

"Defending Commons' Land and ICCAs"
March 2016
CALG Bulletin #1

Dear Friends and supporters,

The murder of **Berta Caceres** has dominated the global advocacy scene over the past three weeks and through our CALG mailing list we have tried our best to spread the news and foster joint actions on Berta's case and the escalation of violence in **Honduras**. Meanwhile, much has happened in other parts of the globe, and there are important news on other cases of extra-judicial killings and harassment of Defenders of Commons and ICCAs (Indigenous peoples' and community conserved territories and areas), which we would like to share with all of you.

Let's stress one more time that civil society mobilization on Berta's murder has been one of the most stunning examples of pro-active, synergetic and successful collaboration between a large number of human and environmental rights advocates, from different national and international platforms. We have all witnessed (and we are witnessing) an exemplary case of well-planned campaign being launched, at various levels, by well respected institutions aiming at making the Honduran state accountable for Berta's murder and for the on-going dispossession of the **Lenca people** from their native land. It is remarkable that such collective response has occurred spontaneously, bringing together a wide variety of actors that, in turn, have learned about each others, with each group contributing to Berta's campaign with its own resources, advocacy tools and campaign strategies.

The cumulative response of this informal network has ultimately led to the withdrawal of key investors from the **Agua Zarca hydroelectric project**. It is now hoped that such informal network, which has been able to link locally grounded efforts to global advocacy, will become stronger and stronger over the months, thus crafting a common strategy to respond to extra-judicial killings of environmental and human rights defenders occurring, as well, in other regions of the World.

Our bulletin "**Defending Commons' Land and ICCAs**" was first launched in January 2016, a few days after the murder of Peruvian Human Rights Defender **Hitler Ananias Gonzales Rojas** and in response to a meeting

being held last November at the IUCN Headquarters, in Switzerland, being spearheaded by the ICCA Consortium to discuss possible partnerships and operational arrangements of the proposed **Solidarity Action and Fund for the Defenders of the Commons and ICCAs (SAFE)** (http://www.iccaconsortium.org/?page_id=53).

Since then, until present, through the continuous monitoring of the web and, thanks to information received by our allies/partners from elsewhere, we have reported 15 extrajudicial killings of environmental and human rights defenders in four different countries: one in the Philippines (30 January), two in Honduras (3 and 15 March) one in Guatemala (16 March) and 11 in Biafra, Southern Nigeria (9 February). This gives us a figure of 5 'defenders' killed each month with all killings reported being linked to the defence of land rights, indigenous peoples' rights or environmental rights. This, of course, does not include many other case of murder of 'defenders' from different parts of the world, where such information are being withheld and 'obscured' by Nation States.

In this bulletin we are covering five Asian regions [(Philippines, Indonesia, Eastern Malaysia, Taiwan and Assam (India)], two Latina America nations (Honduras and Brazil), North America (Canada) and four African nations (Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Africa).

To begin with, we would like to bring to your attention the case of **Brazil**. Once a world leader in restoring indigenous land rights, the country has now become known for its blatant violations against indigenous peoples, especially in the Amazon. 92 killings related to land disputes and encroachment over indigenous ancestral domains have been reported in 2007, but the figure has increased to 138 people killed in 2014. As noted by Victoria Tauli- Corpuz, UN Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: "There have been extremely worrying regressions in the protection of indigenous peoples' rights".

Also **Indonesia**, and particularly **West Papua province**, is witnessing an escalation of violence against indigenous peoples and environmental defenders. Weak land governance systems, powerful elites, corruption, inequality and power imbalances feed into practices where communities are evicted from land, customary land use rights are ignored, community land is sold and compensation is inadequate.

Further west, in the neighbouring **State of Sarawak (Eastern Malaysia)** indigenous peoples, instead, have attained some gains. After years of sustained and peaceful resistance, **Sarawak's Baram controversial mega-dams**

project is officially dead. The Baram dam project was designed under Sarawak's former Chief Minister and current Governor Taib Mahmud, and aggressively promoted by energy supplier Sarawak Energy as part of a multi-billion dollar hydropower scheme. The shutting down of the mega-project is a very welcomed development for which the indigenous people of **Baram** (Kenyah, Penan and Kayan, etc.) must receive much appreciation and due recognition from the international community.

In neighbouring **Philippine archipelago**, large-scale commercial mining and the construction of roads could soon reach the centre of **Mindoro island**, still inhabited by many **Mangyan people** that, as of now, have limited contacts with the outside and therefore are particularly vulnerable to epidemic diseases and, more importantly, would not be able to survive if their land and resources are plundered by mining extraction. In addition to this, in **Zabales** (in the nearby island of **Luzon**), two large mining firms have been allowed to continue their operations, placing local communities at risk. Amongst the good news, Arturo "Nonoy" Regalado, a known close aide of former Palawan governor and alleged mastermind Jose Reyes, has been sentenced to reclusion perpetua or a maximum of 40 years imprisonment. This is related to the 2011 murder of environmental **Journalist Gerry Ortega in Palawan**. There have been 151 journalists killed in the line of duty in the Philippines since 1986. According to the Centre for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR), only 15 out of these 151 cases have been partly resolved with the conviction of the gunmen. No mastermind has so far been successfully prosecuted, except in the 2009 Ampatuan Massacre trial, in which some of the accused are said to be among the masterminds.

We also would like to highlight recent positive development for indigenous peoples in **Taiwan** and in the **State of Assam (India)**. In the former state, due to the more 'friendly' political climate, indigenous peoples are trying to re-negotiate their relationship with the State and to assert their sovereignty. As they push for more political power, Taiwan's native people are expanding their cultural identity. These people are ethnically linked to inhabitants of other Pacific territories such as Malaysia and the Philippines, arriving on the island long before the Han Chinese started migrating from China in the 17th century. But due to forced assimilation, intermarriage and subjugation by the Japanese and the Chinese nationalists who fled to Taiwan in 1949, indigenous groups now only make up around 2 percent of the island's 23 million people.

Instead, in **Assam (North-eastern India)**, the AGP party has promised constitutional protection for the indigenous people, administrative reforms,

creating employment and improving health and education facilities. The party, which was born out of the [Assam](#) Agitation in 1985, have been in power twice, and also continues with its opposition to China building dams on the Brahmaputra.

From **Africa**, instead, we keep receiving worrying reports on blatant cases of violent abuses against indigenous rights defenders. On the 9th of February 2016 an unarmed Biafran activist and 10 other peaceful demonstrators have reportedly been killed in Aba by the Nigerian army. **Biafra**, officially the **Republic of Biafra**, was a secessionist state in then southeastern [Nigeria](#) that existed from 30 May 1967 to 1970, taking its name from the [Bight of Biafra](#) (the Atlantic bay to its south). The inhabitants were mostly the Igbo people who led the secession due to economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions among the various peoples of Nigeria.

Also in **Nigeria**, the rich and unique biodiversity of **Ekuri forest** and its indigenous inhabitants face the risk of being washed away by the construction of a super-highway to nowhere. The Ekuri indigenous people are standing up against the project and different online actions and petitions are now available, which we encourage everybody to sign and support:

<https://www.rainforest-rescue.org/petitions/1045/stop-the-destruction-of-the-ekuri-people-s-rainforest-in-nigeria>

<http://wrm.org.uy/all-campaigns/please-sign-on-stop-the-destruction-of-the-ekuri-peoples-ancestral-rainforest-in-nigeria/>

http://www.iccaconsortium.org/?page_id=3828

<https://www.care2.com/news/member/774550352/3966541>

https://secure.avaaz.org/en/petition/The_Governor_of_Cross_River_State_Nigeria_and_Minister_of_Environment_Stop_the_construction_of_the_Cross_River_State_Sup/?pv=27

In another Africa nation (**Burkina Faso**), 14,000 people have been displaced to make way for three gold mines. Interestingly enough, the gold they extract is then refined in **Switzerland**, which shamefully encourages abusive practices by its companies abroad.

Even more complex is the situation in **Ethiopia**, where a counterterrorism law has become a tool used to silence human rights activists and suppress freedom of speech and assembly. Over the past few years, Ethiopian government repression against journalists, bloggers, activists, political opposition members, students, and indigenous people has reached crisis proportions, while the government is leasing millions of hectares of land nationwide to international and national investors.

While there are no cases of extra-judicial killings of IPs in wealthy **North America**, the rate of suicide amongst First Nation people appears on the increase, as for instance in the **Pimicikamak Cree Nation in Cross Lake, Manitoba** (Canada). It has been reported that in this community of 6,000, six people have killed themselves in two months and more than 140 suicide attempts have been made in two weeks. Much of the blame has been placed on [historic injustices](#) and to massive environmental destruction by hydro development that, over the past decades, has forced indigenous people from their homes and disrupted hunting, trapping and fishing.

See our section below on 'General Topics' and more news from the Regions.

A good reading to all, and anticipated best wished for a peaceful Easter Holiday

The CALG Team
Coalition against Land Grabbing - Philippines

GENERAL TOPICS

Norway takes pathway to ethical investment with human rights policy

Since 2013, a substantial segment of the palm oil industry and the buyers of their product have adopted strong forest conservation policies, often described as “[No deforestation, no peat, no exploitation](#)”. NGO campaigns and consumer reactions have built up the pressure. But when the world’s [largest sovereign wealth fund](#), the [Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global](#) (GPF), withdrew its [investment in 23 palm oil companies](#) in 2012, the news sent shockwaves through the industry. The decision also meant the fund’s [policy on climate change](#) would target tropical deforestation as a priority issue.

READ MORE:

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/mar/18/responsible-investing-financial-winner-human-rights-strategy>

Collective Assimilation: Resisting Full Citizenship

One of the great moments in recent indigenous history was the rejection of full citizenship, most clearly seen in the United States and Canada. Most nation states around the world offer their Indigenous Peoples full citizenship, but at the expense of acknowledging indigenous rights to political autonomy, land and different cultures.

READ MORE:

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/03/20/collective-assimilation-resisting-full-citizenship-163743>

[The Curse of the Mining CEO](#)

Mining executives, like the commodities they manage, tend to go in and out of fashion according to long, hard-to-predict cycles. So you could take Rio Tinto's decision to appoint Jean-Sebastian Jacques as chief executive officer as a bad sign for copper, the metal he's spent most of his recent career digging up. Looking back on the previous six appointees at the traditional big

three London-traded mining companies, one could be forgiven for imagining that their boards attracted some sort of ancient curse while looking for mineral reserves in the rougher corners of the planet. Why?

READ MORE:

<http://www.bloomberg.com/gadfly/articles/2016-03-17/will-rio-tinto-s-new-boss-escape-the-curse-of-the-mining-ceo>

TOPICS BY REGIONS

ASIA

Land Rights Now: Protect indigenous peoples and forests

Forests are the lifeline and cultural heritage of at least 100 million indigenous peoples in Asia

The world's remaining forests, the planet's biodiversity, and rivers are found in indigenous peoples' territories. However, rampant large-scale development projects without regard to the environment and the indigenous peoples inhabiting these areas are threatening to wipe out populations and extract resources.

READ MORE:

<http://www.rappler.com/views/imho/126662-land-rights-now-protect-indigenous-peoples-forests>

THE PHILIPPINES

EU supports project to strengthen work of human rights defenders

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) led the launch of a project to promote, the rights and strengthen the work of human rights defenders today, March 17 at the Balay Kalinaw in the University of the Philippines.

The European Union is financing the three-year project, dubbed "Confronting Challenges on Human Rights Defenders in the Philippines," with funds amounting to P27.8 million (\$600,000) coursed through its European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.

READ MORE:

<http://bulatlat.com/main/2016/03/18/european-union-supports-project-to-strengthen-work-of-human-rights-defenders/>

End of Eden? Mining push in Philippines ends isolation of islanders

Activists say government permits for mining companies threaten the way of life of the Mangyan indigenous people on the island of Mindoro.

A path cut through a forest hillside outside this resort town is no ordinary road. It will soon connect the modern world to an indigenous tribal group that until now has lived mostly in pre-modern isolation. Does this road represent the end of a lifestyle and of farming and food sources that villagers have relied on for millennia?

READ MORE:

<http://news.yahoo.com/end-eden-mining-push-philippines-ends-isolation-islanders-170122992.html>

Zambales mining conflict worsens

A top official of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) of the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said two mining firms allowed to resume mining last year in Zambales has been cleared to continue their operations, while two other mining companies will remain suspended.

This, according to Dr. Benito Molino, chairman of the anti-mining group Concerned Citizens of Sta Cruz (CCOS), who said MGB Director Leo Jasareno told him on Friday that Benguet Nickel Mines, Inc. (BNMI) and Zambales Diversified Metals Corporation (ZDMC) has been cleared by the agency to continue their mining operations in northern Zambales while the suspension on Eramen Minerals Inc. (EMI) and LnL Archipelago Minerals Inc. (LAMI) will remain in force.

READ MORE:

<http://www.manilatimes.net/zambales-mining-conflict-worsens/251592/>

In Compostela, 'green' mining beckons

SMALL-SCALE miners in Compostela Valley province have welcomed the introduction of a clean and efficient way of processing gold as an alternative to decades-old crude and toxic methods of extracting precious metals that have been blamed for pollution and other environment problems.

The "green mining technology" being developed by government scientists and experts is being tested in Compostela Valley, the fourth beneficiary across the

country after Benguet, Camarines Sur and Agusan del Norte. The four pilot projects in the gold-rich provinces cost about P160 million.

READ MORE:

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/775165/in-compostela-green-mining-beckons#ixzz43cuVj7Rk>

Jesuit school recognizes priest's anti-mining advocacy

Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan bestowed an honorary doctorate on a Catholic priest on Thursday in recognition of his efforts to protect Mindoro Island's biodiversity and indigenous people. Fr. Edwin Gariguez, a winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize, the world's largest award for grassroots environmental activists, is also the executive secretary of Caritas Philippines, the social development, humanitarian and advocacy arm of the Catholic Church in the Philippines.

READ MORE:

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/559628/news/regions/jesuit-school-recognizes-priest-s-anti-mining-advocacy#sthash.9ltHEylz.dpuf>

Court convicts killer of Palawan journalist

Arturo "Nonoy" Regalado, a known close aide of former Palawan governor and alleged mastermind Jose Reyes, was sentenced to reclusion perpetua or a maximum of 40 years imprisonment by Branch 52 Judge Angelo Arizala of the Regional Trial Court of Puerto Princesa City, according to the [Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility \(CMFR\)](#).

The court also ordered Regalado to pay P50,000 as civil indemnity, P7.6 million in lost earning capacity, P526,000 in actual damages, P50,000 in moral damages and P30,000 in exemplary damages. Regalado will serve his sentence at the Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm in Palawan. The court established that Regalado provided the money to purchase the gun used in the murder of Ortega, the CMFR said in its article. Ortega was in a store in Puerto Princesa when he was gunned down in 2011.

READ MORE:

<http://bulatlat.com/main/2016/03/12/court-convicts-killer-of-palawan-journalist/>

Advocates urge parties to respect human rights, IHL pact

Marking the 18th anniversary of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), peace advocates called on both parties to implement the said agreement.

Signed on March, 16, 1998, [CARHRIHL](#) is the first substantive agreement between the Government of the Philippines (GPH – then called as the Government of the Republic of the Philippines or GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

The Citizen’s Alliance for Just Peace called “for a thorough and vibrant implementation of CARHRIHL as an essential building block of the peace process between the GPH and the NDFP.”

READ MORE:

<http://bulatlat.com/main/2016/03/16/advocates-urge-parties-to-respect-human-rights-ihl-pact/>

Climate change highlights farmers' need for govt support: DIGNIDAD to bets

On the occasion of former US Vice-President Al Gore's visit to the Philippines and the 31st Climate Reality Leadership Corps Training in Manila on March 14 to 16, DIGNIDAD called on the next government leaders to undertake measures that would provide safe, adequate, and affordable food as well as effective government support to farmers affected by climate change.

READ MORE:

<http://interaksyon.com/article/125267/climate-change-highlights-farmers-need-for-govt-support-dignidad-to-bets>

Marcos’ atrocities, plunder on record

As educators, we find erroneous Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr.’s claim that martial law and his father’s dictatorship brought forth a “golden age” for the Philippines.

The horrendous human rights violations perpetrated by the Marcos regime against the Filipino people are well documented: in the Human Rights Victims Reparation and Recognition Act; in scrolls at the archives of the Commission on Human Rights; on the walls of Bantayog ng mga Bayani, and in books—such as “Pumipiglas: Political Detention and Military Atrocities in the Philippines 1981-1982,” “Not On Our Watch: Martial Law Really Happened. We Were There,” “Mondo Marcos: Writings on Martial Law and the Marcos Babies,” “Dekada ’70,” “Subversive Lives: A Family Memoir of the Marcos Years,” and “Days of Disquiet, Nights of Rage.” In fact, a number of signatories to this letter are victims of the Marcos dictatorship.

READ MORE:

<http://opinion.inquirer.net/93937/marcos-atrocities-plunder-record#ixzz43cs04Qld>

INDONESIA

Land disputes: Lessons from West Papua

A new report compiled by the *Brisbane Catholic Justice and Peace Commission's Shadow Human Rights Fact Finding Mission to West Papua*, has documented human rights abuses and the complicity of businesses in West Papua.

The report documents religious, social and economic discrimination, including how the use of land for major developments has benefited multinationals has excluded Papuans from ownership and jobs. The government is accused of carving up land and giving it to some 50 multinational companies. The report accuses local government of inviting companies to come to the area and gives them permits for operations. Local villagers are often shocked when the companies arrive, showing them the permit and the map. If the villagers don't agree to the proposal, the company goes back to the local government and returns with the police. There is clear evidence of on-going violence, intimidation and harassment by the Indonesian security forces, according to the report.

READ MORE:

<http://csr-asia.com/csr-asia-weekly-news-detail.php?id=12566>

EASTERN MALAYSIA

Malaysian Baram mega-dam project scrapped, indigenous people take back land

Sarawak's controversial mega-dams project is officially dead – ending a three-year battle to stop developmental aggression. The Sarawak state government has finally bowed to pressure from local communities who have been protesting against the construction of 12 mega-dams along the Baram river in the Malaysian province of Borneo.

READ MORE:

<https://asiancorrespondent.com/2016/03/baram-dam-malaysia-sarawak/>

TAIWAN

Taiwan Is Reinventing Its Relationship With Its Indigenous Peoples

President-elect Tsai Ing-wen, the first woman to serve in the post, has already [vowed to apologize](#) for the past suffering of Taiwan's natives, and to press for reforms in policies towards the island's roughly 500,000 indigenous people.

"Why apologize? Well, looking back through history, Aborigines gradually lost their lands while under the rule of different governments and foreign powers," Tsai [said last year](#). "Even today, they continue to be at a disadvantage in areas including economy, education and health."

READ MORE:

<http://iva.aippnet.org/taiwan-is-reinventing-its-relationship-with-its-indigenous-peoples/>

INDIA

AGP Manifesto: Assam Accord, Rights of Indigenous People Major Points

Regional party Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) released their poll manifesto promising implementation of the Assam Accord, constitutional safeguarding of

the rights of Indigenous people of Assam, administrative reforms, creating employment and improving health and education facilities.

READ MORE:

<http://www.northeasttoday.in/agp-manifesto-assam-accord-rights-of-indigenous-people-major-points/>

AGP promises constitutional protection for indigenous people

Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), in its poll manifesto released today, promised constitutional protection for the indigenous people of Assam, administrative reforms, creating employment and improving health and education facilities. Releasing the manifesto, AGP president [Atul](#) Bora said his party wants constitutional protection of political, economic, social and cultural rights of the indigenous people and ensure that they have rights over land in the state.

READ MORE:

http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/agp-promises-constitutional-protection-for-indigenous-people-116031801134_1.html

Assam poll 2016: AGP promises constitutional protection for indigenous people

Releasing the manifesto, AGP president Atul Bora said his party wants constitutional protection of political, economic, social and cultural rights of the indigenous people and ensure that they have rights over land in the state.

READ MORE:

http://www.firstpost.com/politics/assam-poll-2016-agp-promises-constitutional-protection-for-indigenous-people-2684290.html?utm_source=FP_CAT_LATEST_NEWS

LATIN AMERICA

Activists' Murders Show Human Rights Under Assault in Latin America

Human Rights Watch's recent report on human rights trends in 2015 [identified a myriad of abuses across Latin America](#): extrajudicial killings, torture, gender-based violence, prison overcrowding, child labor, counterterror laws that fail to protect due process, violence against trade unionists and members of the LGBT community, arbitrary detention, torture, elevated homicide rates, forced disappearances, police abuses, the lack of judicial independence, and limitations on press freedoms and freedom of expression.

READ MORE:

<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/18262/activists-murders-show-human-rights-under-assault-in-latin-america>

HONDURAS

Berta's struggle is our global struggle...

The assassination of such a vocal and passionate WHRD with a clear grasp of the complex issues at play in the challenge against extractivism and for Indigenous people's rights is, tragically, not an anomaly. Berta had received countless threats against her life and was granted precautionary measures by the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights.

READ MORE:

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/ndana-bofu-tawamba-kate-kroeger-tatiana-cordero/bera-s-struggle-is-our-global-struggle>

Berta Cáceres: Murder of Mother Linked to 'Green' Bank, Mining Companies and Hillary Clinton

[Canada's](#) major role in Honduran mining is underappreciated. The biggest gold miners in Honduras are Canadian and operate with backing [from the World Bank](#), to condemnation [from COPINH](#). Mines have been closed after pollution events, [but prosecution rarely occurs](#). [A Report](#) from [MBendi](#) (investor intelligence) lists several active gold opportunities in Honduras, and mentions other mineral deposits of commercial interest.

READ MORE:

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/berta-caceres-murder-of-mother-linked-to-green-bank-mining-companies-and-hillary-clinton/5514>

Honduras risks becoming 'lawless killing zone' for human rights defenders – UN expert

An independent United Nations expert on the situation of human rights defenders today urged the Government of Honduras “to take immediate and concrete actions, or risk turning the country into a lawless killing zone for human rights defenders.”

UN Special Rapporteur Michel Forst’s appeal came after the killing of yet another outspoken leader of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations Honduras (COPINH), Nelson García, reportedly occurred on 15 March.

READ MORE:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53486#.VvEkFhjWo6g>

Honduras murders prompt dam funds freeze

International backers act after killing of second indigenous group member. Two leading international backers of a controversial [hydroelectric project in Honduras](#) have frozen their \$20m investment after the second murder in less than two weeks of a member of indigenous group fighting the dam. The freezing of financing suggests a worsening climate for foreign investors in Honduras, which is already [plagued](#) by high crime rates, a weak judicial system and rampant corruption.

READ MORE:

<https://next.ft.com/content/aa9385d6-ebd3-11e5-9fca-fb0f946fd1f0>

Development banks need to wake up to the human rights crisis in Honduras

Multilateral development banks have been updating their social and environmental safeguard policies in recent years, and including commitments to respect human rights. Eighty-three banks from across the world have signed on to the [Equator principles](#) to manage social risks, which include such a

commitment. But there is no bringing back Berta Cáceres, Nelson García, or the many others who have died, and continue to die, defending the powerless. The state bears the bulk of the responsibility for safeguarding human rights and, as such, must be held accountable. However, those financing development projects must show that they take human rights risks seriously, and are not part of the problem.

READ MORE:

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/20/development-banks-human-rights-crisis-honduras-agua-zarca>

BRAZIL

In Brazil, UN expert highlights deadly consequences of delaying land demarcation

Following a visit to Brazil, a United Nations independent human rights expert on Monday expressed alarm about the extent of documented and reported attacks on indigenous peoples in the country's central-western state of Mato Grosso Do Sul. Speaking at the end of her 11-day visit to Brazil, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, noted that there were 92 killings in 2007, but the figure increased to 138 people killed in 2014.

READ MORE:

<http://www.newkerala.com/news/2016/fullnews-38643.html>

UN sounds alarm over violence against indigenous activists in recession-hit Brazil

As recession bites and land disputes hit Brazil's agricultural heartland, indigenous people face land grabs and assaults by violent gangs, said Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the U.N.'s Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous people.

Once a world leader in restoring indigenous land rights, Brazil, with a government mired in a corruption scandal, is not doing enough to protect indigenous people who are attacked for protecting their ancestral land, she said.

READ MORE:

<http://news.trust.org/item/20160318183552-9o6jx>

Losing our land like losing our lives, Brazil activist tells World Bank

Investors describe it as one of the last frontiers for major agricultural expansion - a vast area in Brazil's poor northeast that the government is eager to open up to investors hoping to set up big new soy farms and cattle ranches. But for Maria de Jesus Bringelo and tens of thousands of other Afro-Brazilians who earn a living from the land in more traditional ways, the MATOPIBA region has another value: it's their home.

READ MORE:

<http://news.trust.org/item/20160316184011-qcgnl/>

NORTH AMERICA

Want To Reduce Suicide in Native Communities? Step 1: Stop Destroying Native Land

For the past couple weeks, Canadians have been wringing their hands about the suicide epidemic in the Pimicikamak Cree Nation in Cross Lake, Manitoba.

In the community of 6,000, six people have killed themselves in two months and more than 140 suicide attempts have been made in two weeks, leading the First Nation to declare a state of emergency. Much of the blame has been placed on [historic injustices](#) — the very real fall-out of colonization and the residential school system. But another historic injustice has also come to light: hydro development — which can be traced back to the Northern Flood Agreement of 1977. That agreement forced people from their homes and disrupted hunting, trapping and fishing. In 2015, Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger personally [apologized](#) for the damage caused by hydro development to Cross Lake's traditional land, way of life and cultural identity. He also acknowledged

that Indigenous people were not properly consulted on the Jenpeg hydroelectric dam, 500 kilometres north of Winnipeg.

READ MORE:

<http://desmog.ca/2016/03/17/want-prevent-suicide-native-communities-stop-destroying-land>

Treaty education: Why treaties matter

To begin to understand treaties, one must consider the origins of colonization and land claims by foreign governments in what today is the United States.

The relationship between Christendom's principle of discovery and the laws of the United States actually began in 1452 with Pope Nicholas V, when he issued King Alfonso V of Portugal the papal bull Romanus Pontifex, which was basically stating the papacy's lordship of the whole world, and thus effectively declaring war against all non-Christians.

READ MORE:

<http://www.bemidjipioneer.com/columns/3991375-treaty-education-why-treaties-matter>

Church outlines steps to implement UN Indigenous rights declaration

"Let your 'yes' be yes," said Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, quoting James 5:12 as silence descended over the congregation gathered at the Mohawk Chapel. "This strikes me as good counsel for the church of our day, as it seeks to act on decisions made at General Synod 2010 [repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery](#) and endorsing the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)," said Hiltz. "Here we have a call to let our 'yes' in that historic moment be a resounding and continuing 'yes.' "

READ MORE:

<http://www.anglicanjournal.com/articles/church-outlines-steps-to-implement-un-indigenous-rights-declaration#sthash.4ixXCJjm.dpuf>

Local communities need to be included in mining developments, Munk conference told

Mining may be controversial but it isn't going away anytime soon, moderator Paul Cadario warned the audience at the start of a daylong conference on the geopolitics of mining held last week at the Munk School of Global Affairs. "We all take for granted what comes out of the earth, and nobody's proposing that we give up our cellphones or stop constructing buildings or turn off our electrical power plants," said Cadario, a former World Bank senior manager, former president of the University of Toronto Alumni Association and now an advisor to the Munk School.

READ MORE:

<http://www.news.utoronto.ca/local-communities-need-be-included-mining-developments-munk-conference-told>

How B.C. mining could hurt Northwest fishermen

The headwaters of the Taku, Stikine and Unuk Rivers — Southeast Alaska's major salmon-producing rivers — are in British Columbia, where up to 10 major mining proposals dot the map of these watersheds. One mine is already operational, with nine other projects in various stages of exploration and permitting. I rely on these rivers, flowing from B.C. into Alaska, to provide the clean water and fish habitat for my summer catch.

READ MORE:

<http://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/how-bc-mining-could-hurt-northwest-fishermen/>

Goldman Winner Marilyn Baptiste Urges Trudeau to Push for Investigation Into Berta Cáceres Murder in Honduras

In the wake of the March 3 assassination of Lenca activist Berta Cáceres in Honduras, her fellow Goldman Prize winner Marilyn Baptiste, Nits'il'in Yaz/Councillor, Xeni Gwet'in First Nations, wrote a letter supported and distributed by the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), calling on Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to demand a thorough investigation of the crime. No sooner had her letter been released on March 15 than

Cáceres's fellow activist Nelson Garcia was gunned down, shot in the face by a group accosting him as he returned home.

READ MORE:

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/03/17/goldman-winner-marilyn-baptiste-urges-trudeau-push-investigation-berta-caceres-murder>

Zoryan Institute Hosts Powerful Conference on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

A conference sponsored by the Zoryan Institute was held March 8-9 at McGill University's Faculty of Law to examine the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and possible ways to implement its findings. Titled "From Truth to Reconciliation: Towards a Just Future for the Indigenous Peoples of Canada," the event was an initiative of the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (A Division of the Zoryan Institute) in partnership with the McGill University Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism. The conference approached its subject from a legal, political, cultural and social perspective.

READ MORE:

<http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/zoryan-institute-hosts-powerful-conference-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples-2106615.htm>

AFRICA

BURKINA FASO

"Profit over human rights? Gold mining in Burkina Faso and Switzerland's responsibility"

In February 2016, Action de Carême (Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund) and Pain pour le prochain (Bread For All) released a report: "Profit over human rights? Gold mining in Burkina Faso and Switzerland's responsibility". The [full report](#) is only available in French. Below is an unofficial translation by Business & Human Rights Resource Centre of the press release accompanying the report. The Resource Centre also invited the three mining companies named in the report (Amara Mining, Iamgold, Nordgold) to respond to it. Their responses are below,

as well as statements from Metalor, which is also named in the report and has at various times sourced gold for its refinery for these mines.

READ MORE:

<http://business-humanrights.org/en/%E2%80%9Cprofit-over-human-rights-gold-mining-in-burkina-faso-and-switzerland%E2%80%99s-responsibility%E2%80%9D>

NIGERIA

Aba extra judicial killings: IPOB rejects army investigation

The Indigenous People of Biafra has rejected investigations initiated by the Nigerian Army into the alleged extrajudicial killing of unarmed Biafra activists in Aba, Abia State.

About 10 IPOB members were reportedly killed when troops opened fire on them during the agitation for the release of their leader, Nnamdi Kanu, in February. There were also reports that about 30 other members of the group sustained serious injuries during the incident.

The Amnesty International had condemned the development, accusing the army of 'excessive use of force' against the pro-Biafran activists.

READ MORE:

<http://www.punchng.com/aba-extra-judicial-killings-ipob-rejects-army-investigation/>

Extra-Judicial Killings In Aba, Human Rights Activists Raise Alarm, Petition The IGP And The National Human Rights Commission

An Abia State Based Human Rights Activists under the Aegis of Abia Human Rights Agenda numbering Over Fifty Organizations has condemned the increasing trend of extra judicial killings in Aba. Addressing newsmen in Aba, the Spokespersons of the group Comrade Nelson Nnanna Nwafor of Foundation for Environmental Rights, Advocacy & Development (FENRAD) & comrade Innocent Anozie Nwokocho of Society for Economic Rights & Social Justice (SERSJ) describe the Acts as barbaric, wicked and the apex of Human Rights Violations by the State actors, asserting that the murder of unarmed citizens is a heinous crime against God and Humanity.

READ MORE:

<http://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/204302/extra-judicial-killings-in-aba-human-rights-activists-raise.html>

Nigerian government urged to halt “land grab” in Ekuri community forest

A proposed superhighway in southeast Nigeria has prompted calls from locals and the international community to stop what they claim is a land grab in the middle of a celebrated community-managed forest. The people of Old Ekuri and New Ekuri, villages in Cross River State that are collectively known as the Ekuri Community, live in one of Nigeria’s last surviving rainforests. The two villages co-manage a 33,600-hectare (about 83,000-acre) community-owned forest, one of the largest in West Africa.

READ MORE:

<http://news.mongabay.com/2016/03/nigerian-government-urged-to-halt-land-grab-in-ekuri-community-forest/>

ETHIOPIA

The Criminalization of Environmental and Human Rights Activists: Free Ethiopian Political Prisoners!

One year after their arrest on March 15, 2015, three food, land, and human rights defenders continue to languish in an Ethiopian jail. After several court hearings, the prosecution has yet to present any evidence to support the spurious charge of “terrorism” under Ethiopia’s controversial counterterrorism law. A March 1 hearing was once again adjourned and rescheduled for March 15, due to the failure of witnesses to appear in court.

On March 15, 2015, Omot Agwa Okwoy, Ashinie Astin, and Jamal Oumar Hojele were arrested on their way to a food security workshop in Nairobi, Kenya. The event was organized by the NGO Bread for All, with support from GRAIN and Anywaa Survival Organisation (ASO). The three food, land and human rights defenders were detained for nearly six months without charge and denied access to legal representation. On September 7, 2015, they were charged under Ethiopia’s draconian counterterrorism law.

READ MORE:

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-criminalization-of-environmental-and-human-rights-activists-free-ethiopian-political-prisoners/5514592>

SOUTH AFRICA

WATCH: Inside a spooky old uranium mine in the Karoo

Local representatives of the indigenous people of Southern Africa are opposed to the new mine and want to keep the land as it is.

“Open pit mining is not what we should be doing with this land. It’s important that we keep the Karoo as it is. The plants that grow here you don’t get anywhere else in the world,” said Billy Steenkamp, co-founder of the Indigenous People’s Association for Community Economic Development of South Africa.

READ MORE:

<http://www.enca.com/south-africa/watch-inside-spooky-old-uranium-mine-karoo>