Beng Per Wildlife Sanctuary had the highest number of ELCs – 13 – overlapping it in that year, while the Phnum Prech Wildlife Sanctuary had the highest rate of coverage by ELCs, with nearly 35 percent of the protected area's total given to land concessions.

READ MORE

<http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/26633/ngo-releases-its-report-on-land-concessions/>

Cambodia: Suspended sentences and release of land rights activists Sim Somnang, Tri Sovikea and San Mala

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources, including the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) and the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO), about the suspended sentences and subsequent release of Messrs. Sim Somnang, Tri Sovikea, and San Mala, members of the organisation Mother Nature, a local environmental group known for its efforts to stop illegal sand dredging and the construction of a hydropower dam in Koh Kong Province. According to the information received, on July 1, 2016, Judge Min Meakra of the Koh Kong Provincial Court convicted Messrs. Try Sovikea, Sun Mala and Sim Samnang with “threatening to cause destruction, defacement or damage followed by an order” under Articles 28 and 424 of the Criminal Code. These charges were brought after the three environmental activists were arrested last year amid an ongoing campaign to end alleged illegal sand dredging in Koh Kong (see background information). Messrs. Try Sovikea, Sun Mala and Sim Samnang were sentenced to 18 months’ imprisonment and the payment of a two million riel (about US\$500) fine as well as a 100 million riel (about \$25,000) compensation payment to the sand dredging company Direct Access. The company had initially brought a criminal complaint against the three¹[1]. As their 10 months and 15 days’ pre-trial detention was considered time served and the remainder of the sentence was suspended, the three were released in the afternoon of July 1.

READ MORE

<http://www.omct.org/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/cambodia/2016/07/d23834/>

LAOS

Laos Bans New Mining Projects in a Polluted Province

Lao prime minister Thongloun Sisoulith has ordered officials in a heavily-polluted southern province of the country to reject proposals for new mining projects in their area, citing severe damage already caused to the local environment, sources in the country said. Speaking on June 16 at a top-level meeting of officials in southeastern Laos' Attapeu province, Thongloun said the government has decided not to approve new applications to operate mines that have turned water in the region "muddy and polluted." "In particular, many applicants will submit proposals to you to allow them to excavate gold along the Xekaman river, but this has caused muddy and polluted water throughout the year," Thongloun said, according to a posting on the Attapeu province Facebook page. "Attapeu province has had enough!" Thongloun said. "Do not submit new proposals to the government for surveying for new mines," he said. Two large mines already approved to operate as concessions in Attapeu—one run by a Vietnamese military company and the other by a Chinese firm—can continue their work, "but must be closely monitored," Thongloun said. Speaking on June 27 to RFA's Lao Service, a Lao villager living near the Xekaman river in Attapeu's Phouvong district said that he and others living in the area "no longer dare to use the river because of chemical substances found in the water." "Last year, children swimming in the river developed rashes on their skin. And now people won't collect vegetables and mushrooms growing along the river's banks," the villager said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

READ MORE

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/projects-06272016135647.html>

MYANMAR

Myanmar: Statement from seminar on "Community Action for Mining and Customary Land Rights"

A seminar on Community Action for Mining and Customary Land Rights was held during June 20th to 22nd, 2016 with participants from Kachin, Kuki, Karen, Karenni, Chin, Taarng, Mon, Arakan and Shan ethnicities from different States and Divisions. (69) participants from (35) organizations from campaign groups against large-scale mining, farmer networks and community based organizations attending this seminar discussing the negative impacts of mining and analyzing strategies from other countries. One of the results from this seminar was the formation of the Myanmar Mining Watch Network (MMWN) who are issuing the following statement about mining;

1. The current concessions on mining and the new mining concessions must all be suspended.
2. There must be justice applied to solve the problem for those who have lost the lives and been injured because of mining.
3. There must be an independent investigation into current mining in different areas.

4. There must be compensation for the lost lands and homes, as well as for life insurance. Besides this, there must be livelihood, health care and education assistance for persons displaced because of mining.
5. With regards to mining, the State Governments within the Federal Union system must have the right to receive benefits from mining, as well as the rights to manage and make decisions about any mining activities.
6. The recommendations made by local communities must be recognized and followed.

READ MORE

<http://iva.aippnet.org/myanmar-statement-from-seminar-on-community-action-for-mining-and-customary-land-rights/>

INDIA

States rejected 8 out of every 10 claims for land by tribals last year

Eight out of 10 claims for land title by forest dwellers under the Forest Rights Act were rejected last year, tribal affairs ministry data shows. The Opposition is at the crosshairs with Centre in Rajya Sabha over passage of the Compensatory Afforestation Bill, which critics say will further undercut tribal rights and harm environment by introducing government plantations in areas traditionally used by tribal communities. The Forest Rights Act (FRA), in force since 2006, was intended to “undo the historic injustice” towards tribals by giving them legal titles to forestland and resources. A 2015 study by Rights and Resources Initiative, an international coalition working for Indigenous Peoples’ rights, estimated that tribal people have legal title less than 10 per cent of the land they have traditionally used. Individuals and communities can file title claims before the gram sabha under FRA. These are approved by a sub-divisional committee and finally by a divisional committee at the district level.

READ MORE

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/states-rejected-8-out-of-every-10-claims-for-land-by-tribals-last-year/story-XQPbGCTCWvJHhj1ZMpzvPM.html>

When Land Is Lost, Do We Eat Coal?: Coal Mining and Violations of Adivasi Rights in India

Mining operations by India’s state-owned Coal India Limited, the world’s largest coal producer, are shutting out indigenous Adivasi communities from decisions that affect their lives, Amnesty International India said in a new report published today. The report, *“When Land Is Lost, Do We Eat Coal?”: Coal Mining and Violations of Adivasi Rights in India*, traces how Coal India subsidiaries, central government ministries and state government authorities in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha failed to ensure meaningful consultation with Adivasi communities on land

acquisition, rehabilitation and resettlement, and the environmental impacts of mines, seriously affecting their lives and livelihoods. "The government plans to nearly double coal production by 2020, and Coal India wants to produce a billion tons of coal every year. Yet both the company and central and state governments don't seem to care to speak or listen to vulnerable Adivasi communities whose lands are acquired and forests destroyed for coal mining," said Aakar Patel, Executive Director of Amnesty International India. "Abusive laws, poor enforcement of existing safeguards, and corporate neglect of human rights are now leading Adivasi communities to oppose the expansion of the very mines they once thought would bring employment and prosperity, until they receive remedy for violations."

READ MORE

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/research/reports/when-land-is-lost-do-we-eat-coal-coal-mining-and-violations-of-ativasi-rights-in-india>

India's coal mining ambition hurts indigenous group, Amnesty says

India's drive to ramp up coal output to meet growing energy needs has resulted in members of the Adivasi tribe being displaced from their ancestral lands and forced to wait years to be resettled, Amnesty International said on Wednesday. The global human rights group said the Adivasi had suffered disproportionately from India's push for coal. One in six of the 87,000 Indians who have been displaced over the past 40 years by state-owned Coal India Ltd (CIL) is Adivasi, Amnesty said. Laws to protect vulnerable communities such as indigenous groups are poorly implemented and regularly flouted, it said. "Adivasi communities, who traditionally have strong links to land and forests, have suffered disproportionately from development-induced displacement and environmental destruction in India," Amnesty said in a report. "The domestic Indian legal framework does not fully recognize the rights of indigenous peoples," it said. Coal accounts for more than 60 percent of India's electricity capacity, and the government plans to nearly double annual coal output by 2020, opening a new mine nearly every month. Many of India's coal reserves are located in the central and eastern states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha where more than a quarter of the country's Adivasi population lives. "Coal is essential for our national security and we have to go where the coal is," said N. Das, a chief general manager at Coal India, the country's top coal producer. "We follow all the laws, work closely with the local communities, provide jobs, set up welfare initiatives and take steps to minimize the environmental impact of mining," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

READ MORE

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-coal-displacement-idUSKCN0ZT0YC>

The mine that displaced India's indigenous people

About 400 Adivasi families once lived near the Chaal coal mine but were forced out by blasting and water contamination. The earth-shattering sound of dynamite welcomed us to the small village of Lath, which sits on the edge of an open-cast coal mine. The 30 or so people gathered around the centre of the village didn't flinch, though, not even the small children. They've become used to the sound of explosives blasting the earth open since India's largest coal producer, South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL), built the mine on their land in 2003. It was hard to believe looking at the layers of black pits that sink deep into the earth that this land used to be rice fields where cows roamed before the trucks transporting coal arrived. Lath village also used to be home to 400 Adivasi families. Adivasis are India's indigenous people, of which there are many different tribes. People in Lath are from the Kavar tribe. We could see signs of Adivasi culture. The older women wear the traditional Indian sarees without a blouse, using only the shawl of the saree to cover their chest. Their arms and faces are often covered in tattoos of tribal patterns, depicting trees, nature, animals - all things they consider sacred.

READ MORE

<http://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/asia/2016/07/displaced-india-indigenous-people-160707062855721.html>

Meghalaya to take up with Centre coal mining resumption issue

The Meghalaya cabinet today approved a proposal made by the Mining and Geology department to exclusively follow up with different ministries of the Centre to ensure that coal mining resumed in the state at the earliest. The cabinet also stressed on the need to prevail upon the NGT (National Green Tribunal) in its July 7 sitting that it (government) is committed to bring coal mining activity under effective regulations with respect to environment, safety and labour.

READ MORE

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/52902837.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Goa govt gets tough with anti-mining protesters

Goa government has asked District Collectors to take stern action against those trying to hamper mining operations in the state. The directive comes in the backdrop of frequent obstructions created in resumption of mining activity by certain sections of people who have been often blocking the roads to disrupt transportation of iron ore. There have been also protests against resumption of mining operations in Goa, where the Supreme Court has lifted a ban on such activities. "Any act of commission or omission done by any member of society to obstruct legal mining operations or transportation or storage thereof are not only to be acted against swiftly but

also sternly. "This is to be done so that law and order is maintained and a signal is sent across the state that such illegal acts of omission and commission shall not be tolerated in future," Director of Mines and Geology Prasanna Acharya said in an order issued to Collectors here on Saturday. It is imperative that in upholding the provisions of law and enforcing the directions of apex court, all organs and instrumentalities of the state work in perfect harmony, he said. The mining industry in Goa has resumed operations after a gap of almost two-and-a-half-years. Acharya maintained that despite the Supreme Court allowing e-auction of ore, incidents have occurred wherein transportation of e-auctioned cargo from Pissurlem mines to Maina jetty had been stopped.

READ MORE

<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-goat-govt-gets-tough-with-anti-mining-protesters-2188486>

United Nations human rights experts urge India to repeal FCRA law

The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act is being [misused](#) by the Indian government to "silence" groups that are critical of the Centre's ways, according to three human rights experts associated with the United Nations, reported PTI. The experts have said the Narendra Modi government should reconsider the legal provision that restricts NGOs from availing foreign funds. This comes a day after the Home Ministry [cancelled](#) the FCRA licence of activist Teesta Setalvad's (pictured above) NGO Sabrang, which handles cases related to the 2002 riots in Gujarat. "We are alarmed that Foreign Contribution Regulation Act provisions are being used more and more to silence organisations involved in advocating civil, political, economic, social, environmental or cultural priorities, which may differ from those backed by the government," they said. The experts – Michel Forst, UN Special Rapporteurs on Human rights defenders, David Kaye, UN Special Rapporteurs on freedom of expression, and Maina Kiai, UN Special Rapporteurs on freedom of association – said the government's crackdown on NGOs with the help of the Act is not in accordance with international norms on human rights.

READ MORE

<http://scroll.in/latest/810099/united-nations-human-rights-experts-urge-india-to-repeal-fcra-acPEPSI>

Law to protect indigenous people a must: U Hazarika

Stressing that the NRC update alone cannot prevent the indigenous people from being reduced to a minority in Assam, former Supreme Court Commissioner Upamanyu Hazarika today asked the State government to bring in a legislation for protecting the land and safeguarding the indigenous people during the coming Assembly session. Cautioning the present State government against complacency on the issue, he said that if the illegal migrants continue to enjoy the hospitality in the form of government schemes, like IAY, free education and healthcare facilities, etc., nothing can stop them from invading deeper. "The present State government has come to power on the promise of securing the identity of indigenous people and it cannot sit idle on this issue. The first

Assembly session of the new government must deal with this issue as top priority," he said addressing the media here.

READ MORE

<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=jul0316/at054>

Vyapam accused and mining baron walks out of jail

Two days after he was granted bail by the Madhya Pradesh High Court, Vyapam scam accused mining baron Sudhir Sharma on Friday walked out of the jail here to an enthusiastic welcome by his supporters. Mr. Sharma was released from the prison at around 4.30 pm, jail superintendent Akhilesh Tomar told PTI. He first visited a Hanuman temple near the prison where his supporters, who had come in 50-odd vehicles, mostly SUVs, burst fire crackers, distributed sweets, and garlanded him. "I am innocent. I have full faith in judiciary. I will get justice," Mr. Sharma told reporters after his release from the prison after nearly two years. To a question, he ruled out possibility of political conspiracy behind his arrest. During his 692-day in jail, he wrote a Hindi book titled 'Aisi hoti Jail', he said, adding he plans to help NGOs that work for jail inmates. The High Court had on June 22 granted him bail in three cases related to the Vyapam (MP Professional Exam Board) scam as other accused in these cases were already out on bail. He had got bail in another Vyapam-related case earlier. The Special Task Force (STF) of MP police- which was probing the massive racket where recruitment examinations for various government posts and educational courses were allegedly rigged - had arrested Mr. Sharma in four cases in July 2014. He is accused of helping at least 12 persons clear the contractual teacher grade II, police constable, platoon commander and forest guards recruitment examinations through illegal means. PTI

READ MORE

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/vyapam-accused-and-mining-baron-walks-out-of-jail/article8770872.ece>

Illegal sand mining going on unchecked says SOG official

A team of Ahmedabad [rural](#) police's special operations group (SOG) raided a mining site at [Gyaspur](#) near the [Sabarmati](#) river, late on Thursday night, after reports emerged of illegal [sand mining](#). The team seized vehicles worth Rs 1.36 crore including 3 earth moving machines, 2 dumpers and 12 tractors with trailers. "We got information that an organized gang was involved in [illegal](#) sand mining in the area and we sent a decoy team. After confirming the information, a police team raided the spot. When police started seizures, locals from nearby villages tried to obstruct police work and we had to ask for additional forces to prevent an untoward incident," said an SOG official.

READ MORE

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/Illegal-sand-mining-going-on-unchecked-says-SOG-official/articleshow/52924798.cms>

Illegal limestone mining: After 5-year probe, BJP MLA's 'relative' booked

After a five-long-year inquiry, the geology and mining department has filed a police complaint against a leaseholder of Sutrapada taluka in Gir Somnath district for allegedly mining limestone worth Rs 5.48 crore illegally. Ravi Mistry, a geological assistant, lodged the complaint with Sutrapada police station late on Thursday evening. In the complaint, Mistry stated that Babu Barad, a resident of Chagiya village mined 1.55 lakh tonne limestone worth Rs5.48 crore illegally in 2011. Barad is said to be a relative of [BJP](#) MLA from Talala, Govind Parmar. The complaint stated that Barad was allotted 1.61 hectare in Alidhra village of Sutrapada in 1982 to mine limestone for 20 years. The said mining site was located in Survey No 34/1. But one Ramji Dodiya, a farmer of nearby Sundrapara village, filed a complaint with the Gujarat Vigilance Commission (GVC) alleging Barad had indulged in illegal mining.

READ MORE

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/illegal-limestone-mining-2874351/>

Govt changes forest rules, allows private cos to set up plantations

Environmentalists are up in arms as the Union environment ministry drops a rule that prevented the government from allowing industrial plantation in naturally forested areas. Environmental experts say this will harm the forests as well as indigenous communities that depend on them for resources. The change was made in the new draft national forest policy 2016, which was released in the public domain last week for public opinion, says the *Hindustan Times*.

READ MORE

<http://www.catchnews.com/national-news/govt-changes-forest-rules-allows-private-cos-to-set-up-plantations-1466822402.html>

Resumption of mining affecting wildlife badly

Since the resumption of [mining](#) activities, leopards and other wild life have been threatened inside the mining belt of [Bicholim](#). Before the mining industry began operations, many areas in Bicholim were the natural habitats for different species of wild animals. With haphazard mining, there has been a gradual destruction and degradation of natural habitats and also corridors that animals use in between connected habitats. Amrut Singh of the Animal rescue squad of Bicholim was speaking to TOI, said, "For the last 3 years, our observations have revealed wild animals like leopards, bison, jungle cats had a new lease of life with the closure of the mining industry. But

now with the resumption of mining industry and transportation, the threat posed to these animals has again returned." A female [leopard](#) with two cubs had been sighted on many occasions in Mayem and surrounding areas. Two months ago, one of the cubs was badly injured while crossing road when it was hit by a motorcycle. Though, the cub was taken to Bondla zoo for treatment, it did not survive for long. A fortnight ago, a jungle cat died on the spot when it was hit by a mining truck in Surla, Bicholim.

READ MORE

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/goa/Resumption-of-mining-affecting-wildlife-badly/articleshow/52858315.cms>

Financing For Indigenous People, Land Reforms And Protection Of Forests And Other Natural Ecosystems in India - Part II

Other than the fact that elections are being conducted it cannot be said that there is Government in India. The upper caste, which constitutes barely 5 to 7% of the population of the country, has hijacked it. In 2015 2 crore Indians travelled abroad, or around 1.6% of the population. If each of these 2 crore people had one crore in cash then this 1.6% of the population would have had command over all the 1.34 crore crores GDP in the country. Obviously this is not quite right. But even if they each only has half a crore each on average, it leaves only 0.7 crore crores for 120 crore people, which is just Rs 56'000 each for everyone else in 2015. If these rest of the people earn Rs 17'000 in the market economy somehow, that means around Rs 39'000 per person for this balance population comes from Government: the Union budget this year was Rs 13525 for every Indian barring those 2 crore who travel abroad. And a typical State budget per person was Rs 25534 in Karnataka in 2016. This explains why the Union budget in 2015-2016 for the NREGA was only 34'000 crores for the country, and why people in rural areas and the majority of the population in cities have suffered a collapse of health and wellbeing. There are no funds for any public expenditure in India. Considering the ecology and environment has also collapsed this is a disaster of unprecedented magnitude. The Green India Mission had promised to spend Rs 46,000 crore for 10 million ha of land to be reforested with NREGA money. But that turned out to be fiction.

READ MORE

<http://www.countercurrents.org/sharan180616.htm>

TIBET

Tibetan Protests in Ngaba Bring Mining to a Halt 'For Now'

Authorities in southwestern China's Sichuan province have called a temporary halt to mining activities near a sacred mountain in the face of continuing Tibetan protests demanding that the work be stopped, according to a local source. Tibetans living in Akhore town in the Ngaba (in Chinese, Aba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture's Chuchen (Jinchuan) county had for weeks blockaded construction of a road they feared would support mining operations in the area. Now, all work related to the project has been "temporarily halted," due probably to the strength of local resistance and coverage of the protests by international media, a Tibetan resident of the area told RFA's Tibetan Service this week. "Appeals by Tibetans in Akhore town to local and central authorities may also have played a role," RFA's source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "In any case, authorities have stopped all mining in the area for now," he said. Tibetans living in the area remain skeptical, though, that the work has been halted for good, he said. "They know very well that the mining project on the sacred mountain near Akhore is a part of China's broader mining plans, and that they can resume mining in the area whenever they choose to do so." and humans and the disruption of sacred sites, experts say.

READ MORE

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/tibet/halt-06222016135947.html>

BANGLADESH

Santal Revolution Day :Land commission for indigenous people demanded

Most of the indigenous people are facing violation from the land related issue. Its all type of issue finished while government will take initiative to establishment of a separate land commission. Speakers told at a day-long programme marking the 161st anniversary of Santal Revolution in Santal village area of Juri Upazila of Moulvibazar district on Sunday. Speakers said, this commission is very important for solving Indigenous problems. Various cultural programmes and a discussion were held to observe the day. Indigenous artistes staged the cultural programmes at their respective areas. Santal Somaj Koyllan Sangstha, a platform of Santal people organised the programme. Kishor Chodhury Moni, vice chairman of Juri Upazila, was present at the discussion as chief guest. Sukram Santal, adviser of Santal Somaj Koyllan Sangstha, Kaliproshad Santal, president of Santal Somaj Koyllan Sangstha spoke at the meeting. Humayun Kabir, Manager of Sunarupa Tea garden, chaired the meeting. Indigenous community leaders expressed the views that they had long been subjected to violation of human rights. They said that indigenous people were still being uprooted from their own land by the other people. Kaliproshad Santal, President, Santal Somaj Kaylan Sangstha said Santal community is poor and they face discrimination in educational institutions, particularly in primary and high schools, alleging that many indigenous children leave Bangalee schools, as they do not get opportunities equal to Bangalees.

READ MORE

<http://businessnews24bd.com/santal-revolution-day-land-commission-for-indigenous-people-demanded/>

Leaving home in fear of torture

Fearing torture and harassment allegedly by forest officials, around 187 Bangladeshi indigenous men, women and children of five villages under Kalenga Reserve Forest in Habiganj tried to cross into India on Saturday early morning. Stopped by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF), the villagers were brought back to Bangladesh after a four-hour-long meeting between BSF and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) members Saturday night. The BSF found the villagers near the Indian Gumsibari border gate-50 Saturday morning, reported our Kolkata correspondent, quoting Indian media. The place is in Khowai district, about 70km east of Indian state of Tripura's capital Agartala.

READ MORE

<http://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/leaving-home-fear-torture-1246321>

Withdraw eviction notice against Khasi people

Indigenous people accompanied by environmentalists formed a human chain in Moulvibazar Press Club area in the district town yesterday demanding cancellation of the eviction notice against Khasi people in Nahar Punjee area of the district. At the programme organised by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon in cooperation with Khasi rights organisation Kuboraj, Khasi Students Union and Bangladesh Garo Students Union, speakers also demanded formation of a separate land commission to protect the land rights of the indigenous peoples living in plain land areas. The indigenous people are being deprived of their rights in different sectors including education and job, they said.

READ MORE

<http://www.thedailystar.net/country/withdraw-eviction-notice-against-khasi-people-1241968>

Fifty Khasi families in uncertainty

Set to lose their homesteads, land for betel leaf cultivation after exchange of adversely possessed land with India

Welsi Amse has always dreamt that her children would become doctors one day. She has been squeezing every penny possible from the meagre earnings from a betel leaf garden at Pallathal Punji in Moulvibazar for the last few years.

But all her dreams have started to fade away after she came to know that her betel leaf garden, her only source of income, would soon be taken away. Now, the 35-year-old woman is worried sick over how she and her five-member family would survive if their land is taken. Around 50 Khasi families living in Pallathal Punji (indigenous neighbourhood) in Moulvibazar's Baralekha upazila would lose their homestead once the exchange of the adversely possessed land, following the signing of the land boundary agreement, start happening. Lukas Bahadur, headman of Pallathal Punji, told this correspondent that around 300 acres of land, where Khasis cultivate betel leaf, would be taken. "Although India is erecting a barbed wire fence on its part along our betel leaf garden, our officials are not doing anything to stop them," he alleged. The betel leaf garden is the lone source of income for the 50 Khasi families comprising around 250 people. The families living at the hillocks in the upazila are passing days amid worry over losing the land they had been living on for centuries. As part of the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement (LBA), Bangladesh will give India 2,777 acres of adversely possessed land and get 2,267 acres in exchange. The land is in the bordering areas of India's Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, and West Bengal states.

READ MORE

<http://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/fifty-khasi-families-uncertainty-789943>

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Claims mining venture failing to address abuses at PNG mine

Human rights groups are accusing an international mining venture in Papua New Guinea of failing to adequately address hundreds of claims of violence against security personnel. They say violence is continuing at the Porgera gold mine, while victims of historic cases of shooting, rape and injury are still demanding justice. The Akali Tange Association says it's had no response to a claim it lodged last September with Barrick Niugini on behalf of 256 victims. The association's executive officer McDiyan Yapari says the cases span more than two decades from 1990 to last year. MCDIYAN YAPARI: Ninety people have been shot dead just for trespassing. Eighty-eight people sustained injuries, either they were injured, tortured or illegally detained at the hands of security personnel. The remainder, 78 of them have been missed out, they were women rape victims who have missed out from the remedy. The remedy was a grievance mechanism introduced by Barrick in 2012 to deal with allegations of violence at the gold mine in Enga Province. The company, a Canadian-Chinese joint venture, says some of the 256 claims were dealt with by the mechanism or by the mine's previous owners. But Catherine Coumans from Mining Watch Canada says the mechanism, was too narrow in scope, as it only covered women raped by Barrick security guards.

READ MORE

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/programmes/datelinepacific/audio/201808428/claims-mining-venture-failing-to-address-abuses-at-png-mine>

ALERT! Mining Threatens Papua New Guinea's Mighty Sepik River with Utter Ruin

Chinese government's massive open-pit mine in the rainy Papua New Guinea highlands, with its tons of toxic tailings full of sulphides and heavy metals, is to be poised above the Sepik River and its primary rainforests, intact local cultures, and the South Pacific Ocean. Apparently Papua New Guinea's urban elites have learned little from decades of foreign industrial mining (and logging) causing conflict and despair, environmental damage, and social and economic decline.

READ MORE

<http://ecointernet.org/2016/07/04/alert-mining-threatens-papua-new-guineas-mighty-sepik-river-with-utter-ruin/>

AUSTRALIA

Federal Court grants native title to Indigenous group

The Federal Court of Australia has formally recognised the Indigenous people of central Queensland as the traditional owners of the land. The Darumbal people filed a native title application for land covering most of central Queensland almost two decades ago — making it one of the longest running claims in the state's history. Today in a special on-country hearing, Federal Court Judge Berneia Collins acknowledged them as the traditional owners. More than 100 people came to watch the hearing. Many cried and hugged each other, while others cheered and clapped at the end of the proceedings. The agreement recognises the Darumbal people's right to hunt, fish, gather, teach and conduct traditional ceremonies on the land. The determination area covers almost 15,000 square kilometres. Warren Malone was one of the people who made the application in 1997, and said the formal recognition was important for his people.

READ MORE

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-06-22/darumbal-native-title--officially-recognised/752946>

Federal election 2016: PM ends 37-year land claim tussle

It has been a long and tortuous 37 year process, but Malcolm Turnbull yesterday marked the final settlement of one of the nation's most complex and protracted indigenous land claims. The Prime Minister, having taken his campaign to the Northern Territory, visited the Cox Peninsula outside of Darwin to formally hand over the Kenbi land title deed to the traditional owners of the land. Met by indigenous dancers upon his arrival, Mr Turnbull slowly walked behind them before taking a seat under a marquee with a view over Darwin Harbour on a beautiful morning in the nation's top end. Mr Turnbull used his address to note it was the 40th anniversary of the Land Rights Act and 50 years since the 1966 Wave Hill Walk-Off triggered movements among Aboriginal people for land rights and representation. He met earlier with the traditional owners — which include Jason, Zoe and Raylene Singh as well as Kathleen Minyingma — who will now see the large parcel of land on the peninsular of more than 60,000ha pass to them under the terms of settlement. "At last we have waited to get a little back," Mr Singh said. "I am very happy after 37 years. We have got our land back."

READ MORE

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/federal-election-2016/federal-election-2016-pm-ends-37year-native-title-tussle/news-story/b18b28a94261064bc14f48d4cda39d5b>

Kenbi owners hope for healing in NT

Now that one of Australia's longest-running and most complicated Aboriginal land claims has finally been settled, a traditional owner hopes the Larrakia people will begin mending the rift dividing the community. Raelene Singh and her family have been recognised by the government as the rightful owners of the Kenbi site on the Cox Peninsula, across the harbour from Darwin, and in a ceremony on Tuesday received the title deeds to the land from Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. "To me it feels joy and a relief to finally get this land handed back and to become finally Aboriginal land," she told AAP. Running since 1979, in April the land claim was finally completed, following two hearings, three Federal Court reviews and two High Court appeals. The final agreement includes 52,000 hectares as land trust land and 13,000 hectares as freehold land which can be used for indigenous business development, with about 1600 Larrakia people to benefit. Some Larrakia people are still very unhappy with the resolution of the claim and do not support Ms Singh's family being designated as traditional owners. As a senior ranger, she said she was looking forward to caring for sacred sites as her ancestors did, and creating more jobs in the community of Belyuen, perhaps starting with an ecotourism venture.

READ MORE

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/a/31883342/kenbi-more-than-about-land-pm/#page1>

LATIN AMERICA

Latin America the world's most dangerous place for environmental activists

More environmentalists were murdered in Latin America in 2015 than anywhere else in the world, with anti-mining causes costing the most lives, a [report by Global Witness shows](#). According to the UK-based organization, which campaigns against natural resource-related conflict and corruption, the region recorded the highest number of conservationist murders —122 out of a total of 185. Brazil took the lion's share with 50 killings, followed by Colombia (26), Peru (12) and Nicaragua (12). Though not located in Latin America, the Philippines ranked second overall in terms of activists' murders, with 33 victims. Conflicts over mining were the number one cause of killings in 2015 (42 cases), the report notes, followed closely by agribusiness (20), logging (15) and hydroelectric projects (15). Numbers are, unfortunately, likely to be much higher given the suppression of monitoring efforts by civil society groups and the media in some of the countries investigated

READ MORE

<http://www.mining.com/latin-america-the-worlds-most-dangerous-place-for-environmental-activists/>

Civil society under attack in Latin America

Civicus, the non-profit organisation 'dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society around the world', has released its annual [Civil Society Watch Report](#). The report documents serious violations of the freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly in 109 countries over the course of 2015, 14 of which are in Latin America. It presents a worrying trend. Despite calls to reverse the widespread closing in on the civil society space, it observes 'more and more states are failing their commitments under international law and reneging on their duty to protect and enable civil society'. This has led to an alarming rise in the number of incidents of harassment, physical violence and targeted assassinations directed at civil society activists across the world – by both state and non-state actors. The report also claims 'an alarmingly high proportion of [Latin American] countries exhibiting grave violations'. The vast majority of these violations concern failures to protect the freedom of association, with individuals and groups associated with Civil Society Organisations (SCOs) frequently subjected harassment, violence and, in several countries, killings.

READ MORE

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/democraciaabierta/piers-purdy/civil-society-under-attack-in-latin-america>

HONDURAS

EU condemns killing of Honduran environmental activist, others

The United Nations and the European Union have condemned the murder of environmental activist Lesbia Yaneth Urquia, killed in Honduras just four months after award-winning environmentalist Berta Cáceres was shot. Both women fought against a giant dam for years, a project that has brought the death of 100 people in five years who oppose it, along with mining, logging and other destructive agricultural projects, human rights groups say. The dam would flood large land areas and cut off water, food and medicine for hundreds of indigenous people. The EU, in a statement, said urgent steps are needed to fight to protect such activists, [BBC reported](#). "The murder of Lesbia Yaneth Urquí adds to the dire list of Human Rights Defenders that were recently murdered in Honduras, including journalist Henry Roberto Reyes Salazar, environmentalist and indigenous leaders Berta Cáceres and Nelson García, and leader of LGBTI community René Martínez, the EU said [in a statement](#). "This killing as well as the climate of violence that continues to prevail over human rights activists in the country is an extremely worrying development," the statement said. The EU said decisive steps should be taken to protect defenders of human rights. That includes the need for impartial investigations that lead to prosecution and indictment, it said, as well as effective protection for other potential victims. Urquia's body was found July 6 on a rubbish dump in Marcala about 100 miles west of the capital, Tegucigalpa. She had reportedly suffered a severe head injury.

READ MORE

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2016/07/10/EU-condemns-killing-of-Honduran-environmental-activist-others/7571468168147/

In the Aftermath of the Murder of Berta Cáceres: Squashing Indigenous Resistance and Discrediting International Observers in Honduras

People who work for human rights, the rights of Indigenous communities, protection of our global environment, and social justice, are demanding justice after the murder of Berta Cáceres. She was killed in early March when gunmen broke into her house and shot her. It is abundantly clear to many Hondurans and international supporters and observers that her killing was political. Cáceres was the charismatic leader of COPINH, an organization begun in 1993 by Lenca communities in Honduras to promote their rights and protect their traditional lands, and to work with other Indigenous and popular organizations.

READ MORE

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/07/12/in-the-aftermath-of-the-murder-of-berta-caceres-squashing-indigenous-resistance-and-discrediting-international-observers-in-honduras/>

Honduran Indigenous Activist Wins Human Rights Award for Struggle Against Corporate Destruction of Land

On June 9, Ana Mirian Romero, a 29-year-old indigenous Lenca woman and mother of five from the department of La Paz, Honduras, was recognized by the European human rights organization Front Line Defenders in a ceremony in Dublin, Ireland. Romero was awarded the organization's annual award for Human Rights Defenders for her work struggling for the recognition of indigenous lands and against the corporate destruction of the environment in Honduras. "Our struggle is going to continue," said Romero in a Skype interview from Dublin. "With this prize, it is something that gives us more force, and something that reinforces our struggle; it gives us more value to continue."

READ MORE

<http://upsidedownworld.org/main/guatemala-archives-33/5643-honduran-indigenous-activist-wins-human-rights-award-for-struggle-against-corporate-destruction-of-land>

BRAZIL

Proposed Amazon dam would fuel land speculation, deforestation, study says

A proposed dam in the heart of the Amazon will lead to a wave of deforestation as remote areas of the world's largest rainforest are opened to agriculture, said a study from Brazilian researchers published on Tuesday. Local businesses with contracts to help build the proposed Tapajos dam complex are likely to use their profits to buy land in the Amazon for soy farming or cattle ranching, said the study published by the Federal University of Western Para in northeastern Brazil. Such land purchases would increase deforestation as developers push into the jungle, also imperiling the land rights of Mundurucu indigenous people who live there, it said. New waterways and other infrastructure created after damming the Tapajos River would make it easier to turn forested land into plantations, said Philip Fearnside, a professor at the National Institute for Amazonian Research and one of the study's authors. "A lot of the land in the Amazon doesn't have a legal title," Fearnside told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "There would be a tremendous windfall for the people who claim that land." Speculators would likely move onto untitled land and cut down trees to stake a claim of ownership, he said. "The social and environmental impacts would be huge." Supporters say rising land values associated with the dam would increase agriculture, creating jobs and boosting exports. With Brazil facing a severe recession, backers of the dam say new investments are needed to boost hydro-electricity production and farming.

READ MORE

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-science-landrights-idUSKCN0ZE2OG>

Brazil land conflicts are reputational risk for food firms - consultancy

Deadly clashes over land in Brazil constitute a reputational risk for multinational companies sourcing food from territories claimed by indigenous people, a UK-based consultancy said. The most recent confrontation began on June 12 when indigenous activists from the Guarani-Kaiowa group set up a camp in Mato Grosso do Sul state, in a push to have their ancestral land claims formally recognised by the government. Two days later, armed farmers attacked the camp, killing one person and seriously wounding six, the National Indian Foundation, a government agency, said. Beef, soy and sugar are some of the products most frequently sourced from disputed lands in Brazil. Firms buying these goods may face negative publicity from campaigners accusing them of backing "land grabs" and "violations of indigenous rights", Verisk Maplecroft senior analyst Katie Micklethwaite said. "Mato Grosso do Sul is an obvious flash point as it has a lot of land that is lacking formal title and it's of interest to international investors," Micklethwaite told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Areas with a rapidly expanding agricultural frontier and a large indigenous population are particularly at risk for land conflicts," she said late on Tuesday. About one third of the territories claimed by Brazil's indigenous people have not been formally allocated to them through official titles, leading to frequent conflicts in some rural areas, she said.

READ MORE

<http://news.trust.org/item/20160629114403-gjoc6/?source=leadCarousel>

Brazilian indigenous land activist killed in conflict with farmers

An indigenous activist was shot dead in southwestern Brazil and at least six others seriously wounded when their camp was attacked by armed farmers, a government agency said. Clodiode Rodrigues de Souza, 26, a member of the Guarani-Kaiowa indigenous group was killed and five other adults and a child were hospitalized in Mato Grosso do Sul state on Tuesday, the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), said. The campaigners had set up a camp in a push to have their ancestral land claims to be formally recognised by the government when they were attacked by about 70 farmers riding motorcycles, trucks and a tractor, witnesses said. Amateur video footage of the confrontation shot from a distance shows activists running for cover as gunshots ring out and fires burn on the green fields of Brazil's agricultural heartland. "The Guarani-Kaiowa have been fighting for decades for the recognition of their traditionally occupied territories," FUNAI said in a statement on Wednesday, adding the Ministry of Justice and national police were investigating the killing. Last month, FUNAI recognised the disputed area as indigenous land but the Guarani-Kaiowa have not received a formal title to the territory about 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the city of Caarapo near the border with Paraguay, local media reported. Some farmers and plantation owners in the state known for its soy, sugar and cattle production are unhappy with the decision to demarcate land for indigenous people. Amnesty International said on Tuesday a small number of Guarani Kaiowa families received a judicial order late last week to leave the contested land in Mato Grosso do Sul.

READ MORE

<http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/international/385218/brazilian-indigenous-land-activist-killed-in-conflict-with-farmers>

Dispute turns deadly as indigenous Brazilians try to 'retake' ancestral land

Jesus de Souza still struggles for breath, despite the assistance of an oxygen tube. He has had two operations after a bullet pierced his intestine. Lying in hospital, the 29-year-old teacher from the Guarani-Kaiowá indigenous community in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul tries to control his emotions as he recalls the day he was shot by local landowners, in an attack that left his brother, Clodiodi, dead, and five others seriously wounded. "Since this happened, I have not shed a single tear," he says. "I won't until I am back in my village." [Tension over land rights](#) between the early inhabitants of the southern part of the state and the European-origin farmers who settled there in the 19th and 20th centuries is boiling over. In a feud that dates back decades, indigenous people seize private property they claim as their ancestral lands and farmers respond with deadly violence.

READ MORE

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/jul/14/dispute-turns-deadly-indigenous-brazilians-ancestral-farmland-guarani-kaiowa>

Brazil: Outrage as Indians' homes bulldozed

A video showing a [tribal community's homes being bulldozed](#), condemning families to live by the side of a major highway, has caused outrage in Brazil. Almost 100 heavily-armed police officers evicted the Apy Ka'y [Guarani community](#), whose ancestral lands have been destroyed for industrial-scale farming. Watch: [Brutal eviction from Apy Ka'y](#). The Indians had been [forced to live by the side of a highway](#) for ten years, during which eight people were run over and killed, and another died from pesticide poisoning. In 2013 the [community re-occupied a small patch](#) of their ancestral land. They have now been evicted from it again, after a judge granted the landowner's request for an eviction order, despite having received appeals from the Guarani, from their allies in Brazil, and from thousands of Survival supporters around the world. The Guarani of Apy Ka'y are now back on the side of the highway. [Another video](#) shows armed police overseeing the eviction of the nine Guarani Kaiowá families. Tribal leader Damiana Cavanha is shown denouncing the eviction, insisting on her people's right to defend their lives, protect their lands and determine their own futures. Watch: [Damiana denounces eviction](#) She said: "We do not accept this. I will stay here, this is my right. We have our rights. It's not only the white people that have rights, the Guarani Kaiowá and the indigenous peoples also have rights. So many of us have died, so many people have been killed by the gunmen... Let us stay here, we have our Tekoha [ancestral land] and I will return to my Tekoha." In June 2016, [ranchers' gunmen attacked](#) another Guarani community at Tey'i Jusu. One man was killed and several others, including a twelve year old boy, severely injured.

READ MORE

<http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/11353>

Olympics: Torch reaches land of tribe facing “genocide”

The [Olympic torch](#) is set to arrive on June 25 in a state where the [Guarani tribe](#) is widely feared to be facing annihilation due to systematic land theft, malnutrition, suicide and violence. The torch’s arrival in Mato Grosso do Sul in the southwest of Brazil comes as part of a nationwide tour before the start of the [Rio de Janeiro Olympics](#) in August. It is set to be carried by Rocleiton Ribeiro Flores, an [indigenous man from the Terena people](#), in the city of Dourados which is close to Guarani territory. Last week, [one Guarani man was killed](#) and several others – including a twelve year old boy – were seriously injured in [an attack by ranchers’ gunmen](#) on Tey’i Jusu community. The previous day, Survival received audio through its [Tribal Voice project](#) documenting a [separate armed attack](#) on Pyelito Kuê community. Elsewhere, another community, Apy Ka’y, is [facing eviction](#) after a land reoccupation in 2013. With the eyes of the world on Brazil, [many campaigners are hoping](#) that the Olympics will raise global awareness of the genocidal violence, slavery and racism that have been inflicted on indigenous Brazilians past and present in the name of “progress” and “civilization.” Over the past few decades, most of the Guarani’s land has been stolen by destructive agribusiness, and they have been [forced to live on roadsides](#) and in overcrowded reservations. Guarani children starve and many of their [leaders have been assassinated](#). Hundreds of Guarani men, women and [children have killed themselves](#) and the Guarani Kaiowá group suffer the highest suicide rate in the world.

READ MORE

<http://www.survivalinternational.org/news/11314>

Brazil human rights defender found drowned in dam

Last week, a human rights defender’s body was found drowned in the hydro-electric dam she spent three years fighting. [Nilce de Souza Magalhães](#) was a fierce opponent of the Usina Hidrelétrica Jirau, a rock-fill dam in north-western Brazil. She was murdered in January 2016 by a man who said he wanted to ‘silence’ her. On 21 June, dam workers found Nilce’s body washed up on the side of the dam’s river bank. Her hands and feet had been tied with ropes and attached to large rocks that kept her body submerged under water for six months.

Brazil is one of the deadliest countries in the world for those who work to defend people’s right to land. Front Line Defenders has documented almost 30 killings of environmental, indigenous, and land rights defenders in Brazil in 2016 alone – Nilce is the 27th. In 2015, Global Witness [ranked](#) Brazil as the deadliest country in the world for environment rights defenders.

READ MORE

PERU

Peru Scrambles to Drive Out Illegal Gold Mining and Save Precious Land

ON THE BORDER OF THE TAMBOPATA RESERVE, Peru — The raid began at dawn. In four small wooden boats, the forest rangers and Peruvian marines, checking and rechecking their automatic weapons, headed silently downriver toward the illegal gold miners. They didn't have to go far. Around the first bend was a ramshackle mining settlement, tarps stretched over tree poles. Soon, the marines were firing into the air, the miners and their families were on the run, and the rangers were moving in with machetes.

READ MORE

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/26/world/americas/peru-illegal-gold-mining-latin-america.html?_r=0

Peru losing its battle against illegal gold mining

Peruvian authorities are losing their battle against an army of illegal gold miners who have carved a toxic path through the country's rainforest, one of the most biologically diverse places on earth. Total forest loss to date along the Santiago River is 8 hectares or the equivalent to 12 soccer fields. According to an in-depth [report by The New York Times](#), a force of marines and rangers sent in the past days to raid the Tambopata reserve, in the country's southern Amazon, has already been outnumbered. And the devastated areas keep growing. Recently [released satellite images](#) show widespread damage along a new area by the Santiago River, equivalent in size to 12 soccer fields. The once pristine waters of the stream have already turned murky brown, partly due to the fact that illegal miners use high-pressure water hoses to dissolve the soil.

READ MORE

<http://www.mining.com/peru-losing-its-battle-against-illegal-gold-mining/>

Deforestation from illegal gold mining spreads to northern Peru

Satellite images [released last week](#) revealed evidence of the first known case of deforestation caused by gold mining in northern Peru. Occurring in Peru's Condorcanqui Province in the Amazonas region, gold mining operations are expanding along the Santiago River, as well as creeping into and displacing neighboring forest. High-resolution images of areas recently

deforested due to mining activity along the Santiago River, indicate that eight hectares (20 acres) of forest has been lost so far — an area the size of 12 soccer fields. These satellite images, published by Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project or MAAP, a project of the Amazon Conservation Association and ACCA-Conservacion Amazonica, show that this deforestation occurred between August 2014 and August 2015. The Regional Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Peruvian Amazon in northern Peru, better known as ORPIAN, claims illegal mining threatens the nearly 70,000 residents of the indigenous Awajun and Wampis communities living in the Santiago region. President of ORPIAN, Edwin Montenegro, [believes](#) illegal mining is on the rise in the region and is not being monitored.

READ MORE

<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/07/deforestation-from-illegal-gold-mining-spreads-to-northern-peru/>

Anti-mining politician freed from jail in Peru slams government

A fiery anti-mining activist and former governor of a gold-rich region in Peru who was freed from jail on Wednesday accused the government of locking him up for two years in order to keep him from power. Gregorio Santos welcomed the Supreme Court's decision to annul an extension of his stay in 'preventive' prison, which prosecutors probing him for corruption said was needed to keep him from fleeing Peru or obstructing their work. Santos, who has no past convictions, never faced trial nor was found guilty of a crime. The investigation is ongoing. "I'm only getting back what should never have been taken from me, my right to defend myself in freedom," Santos told reporters in broadcast comments after his release. Santos, an Andean peasant leader who was elected governor of Cajamarca in 2010 and again in 2014, spearheaded protests that derailed Newmont Mining Corp's plans to expand its operations in the region, one of Peru's poorest and home to the country's biggest gold mine.

READ MORE

<http://www.oann.com/anti-mining-politician-freed-from-jail-in-peru-slams-government/>

Facing controversy, Peruvian palm oil firm seeks sale of its Amazon rainforest holdings

A consortium linked to large-scale destruction of rainforests in the Peruvian Amazon is putting one of its palm oil companies up for sale, reports Forest Peoples Programme. According to a notice posted in *The Jakarta Post*, the Melka Group is planning to sell off its palm oil holdings in public auctions on June 30, July 7 and July 14. The sale is notable because the companies "are highly controversial and subject to numerous challenges and complaints in the Peruvian courts, at the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil and by investment regulators," says Forest Peoples Programme. These include satellite imagery showing the clearance of primary forests, actions by the Peruvian government, and lawsuits by indigenous peoples who claim their land was seized

without their consent. United Cacao — another one of the Melka Group's companies — is also enveloped in controversy over its operations. Marcus Colchester, senior policy advisor at Forest Peoples Programme, says the potential sale follows a pattern of companies selling off controversial assets to avoid sanctions. He terms that practice “trash and run”.

READ MORE

<https://news.mongabay.com/2016/06/facing-controversy-peruvian-palm-oil-firm-seeks-sale-of-its-amazon-rainforest-holdings/>

COLOMBIA

Colombia's six-pillar strategy lays foundations for mining future

TORONTO (miningweekly.com) – Colombia's newly launched six-pillar [mining](#) strategy would boost confidence and investor appeal, said Mines and [Energy](#) Vice-Minister [María-Isabel Ulloa](#) in an interview with [Mining Weekly Online](#). The country's reputation as a [mining](#) jurisdiction had been dented in previous years after a rush of companies invested in concessions, only to face delays and then a moratorium on the processing permits and licences. The first pillar of the strategy was to improve legal certainty. “We've done all of the legal modifications we think are needed and we are concentrating on having more [concrete](#) and stable concepts on how to apply the law,” said Ulloa. The other five pillars included: boosting the country's competitiveness; [building](#) levels of trust between all stakeholders; investing in [infrastructure](#) that would also assist metals and minerals exports; increasing information available for the [mining](#) sector, including geological mapping; and strengthening the ministry. Ulloa stressed that companies operating in [Colombia](#) needed to be transparent with government at both local and national levels, and engage early and often with local communities, especially with indigenous people.

READ MORE

http://www.miningweekly.com/article/colombias-six-pillar-strategy-lays-foundations-for-mining-future-2016-03-12/rep_id:3650

Colombia revokes mining concessions in the moorlands

Colombia's Constitutional Court has passed a resolution to suspend mining in almost two-thirds of the country's strategic mining development areas, scuppering efforts by the government to make the sector a “motor” of the country's economy.

READ MORE

<http://laccanet.com/news/article/1428/lacca/colombia-revokes-mining-concessions-moorlands/>

ARGENTINA

Canadian mining giant Barrick Gold fired whistleblower. Then it spilled cyanide into five rivers

Toronto-based mining giant, [Barrick Gold](#), spilled cyanide solution into five Argentina rivers shortly after firing an engineer who raised serious safety concerns about the mining operation responsible for the contamination. Court documents obtained by *National Observer* allege that Barrick, the largest gold producer in the world, abruptly dismissed senior engineer Raman Autar in 2014 to “escape publication” of critical health, safety and environmental violations he found at the [Veladero mine](#), one of the world's largest gold mines. The allegations are particularly explosive as the cyanide spill — linked to a valve failure and open sluice gate — dumped more than one million litres of the solution into five rivers in Argentina's San Juan province. Barrick would not confirm whether addressing the whistleblower's list of concerns would have prevented the spill. Autar's lawsuit is ongoing and none of the allegations have been proven in court. Toronto-based mining giant, [Barrick Gold](#), spilled cyanide solution into five Argentina rivers shortly after firing an engineer who raised serious safety concerns about the mining operation responsible for the contamination. Court documents obtained by *National Observer* allege that Barrick, the largest gold producer in the world, abruptly dismissed senior engineer Raman Autar in 2014 to “escape publication” of critical health, safety and environmental violations he found at the [Veladero mine](#), one of the world's largest gold mines.

READ MORE

<http://www.nationalobserver.com/2016/06/24/news/canadian-mining-giant-barrick-gold-fired-whistleblower-then-they-spilled-cyanide>

CHILE

In Chile's forests, shadowy rebel groups threaten logging industry

Few moments of relaxation for Chilean logger Nelson Hidalgo were shattered one day last month when 12 armed men piled out of a pick-up truck and demanded he step outside his work-site dining trailer. At rifle-point, the masked men forced Hidalgo and a handful of colleagues to the ground, according to the workers' accounts. Over the next hour, the armed men burned a minibus, an excavator, and other equipment belonging to Nylyumar Forestry -- Hidalgo's employer and a subcontractor for Chilean timber giant Celulosa Arauco. As they left, the men scattered leaflets claiming allegiance to Chile's indigenous Mapuche people, many of whom assert that logging companies are trespassing on their territory and draining the natural resources that are their birthright. No one was injured. But Nylyumar estimates losses that afternoon came to \$600,000, and the company's workers were shaken. "Since then, I've been tense. My muscles are in pain, as if they've been shrinking," the gruff, middle-aged Hidalgo said. Such experiences have been multiplying lately, industry and government data show, and weighing on Chilean logging, the country's second-largest industry after copper mining. Mostly focused on southern Chile, it is the

source of 10 percent of the country's exports. Twenty-five attacks by saboteurs claiming to represent Chile's Mapuche were registered in the first five months of 2016 by forestry subcontractors' union Acoforag. That resulted in an estimated 9 billion pesos (\$13.5 million) in damage, up from 3 billion pesos in all of 2015 and 638 million in 2014, according to the union.

READ MORE

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-chile-logging-idUSKCN0Z80DA>

AFRICA

Africa: Mass Killings, Forced Evictions Threaten Indigenous, Minority Groups to Point of 'Eradication' - Rights Group

Armed conflict and land dispossession has led to the persecution of minority groups and the erosion of cultural heritage. Mass killings, forced evictions and conflicts over land put indigenous and minority groups at risk of being eradicated from their ancestral lands, a human rights group said on Tuesday. From Ethiopia, China and Iraq, the combination of armed conflicts and land dispossession has led to the persecution of minority groups and the erosion of cultural heritage, according to a report by the Minority Rights Group (MRG). Carl Soderbergh, MRG director of policy and communications, said while discrimination against ethnic or religious minorities is not new, the level of targeted abuse is getting worse. "The conflict that's happening in Syria and Iraq right now is leading to the massive displacement of smaller and very ancient religious minorities like the Yazidis and the Sabeen Mandaeans," said Soderbergh, lead author of the 'State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2016' report.

READ MORE

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201607120814.html>

LIBERIA

“Liberia’s Rainforests in Danger”

The embarrassment that Liberia faced as a result of the infamous Private Use Permit (PUP) saga, which saw a substantial amount of the country’s precious forests given out illegally to logging companies by top government officials and community leaders, is on the verge of resurfacing if government goes ahead with its plan to award logging rights to certain concessions, an environmental group has warned. The Sustainable Development Institute (SDI), a global environmental watchdog, says the PUP scandal might just be a tip of the iceberg in relation to the damage caused to the country’s forests if government does not reconsider its decision to award

logging rights to foreign concessionaires. The PUP saga brought the insincerity of Liberian government officials to light. SDI says the country's forests are under renewed threats from what it termed as Conversion Timber/Logging, which the government is on the verge of introducing – and has the potential to destroy the country's remaining rain forests. This will see agricultural concessions, especially oil palm companies such as Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL) and Sime Darby, carrying out logging activities within their concession areas. This will also see the illegal expansion of these companies beyond their controversial limits. At a ceremony over the weekend where the SDI presented a petition to government, SDI disclosed that the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) has developed regulations that would enable large-scale timber extraction in agricultural concession areas for export. SDI believes this will further exacerbate the threats from the oil palm sector.

READ MORE

<http://www.liberianobserver.com/news/%E2%80%9Cliberia%E2%80%99s-rainforests-danger%E2%80%9D>

Liberia's Forest in Danger- International conservationists Alarm

Several international conservationist have alarmed over a proposed plan by the Forestry development Authority (FDA) to develop a regulation to allow for forest destruction or conversion for oil palm and/or rubber plantations. In a communication dated June 30, 2016 address to Mr. Harrison Karnwea, Managing Director of the FDA, a number of international individuals working on forest related issues expressed that the plan by the FDA contradicts the government's pledge to work with the international community to reduce deforestation and forest degradation. "We are, however, deeply concerned that the FDA plans to develop a regulation to allow for forest destruction or conversion for oil palm and/or rubber plantations. We note that this does not only contradict the government's pledge to work with the international community to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, and the restoration of degraded landscapes, it places the future of one of the most viable tract of rainforest in West Africa in danger", stated the communication signed by 50 individuals from different countries.

READ MORE

<http://www.frontpageafricaonline.com/index.php/news/1366-liberia-s-forest-in-danger-international-conservationists-alarm>

LIBERIA: GVL Strongly Rejects SDI's Erroneous Assertion

Golden Veroleum Liberia strongly rejects the suggestion that it had applied for "a permit to allow logging for export in its Concession Area" as suggested in the Front Page Africa article of 11 July 2016 titled "Liberia's Forest in Danger – International conservationists Alarm". At no stage has GVL sought, or proposed, to deforest agreed forest conservation areas for oil palm development. It has stated on several occasions that it will never sell timber from within its concession area for profit.

GVL made a request to the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) on behalf of one community to permit the community to collect logs from an area that had already been agreed for development for oil palm. GVL did this so that, if it is legally possible, the community might extract maximum value from its own land before oil palm development began. The development area had been identified in accordance with strict, internationally agreed guidelines to define what high carbon stock forest is and what may be developed. From the outset, GVL made it clear that it needed full guidance from the FDA on what was legally permissible. Throughout this process, it has shared correspondence between GVL, the FDA, the concerned community and the Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) freely and openly to ensure that it was working completely in accordance with Liberian law and its own No Deforestation policy.

READ MORE

<http://gnnliberia.com/2016/07/11/liberia-gvl-strongly-rejects-sdis-erroneous-assertion/>

UGANDA

Uganda: Kalangala Town Council Surrenders Forest Reserve

Authorities in Kalangala Town Council have finally succumbed to pressure and given part of the degazetted Buggala Central Forest Reserve land to the district leadership. The council chairperson, Mr Stephen Kizza, said the move aims at allowing the district to plan and allocate plots in the reserve to ensure proper expansion of the town. "They (district) are the ones with a land board and we found it important to let them manage the land. We will work closely with them to develop the area," Mr Kizza said in an interview on Monday. During the 9th Parliament, MPs approved the degazettement of 14 urban forest reserves in different town councils including Kalangala to pave way for development. Kalangala District had requested for the degazettement of the entire Buggala Forest Reserve and Kampala Forest Reserve, both located in Kalangala Town Council. However, Parliament only approved the degazettement of only 173 out of the 246 hectares of the Buggala Central Forest Reserve. Kalangala LC5 chairperson Willy Lugoloobi, commended the town council, adding that the district will develop the area into a tourist site. As compensation for the degazetted forest, Kalangala District plans to give National Forestry Authority some 193 hectares on Bunyama Island to plant there a new forest. Buggala Island, the largest out of the 84 islands, covers 29,000 hectares, 10,000 of which were allocated for oil palm trees. In just two years, the island has lost close to 800 hectares of the forest cover to illegal loggers and palm oil growers.

READ MORE

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201606220152.html>

'All we ask is for is our land back': Uganda's Bugala Island farmers

Mariam Nakakeeto listened quietly to the grievances of fellow farmers gathered outside the grounds of a local church on Bugala Island, by the shores of Lake Victoria. Nakakeeto, 35, is one of more than 100 farmers who say they were left landless in 2011 when Ugandan palm oil company Bidco Africa cleared their fields to make way for commercial palm oil agriculture. "I lost 15 acres (six hectares). They just came and started clearing the land without our permission," said Nakakeeto, a mother of six. "We were told the government had sold the land but we have lived here for two decades. We can't just lose our land like this," she added. Farmers on Bugala Island, the second largest in Lake Victoria, are now locked in a legal battle with Bidco, which says it has not been involved in any land transactions. "The Ugandan government was solely responsible for acquiring the land for the project," a company spokesperson told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "This was with the full involvement of all stakeholders and on a willing-buyer, willing-seller basis."

The farmers' case is one of many conflicts over land in the East African country, which lacks a nationwide tenure system, making it difficult to prove ownership. Many people live and work on land for generations but without official titles or documentation they cannot prove tenure.

READ MORE

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-uganda-landrights-palmoil-idUSKCN0Z601S>

ANGOLA

Angolan government selects provinces to plant palm trees

The provinces of Bengo, Benguela, Cabinda, Kwanza Norte and Uige are the areas of Angola selected for palm plantation projects, said the Angolan Agriculture Minister, Afonso Pedro Canga. The minister told Angolan news agency Angop that the ministry had received palm oil investment projects, with at least three firm proposals made so far. "We used to produce a large amount of palm oil," the minister said adding that there were some remaining palm growing areas and even a programme for palm oil production. Alongside these investment, Canga said that Angola had specialised palm research and renovation stations. The minister also said the country was cooperating with institutions from the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. All of these countries are large palm oil producers and there are plans to swap genetic material with Angola to improve palm stock in the country. (macauhub/AO)

READ MORE

<http://www.macauhub.com.mo/en/2016/06/16/angolan-government-selects-provinces-to-plant-palm-trees/>

GABON

Conservation to Compensate Carbon Emission Essential in Gabon

The production of oil palms has been expanding from Southeast Asia to Central Africa. In light of this expansion, a new study conducted by **Duke University** has revealed that conversion of the tropical forests in Africa into monoculture palm plantations can severely affect the emission of climate-warming carbon.

READ MORE

<http://www.azocleantech.com/news.aspx?newsID=23460>

CONGO

Illegal gold trade in Congo still benefiting armed groups, foreign companies

International regulations have failed to prevent foreign firms and armed groups from profiting from illegal gold mining in mineral-rich eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, a [new report by Global Witness](#) shows. According to the UK-based organization, which campaigns against natural resource-related conflict and corruption, up to \$17 million worth of gold produced by Chinese firm Kun Hou Mining went missing during a 12-month period between 2014 and 2015. The document adds that the metal was very likely to have been “smuggled out of Congo into international supply chains.” Illegal gold trade has also benefitted Congo-based armed groups, which made as much as \$25,000 a month in illegal taxes charged to artisanal diggers and received at least two assault rifles and \$4,000 from the company over a two-year period, Global Witness says. [Global regulations](#) in place since the beginning of the decade, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development guidelines on responsible mineral-supply chains and the U.S. Dodd-Frank Act, have been more successful when it comes to limiting illegal trade of the so-called conflict minerals.

READ MORE

<http://www.mining.com/illegal-gold-trade-in-congo-still-benefiting-armed-groups-foreign-companies/>

KENYA

Lessons from Kenya: Why the World Bank must apply the Indigenous Peoples Policy consistently

In 2010, the World Bank approved a \$330 million loan for the *Kenya Electricity Expansion Program*, to increase the capacity of electricity supply and access to electricity in Kenya. The programme, co-financed by the European Investment Bank (EIB), included expansion of existing geothermal production as well as new construction of a 140 megawatt power station — Olkaria IV. In a January statement during the Powering Africa Summit, the [Narasha Community Development Group](#) expressed concerns that over 1,000 people, mostly indigenous Maasai, were directly affected and an estimated 2,000 people indirectly affected by the programme in the Greater Olkaria Geothermal Area. The resettlement process associated with the programme's geothermal power generating component, implemented by the Kenya Electricity Generating Company Ltd. (KenGen), has been beset by problems. In 2014 members and representatives of a Maasai community filed a [complaint](#) with the World Bank's accountability mechanism, the Inspection Panel (IPN). It included concerns that the project affected persons had only agreed to relocate provided they receive the collective title to the land before resettling, however, this has not happened. In addition, the community's land was reduced from 4,200 to 1,700 hectares in the resettlement, and 14 families have still not received housing. Moreover, despite that keeping of livestock serves as an integral component not only of the Maasai economy but also of their identity, the land chosen is not suitable for grazing and no viable alternatives for the resettlement site have been offered. In its July 2015 investigation report, the IPN found that despite the fact that the Maasai communities fit the requirements necessary to trigger the World Bank's Indigenous Peoples Policy, the Bank did not apply the policy because the Maasai are pastoralists. When indigenous peoples are present in or have collective attachment to a World Bank project area, the policy must be applied and certain protections put in place, including the development of an Indigenous Peoples Plan, recognition of traditional land tenure and provisions for benefit sharing. The policy provides that projects must not proceed without first securing "broad community support" from the indigenous peoples.

READ MORE

<http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/2016/06/lessons-from-kenya-why-the-world-bank-must-apply-the-indigenous-peoples-policy-consistently/>

SOUTH AFRICA

Mining must transform relationships

The recent assassination of Wild Coast local community leader and environmental activist Sikhosphi Rhadebe is an example of what can happen if companies disregard the groups and individuals affected by their operations. Rhadebe had for more than a decade opposed an Australian developer's bid to mine titanium on 22km of pristine Wild Coast mineral sand beaches and dunes close to the Xolobeni settlement, as well as plans to build a limited-access freeway. The

mining company — Perth's Mineral Commodities — denies any involvement in Rhadebe's killing, but this has done little to dampen speculation that his activism was in some way to blame for his death. According to the Shared Value Initiative, a global community of leaders who find business opportunities in addressing societal challenges, this is not an isolated incident. An EU-funded atlas of 600 international mining and oil companies published in 2015 identified more than 1,500 ongoing conflicts raging over water, land, spills, pollution, ill-health, relocations, waste, land grabs, floods, and falling water levels.

READ MORE

<http://www.bdlive.co.za/opinion/2016/07/04/mining-must-transform-relationships>

GroundUp Op-Ed: Expropriation Bill could be a turning point in land reform

The Endorois people, a traditional pastoralist community, were removed from their land by the Kenyan government in the 1970s to make way for a national reserve. They were moved to more arid pastures where their cattle died in great numbers. The relocation spelt the end of their prosperity. Forty years later, in 2010, the the African Commission on Human and People's Rights ruled that their expulsion was a violation of their human rights and ordered that the Endorois' land be restored to them. They were also to be compensated. The Endorois decision was one of the first rulings of an international tribunal to find a violation of the "right to development". The Commission found that the Kenyan government's failure to seek the consent of the Endorois people about the use of their land, or compensate them, was a violation of this right. Their eviction was also a violation of less tangible rights, such as the right to health, culture and religion. The ruling also recognised the Endorois as a "community" of people, as well as an indigenous people with a historic attachment to particular land. It recognised that they have property rights over the land they traditionally occupied and used; despite the colonial and Kenyan government denying them formal title over the land. The Endorois case resonates across borders. Not only does South Africa have regional obligations under the African Commission to incorporate the principles into law, the Endorois decision has bolstered the work of our legal practitioners working both with those who do and with those who do not have land in South Africa. On 25 May we celebrated Africa Day and on the same day the South African Parliament passed the Expropriation Bill, two decades after our Bill of Rights authorised more equitable grounds for expropriation.

READ MORE

<http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2016-06-23-groundup-op-ed-expropriation-bill-could-be-a-turning-point-in-land-reform/>

CANADA

Mining companies keep draining Arctic lakes and moving all of their fish

In what's being called a "fishout program," Canada's most remote northern territory has given the go-ahead for a mining company to drain an entire lake and relocate all of its fish. Once mining is done, the company plans to re-flood the lakebed and put the fish back. Though the plan may seem absurd at first blush, it's actually the second time the mining company has relocated fish from a lake in order to expand its open pit Meadowbank gold mine — a practice by mining companies that's become surprisingly common in northern Canada. It's become so normal that the Canadian government drew up guidelines in 2011 for how mining companies should drain lakes and relocate fish. Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd. wants to drain 500,000 cubic metres of water from Phaser Lake in Nunavut, one of Canada's three arctic territories. The lake, a wolf head-shaped body of water with a maximum depth of five metres that's home to a small population of lake trout and round whitefish, would be drained and treated. From there, the water and the fish will be dumped into nearby Wally Lake. The fish relocation would happen before the end of August, if the project gets final approval from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. It's unlikely all the fish will survive the relocation. In the company's previous lake-draining fish relocation, 40 percent of the fish died. And in a January 15 letter, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans warned the company that Wally Lake "may already be at carrying capacity," meaning new fish would have to compete for the same resources as the fish that are already there. That could mean even more dead fish.

READ MORE

<https://news.vice.com/article/a-mining-company-wants-to-drain-this-arctic-lake-in-nunavut-and-re-locate-its-fish>

Historic agreement reached between KDFN and YG

Kwanlin Dün First Nation citizens will soon be able to obtain mortgages to develop on their land, and home improvement loans, without surrendering aboriginal rights and title. Kwanlin Dün First Nation citizens will soon be able to obtain mortgages to develop on their land, and home improvement loans, without surrendering aboriginal rights and title. The agreement between the Kwanlin Dün First Nation government and the Yukon government allows the First Nation to register its land at the Land Titles Office, an option not previously available for settlement lands in the territory. This "landmark regulation," as Kwanlin Dün Chief Doris Bill called it, is the first of its kind in Canada, and it paves the way for other Yukon First Nation governments to get financing to lease and build on their land while retaining aboriginal rights and title. Premier Darrell Pasloski, Bill, and Justice Minister Brad Cathers announced the enactment of the Land Titles Act, 2015 at Kwanlin Dün First Nation council chambers Tuesday afternoon. "The road to today has been challenging and costly, but Kwanlin Dün needed a registry to ensure our citizens have opportunities to build homes and to enable residential and commercial leasing to generate revenue for present and future generations," said Bill.

READ MORE

<http://www.whitehorsestar.com/News/historic-agreement-reached-between-kdfn-and-yg>

How a controversial dam tramples on rights of Canada's indigenous Innu people

Controversial hydroelectric dam project in sub-Arctic Canada relies on local Innu people giving up their own lands. Thought only developing countries trampled on indigenous rights like this? Think again. Nalcor Energy, the firm building two dams to produce the [Muskrat Falls hydroelectric project](#) in Labrador, along Canada's north-eastern coast, talks enthusiastically about "boundless energy". And why not? Hydroelectric power is seen as a renewable and relatively benign way to meet the ever-growing energy needs of industrialised societies. Nalcor, owned by its provincial government, boasts that its project will "significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions – equivalent to taking 3.2m vehicles off the road each year".

READ MORE

<https://www.rawstory.com/2016/07/how-a-controversial-dam-tramples-on-rights-of-canadas-indigenous-innu-people/>

Canada Day: Indigenous Peoples Reiterate Call for Reconciliation and Unity

It's a year that has seen the residential school era finally termed "cultural genocide," the election of a Prime Minister who has vowed to work with Indigenous Peoples on an equal footing, and the announcement that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples would be made into law. On this day, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) reminded the rest of the country that Indigenous Peoples were integral in the founding of Canada and need to be recognized as such. "Canada Day is an opportunity to consider the tremendous contributions of First Nations to this land and all the people who live here," said AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde in a statement. "Canada was founded on Treaties and our nation-to-nation relationship with the Crown, sacred promises based on peaceful co-existence, mutual respect and sharing."

READ MORE

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/07/01/canada-day-indigenous-peoples-call-reconciliation-and-unity-165007>

Aboriginal Day Live 2016 Was Unapologetically Resistant

The annual Winnipeg festival is a celebration of traditions and nations across Canada, the U.S., and the world.

I often wonder if the land gets lonely for people; if it remembers a time where it felt our ancestors's energy flowing over it freely and beneath its concrete scars, and waits for our return. If this should be the case I imagine that this past weekend in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the land at The Forks in Treaty 1 territory—homeland of the Metis Nation—felt itself come alive again, woken up by over 10,000 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people celebrating the 10th annual Aboriginal Day Live. The Forks, situated where the Red and Assiniboine rivers greet one another, has been a traditional gathering place for Indigenous peoples of the territory since a time before we hold memory.

READ MORE

<http://www.thefader.com/2016/06/27/aboriginal-day-live-2016>

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