

"Defending Commons' Land and ICCAs"

Avril 2016 CALG

Bulletin #2



Dear Friends and supporters,

In this April edition we are covering five Asian and Pacific regions: Philippines, Sarawak, Taiwan, Bangladesh, India, Papua New Guinea, and Fiji, five Latin America nations: (Brazil, Peru, Honduras, Colombia, Guatemala), North America (Canada), four African nations (South Africa, Tanzania, Congo, Sierra Leone) and Northern Europe (Finland).

A selection of interesting articles is found in our **General Topics** section. Some of them concern the World leaders gathering in New York City to sign the historic **Paris Climate Agreement on Earth Day**. One topic of discussion is that Climate change combat is often in the hands of policy-makers, researchers and governments. However it is the marginalized and indigenous communities that feel the full force of climate change effects. Thus, to be effective, the campaign needs to include the wisdom and traditional practices of these communities to better protect those who need it the most.

A [new report](#) (pdf), written by the environmental journalist Fred Pearce, estimates that roughly **50% of our earth's land is subject to claims from customary land users** including indigenous people. But only around 10% of this land is officially recognized as belonging to these communities. This renders a huge number of people around the world – perhaps up to 2.5 billion in total – highly vulnerable to having their lands and resources taken by outside, and often more powerful, interests.

To begin with, we would like to bring to your attention **the Philippines**, where **two environmental and indigenous peoples rights defenders have been murdered** in Brgy. Bulalacao, Bataraza (**Palawan**) on April 13. Tedy Salamat (Pala'wan IP) and Ptr. Nestor Lubas (Tagbanuwa IP) were shot while traversing the road of Brgy. Bulalacao on motorcycle. The two IPs had given their service as para-environmental enforcers to PNNI (Palawan NGOs Network Inc.). Lubas was the president of the local indigenous organization Natarizal (an affiliate of NATRIPAL, the largest province-wide indigenous federation). He was also a member of our Coalition against Land Grabbing (CALG) and, in the Municipality of Rizal, he had played a major role in collecting signatures for a petition calling for a moratorium on oil palm expansion that was submitted by CALG to Palawan Vice-Governor last September 2014. We assume that direct engagement of both Nestor and Tedy in protecting the forest environment and ancestral domain of the local Pala'wan tribe is the main reason behind their assassination. Based on PNNI's record, Lubas was instrumental to the confiscation of five chainsaws and led two operations which resulted to the confiscation of assorted lumber in Sitio Sicud, Brgy. Candawaga in Rizal town. The latest operation conducted by Lubas allegedly involved an Army personnel from the Western Command.

In spite of the continuous assassination of indigenous peoples activists, in the Philippines, the call to appeal the Government to fulfill its "responsibilities" – **AGRICULTURAL LAND, FOOD, and JUSTICE** continues. Indeed, this was the central theme of various peaceful demonstrations that took place in the country on April 22nd to celebrate the **46th Global Earth Day**. In Mindanao this call was closely linked to the tragic episode of April 1st, when a violent dispersal was executed to counting 6000 farmers asking for rice and aid due to hunger and poverty killing 3 and injuring hundreds who marched and protested in front the **National Food Authority in Kidapawan City** (Northern Cotabato). A Philippine human rights group (Karapatan) has now brought the plight of the protesting farmers affected by drought before the United Nations Human Rights Council.

With **Kidapawan case and other previous massacres** (e.g. Lianga, in Surigao), the Aquino administration is leaving behind a bad record for the whole nation: hungry farmers, unresolved agrarian reform, significant environmental exploitation, Lumad and farmers' assassinations. Few days are left before national election and yet no running candidates have been vocal on the plight of indigenous peoples.

On April 15, A **Lumad indigenous delegation** (The Lakbay Lumad USA) has started its **six-week speaking tour of the US** to tell their tragic stories and will end in New York for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Elsewhere, in Europe, other **indigenous leaders** from threatened tropical forests are **touring Brussels, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK** to raise concerns with high-level policy and decision-makers about palm oil supply chains and the impact they are having on their lands, forests and communities.

<http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/agribusiness/news/2016/04/indigenous-leaders-threatened-tropical-forests-launch-tour-europe-w>

Other bulletin news from the Asian and Pacific regions include efforts from a group of high-profile academics and former politicians in **Thailand** to **raise opposition against the renewal of Akara Resources' gold mining** license and the company's plan to open a new gold mine, arguing that the gains from the new concession would not be worth the environmental pollution and harm to public health.

Meanwhile, attempts of **indigenous peoples in Taiwan to be better recognized** at the national political level are ongoing, with mixed results. Recently an Aboriginal legislator has complained that the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) legislative caucus was excluding Aboriginal rights from legislative discussions. Council of Indigenous Peoples Minister Mayaw Dongi said that any discussion of transitional justice should include at least the issue of Aboriginal land rights, citing a 1895 order by the Japanese colonial government that asserted control over any land not covered by a written contract, effectively confiscating vast swathes of undeveloped land occupied by Aborigines.

Far south, in the state of **Sarawak**, some of the **headmen of various longhouses** have come forward to seek clarification on whether the state gomen (which has always been BN) had actually taken their lands from them. Because after receiving some beautifully framed maps which were accompanied by some very official looking certificates, they realized that they may have already become squatters in the land that they, and their ancestors, have been living on. From the press release highlighting this story, it would appear that the natives can still live where they are, but the land may not be theirs anymore.

As testified by various reports and press releases the situation of the indigenous people in the **Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)** of **Bangladesh** continues to raise serious concerns. **They have been killed, tortured, raped and massacred.** Their ancestral lands were confiscated following which they were forcefully evicted. Still, the injustices have not been over and done with. As of now the Bangladesh State has not recognised this people as indigenous and, therefore, their rights to be protected under International Instruments on Protection of Indigenous People's Rights. On the contrary incidents of rape and sexual harassment are on the rise in different parts of the country, especially in relation to indigenous women. According to the **Kapaeeng Foundation Human Rights report, 85 indigenous women and girls fell victim to sexual and physical violence in 2015 in the country.** A total of 69 cases of violence against indigenous women and girls in Bangladesh were documented. Among the 69 cases, 38 cases were reported from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), while the remaining 31 were from the plains.

In neighboring **India, the Gir wildlife sanctuary, home to the rare Asiatic lion,** is now facing threats from illegal mining. Five years after RTI activist Amit Jethwa, who was spearheading the fight against illegal mining was shot dead, activity in and around the sanctuary is continuing unchecked. Activists' battle against illegal mining in the area continues.

Massive land grabbing at the expenses of indigenous peoples continue to take place in **Papua New Guinea.** A UN report on the human rights situation in PNG has now been completed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

As we witness the depredation of indigenous territories in Central, Southern and Southeast Asia, and abuses committed against its inhabitants, news from **FIJI** bring us a breath of fresh air. This is one of only two countries out of 200 sovereign states where indigenous people still own the bulk of the country's lands, with the other country being Bolivia. **As of now, iTaukei as Fiji's indigenous people still own 91 per cent of all lands** in Fiji.

A key highlight in this April bulletin is **Brazil,** especially with reference to FUNAI's welcomed decision to demarcate the **Munduruku's ancestral rights to Sawré Maybu,** a territory of 178 thousand hectares located between Itaituba and Trairão, in the state of Pará. The final demarcation, however, still depends on a presidential decree that cannot be published for 90 days - a normative timeframe to allow questions and debate to take place - nevertheless, the Munduruku territory is now all but secured from the consequences of the São Luiz do Tapajós dam.

Recently Brazilian **environmental Special Forces** have apprehended illegal miners in the heart of the Amazon. Images of the raid can be seen in a Reuters Wider Image photo essay at

<https://widerimage.reuters.com/story/illegal-gold-mining-in-the-amazon>

Elsewhere, in northern Brazil, the situation of indigenous peoples is rather worsening. After being shot at and having their homes burned by gunmen hired by ranchers, **Guarani villagers are being harassed** even while the United Nations, [Survival International](#)(SI) and several Brazilian organizations and officials are trying to help them.

The indigenous Guarani people of Taquara village in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul are attempting to reoccupy land stolen from them.

In support of South America Indigenous Peoples, **Survival International has launched various advocacy actions**. In a [letter to the UN Special Rapporteur for Health](#), the organization highlighted the failure of South American governments to address the contamination. Tribal peoples are especially susceptible to mercury poisoning due to the large amount of illegal gold mining taking place on their lands.

At the same time, there are have been new moves from Latin American organizations to highlight **violations and abuses of Canadian mining operations**, and some of the complaints have already been forwarded to **Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau**. But, back home Trudeau is already too busy dealing with claims made by First Nation people. In Fact, recently, the Supreme Court has said, in a unanimous decision, that the **Métis and non-status Indians are "Indians"** within the meaning of Canada's 1867 Constitution, this is likely to set the stage for potentially costly negotiations around land claims and enhanced social benefits for nearly 700,000 people.

In **Peru** the recent conferment of the prestigious **Goldman Environment prize** for Latina America is among the few good news that this month of April has brought to indigenous peoples in the region. The story of **Maxima Acuña** - a farmer who owns a 60-acre plot of land on the exact site where the giant Newmont Mining Corporation has pursued a land grab - is a reminder that even the world's largest companies can be held in check by activists. The plans for Conga Mine called for draining four nearby lakes. One of these would be turned into a waste storage pit, threatening the headwaters of five watersheds and an entire ecosystem of high-altitude biologically diverse wetland. Now these dreadful plans have been put to an end, thanks to Maxima and her community. Instead, elsewhere in Peru, the impact of mining has had devastating consequences on indigenous peoples. For instance 80% of a [Nahua community](#) have tested positive for high levels of mercury poisoning. 63% of those affected are children.

In neighboring **Colombia, indigenous Amazonian tribes continue to face threats**. A new report "Deforestation and Indigenous Peoples Rights in the Colombian Amazon" co-published by social justice and environmental NGO DEDISE and Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) is now available. It

underlines the critical role of secure land and territorial rights and traditional knowledge in sustaining one of the most culturally and biologically diverse forests on the planet. The study pinpoints contradictions between national policies for economic growth and recent pledges made by Colombia's government to tackle climate change, promote sustainable development and achieve zero deforestation in the Amazon region by 2020.

In Guatemala 15,000 indigenous people have recently ended a major March for Water. The march was organized to defend their rights over ancestral lands and to condemn the exploitation and contamination of their rivers by mining corporations.

In previous alerts we have already emphasized the spreading of individual persecution of land rights and environmental activists in [Honduras](#) so we will not expand the discussion further in this bulletin. A new report is now available on the Web on the [International Mission "Justice for Berta Caceres Flores"](#) composed of 15 parliamentarians, jurists and representatives of human rights, trade union, and popular organizations and networks from throughout the world, that was carried out between 17 and 21 March 2016.

As we move to the African continent, especially in **East Africa**, we see the coming into being of [new collaborations between pastoralist groups and conservationists](#), all working together to strengthen indigenous communities' rights over their lands. This kind of collaboration is key to securing the region's landscapes for people and their livestock, and wildlife tourism, which collectively are not only the basis of rural livelihoods but underpin billions of dollars in economic value to communities, governments, and businesses in Kenya and Tanzania. As it is pointed out in one of the articles of this bulletin, one key limitation is that most African organizations often struggle with short-term, highly restricted, and project-based funding that limits their ability to appropriately invest in their staff and core capacity. Capacity development support is frequently still trapped in outdated and unhelpful training and technical support models that are more geared towards funders' [logframes](#) than local organizations' needs. Strong, impactful and sustainable local organizations would require instead long-term partnerships, core investment and support that enables them to build their staffing and technical capacity, and global networks that can amplify local voices.

In Tanzania, Masai communities are still struggling to get back their land that was grabbed in the name of conservation. The recent conferment of this year's [Goldman Environmental Prize](#) for Africa to **Edward Loure** is bringing new hopes for securing land rights for all the 76 communities in the northern part of the country. Loure leads the grassroots organisation [Ujamaa Community Resource Team](#) (UCRT), which has championed community land rights and sustainable development in Northern Tanzania for the past 20 years. After much struggle, they pioneered an approach which gives land titles to an entire community, as opposed to individuals - something absolutely necessary for the Maasai to pursue their traditional lifestyle in which land and natural resources are shared at a community level.

The **expansion of both 'legal' and illegal mining all over Africa** is raising much preoccupation amongst environmentalists, activists and advocates world-wide. For instance, illegal mining in **Congo** is wiping out gorilla populations. **The population of Grauer's gorillas**, the world's largest subspecies, **has dropped by 77%** in the last 18 years due mainly to illegal mining and the civil war that hit the Democratic Republic of Congo, as an extensive report published this week shows.

In **Sierra Leone**, on 23rd April 2016, **Kono district descendants in the diaspora have called for a global demonstration to protest against Tiffany & Co.'s** financial partnership with the Ocea Group – the sole owner of Koidu Holdings Ltd, for its gross injustice against the indigenous people of Kono, in the eastern district of Sierra Leone. Ocea is the largest diamond mining company in the country. In a recent court ruling in Sierra Leone, the high court determined that Ocea is not entitled to pay taxes because the parent company is not legally registered to do business in Sierra Leone. That a foreign based mining company wholly owned by an Israeli billionaire, Benny Steinmetz, can operate in collaboration with post-war mercenaries from South Africa without a license and tax-free, in one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world, defies all national and international legal norms and ethics governing the global mining trade, as well as common sense.

In **South Africa the struggle in Xolobeni against the proposed open-cast mining of titanium ores continues.** The recent assassination of the chairman of the Amadiba Crisis Committee, **Sikhosiphi Bazooka Rhadebe** does not seem to have weakened the fight. To be opposed is the TEM mining company, a subsidiary of Australian mining company MRC. Community members say the mine will mean the removal of people from the land and the destruction of their livelihoods. The murder of Sikhosiphi "Bazooka" Rhadebe, a leading opponent of titanium mining in Xolobeni, marks a crisis that has been building for over two decades around land and chiefs in rural black South Africa. The context of his murder is a scramble for self-enrichment by chiefs, which is not confined to the Wild Coast. Many chiefs are now scrambling to push themselves to the forefront of empowerment companies for self-enrichment from mining deals.

Our bulletin ends with some discouraging news from **Northern Europe**. In **Finland**, this April a new law known as **'The Forestry Act'** has come into effect. It **will threaten over 5.4 million acres of water systems and nearly 900,000 acres of forest in Europe's only pristine forests**, while opening the door to further exploitation. The Sami Council is now assessing what their next steps will be to try to stop what is being called one of the largest land grabs in Europe's history. It must be pointed out that Finland has received criticism for never ratifying the International Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, known as ILO 169, that stipulates the right of Indigenous peoples to free, prior and informed consent of all corporate and development projects on their land.

A good reading to all,

The CALG Team

GENERAL TOPICS

An urgent plea for governments to stem the murder of forest guardians

In early March, Indigenous Honduran activist Berta Cáceres was gunned down in her own home in response to her protests against a dam that threatens to displace hundreds of her people. A few weeks later, another member of her community, Nelson García, was murdered for the same reason. Berta received the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2015 in recognition of her efforts, and was an inspiration to Indigenous Peoples around the world. During my official [visit](#) to Honduras last November, she facilitated my meeting with her people, who told me troubling stories of violence and intimidation in response to their protests. Despite numerous death threats and emergency protection measures granted by the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights, the Honduran government failed to protect Berta, and continues to fail her community. Her family and her community remain in danger, and it is urgent that the government – who has thus far maintained that Berta’s murder was a botched robbery – act immediately to protect her family and stem the flow of indigenous blood.

READ MORE

<http://news.trust.org/item/20160405170026-jth2s/?source=gep>

Indigenous peoples are being killed for their land

The March 31 front-page article “[‘A lot of people wanted her dead’](#)” shed light on the murder of nature’s guardians, but it missed a crucial point: Berta Cáceres Flores’s murder was rooted in her government’s catastrophic failure to recognize the land rights of indigenous people and local communities. This problem is not unique to Honduras, or even to Latin America, as the murders of Indra Pelani in Indonesia, Chai Bunthonglek in Thailand and Yunis Akumu in Uganda demonstrate. Worldwide, indigenous and other local communities have legal ownership rights to just one-fifth of their lands. This gap allows governments to sell their territories to the highest bidder, agreements that are legal on the surface but violate long-held rights and the international agreements that support them.

READ MORE

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/indigenous-peoples-are-being-killed-for-their-land/2016/04/01/5f7dca9c-f764-11e5-958d-d038dac6e718_story.html

Indigenous Protest Exclusion from COP21, Say It Threatens Them

As 165 countries signed the highly controversial Paris climate change deal at U.N. headquarters on Friday, Diana Rios, a 23-year-old Indigenous Asheninka activist from the Peruvian Amazon, paddled down the East River to protest against the exclusion of Indigenous people from the international push to tackle global warming. Rios expressed frustration at what she sees as inadequate recognition of the threats climate change poses to Indigenous communities. "The communities have a key role in protecting tropical forests and slowing global climate change. We have the potential to help the world fight it, and adapt to its impacts," she said.

READ MORE

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Indigenous-Protest-Exclusion-from-COP21-Say-It-Threatens-Them-20160424-0012.html>

Combatting Climate Change: Involving Indigenous Communities – Analysis

Climate change combat is often in the hands of policy-makers, researchers and governments. However it is the marginalised and indigenous communities that feel the full force of climate change effects. To be effective the campaign needs to include the wisdom and traditional practices of these communities to better protect those who need it the most.

READ MORE

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/27042016-combatting-climate-change-involving-indigenous-communities-analysis/>

Forest lands and indigenous people 'increasingly insecure' as Paris Agreement signed

Representatives from 155 countries are in New York to sign a climate-change agreement to limit the rise in global temperatures. Forest-dwelling indigenous peoples claim the pact ignores them and that they face assaults when trying to protect their land. Those active in securing their land rights in the world's forests and protecting local communities spoke out during a presentation called Forests for Climate – The Science, The Politics, The Indigenous Peoples at the Ford Foundation on Thursday. *"The world is created to be balanced... it is all connected... if... something happens in our territory it will affect you guys here. That's why we have to act together,"* Mina Setra,

an indigenous Dayak Pompakng from Indonesia and deputy secretary general of the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN), told RT.

READ MORE

<https://www.rt.com/usa/340675-forest-lands-increasingly-insecure/>

Keep indigenous people on their land to protect forests, say activists

With world leaders converging in New York to sign a landmark climate deal, activists along with actor Alec Baldwin called on Thursday for a halt to deforestation, a contributor to global warming, by giving indigenous people rights to their land. Keeping indigenous tribes from being pushed off their land would help protect forests that absorb planet-warming greenhouse gases, they told reporters in New York City.

READ MORE

<http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report-keep-indigenous-people-on-their-land-to-protect-forests-say-activists-2204920>

In Celebration of Earth Day: Panel on Tropical Forests and Indigenous Population

Ford Foundation Holds Thursday Panel on Tropical Forests and Indigenous People

World leaders gathered in New York City to sign the historic Paris Climate Agreement on Earth Day. On its first day available, a record 175 nations became signatories to the non-binding treaty, which is set to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit global warming by 2100. Just one day prior to such an historic event, the Ford Foundation hosted a panel briefing about communities of indigenous people who are striving to protect critical tropical forests. The focus of the panel was to discuss the role of the world's nations in supporting these efforts in order to meet the goals of the landmark climate change agreement.

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<http://edmdigest.com/news/in-celebration-of-earth-day-panel-on-tropical-forests-and-indigenous-population/>

Forest guardians face violence and death, Ford Foundation panel with Alec Baldwin hears

At the Forests for Climate panel, Indigenous activists joined with researchers and celebrities as they addressed the need to safeguard land rights for Indigenous people who are the stewards of their regions' forests. Setra told the panel that with the loss of the forests, Indigenous people also lose their culture. They are absorbed into large cities where they are "no longer Indigenous people." The Ford Foundation event coincides with the growing threat to Indigenous environmental leaders who oppose projects that endanger their communities and forests. In late March, illegal loggers wielding axes hospitalized Cambodian activist Phon Sopheak during a forest patrol. That same month, Honduran Lenca activist Berta Cáceres was murdered. Over the five years ending in 2014, more than 450 environmentalists world-wide were killed, according to the international watchdog [group](#), Global Witness. Disputes over industrial logging, mining and land rights most often prompt the deaths.

READ MORE

<http://www.nationalobserver.com/2016/04/21/news/forest-guardians-face-violence-and-death-ford-foundation-panel-alec-baldwin-hears>

Will the Permanent Forum Stand Up for Indigenous Peoples?

The U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) seems complicit in the burying of its most profound action to date: the critique of the Doctrine of Christian Discovery issued at its 13th Session in May 2014: "Study on the impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery on indigenous peoples, including mechanisms, processes and instruments of redress." [UN Doc E/C.19/2014/3]

READ MORE

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/04/26/will-permanent-forum-stand-indigenous-peoples>

Land rights crucial to save tropical forests – UNDP

The world's tropical forests are a key part of slowing climate change, and ensuring indigenous peoples have land rights is essential to protecting them, US-based researchers say. A campaign group, Global Witness, puts [the number of land and environment activists killed since the end of 2009](#) at around 650. It says most died fighting to protect remote land from development which had been approved by governments.

READ MORE

<http://www.climatechangenews.com/2016/04/26/land-rights-crucial-to-save-tropical-forests-undp/>

"In Crisis, We Find Hope"

An interview with Mexican activist Gustavo Castro Soto about the Berta Cáceres assassination—and building a world that moves beyond extractivism.

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<https://nacla.org/news/2016/04/28/crisis-we-find-hope>

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

THE PHILIPPINES

PNNI demands justice for the death of comrades

The Palawan NGO Network Inc. (PNNI) demands justice for the killing of their two para-environmental enforcers Tendy Salamat and Ptr. Nestor Lubas who were shot in Brgy. Bulalacao, Bataraza, April 13. Salamat and Lubas were traversing the road of Brgy. Bulalacao on motorcycle when they were shot. Both men died on the spot. Policemen recovered from the crime scene six empty shells of caliber 45. The suspects are still at large. PNNI Executive Director Atty. Robert Chan condemns the killings of their volunteers especially if the act has something to do with their job of protecting the environment.

READ MORE

<http://palawan-news.com/pnni-demands-justice-killing-comrades/>

Earth Day 2016 NMR-Philippines: Exacerbating the People's Plight Amidst Poverty and El Niño

Thousands of concerned citizens, environmental activists, people's artists, church people, workers, some local officials, Lumad (Filipino Indigenous People), and peasants all throughout Mindanao, Philippines marched in solidarity on April 22nd to celebrate the 46th Global Earth Day. Green-group as well with initiative "Luntiang Bayan: Boto para sa Tao, Hayop at Kalikasan" (Green Nation: Vote for the People, Animals and Environment) in connection to the approaching May 9 national election guides voters to choose candidates that carry programs with the totality and commitment for the Environment protection. The cry of the people condemns the inutile response of the Philippine state to protect the environment and care of the people's needs.

READ MORE

http://www.einnews.com/pr_news/322969021/earth-day-2016-nmr-philippines-exacerbating-the-people-s-plight-amidst-poverty-and-el-ni-o

Upholding the rights of indigenous peoples

The indigenous peoples (or IPs) estimated to be 14-17 million accounts for 12 percent of the country's population. They are spread over Northern Luzon (Cordillera Administrative Region, 33%) and Mindanao (61%), with some groups in the Visayas area. Although the IPs are represented in the House of Representatives, they still have the least meaningful political representation. There is supposedly a committee on Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples comprising of 25 members who takes care of all matters directly and principally relating to indigenous cultural communities and IPs and the development of their communities. But in reality their programs seem weak because to this day, many elements are destroying the IPs environment and their culture. And up to now they are the people with the least education. In other words, neglected and exploited.

READ MORE

<http://www.philstar.com/opinion/2016/04/25/1576558/upholding-rights-indigenous-peoples>

Salupongan International: Fighting for the rights of indigenous people

Although the conflict between the Philippine government and the communist rebels in Mindanao has been a long problem that has affected thousands of indigenous people in the area, not many are aware that another issue that is facing them is the violation of their human rights, specifically the displacement and environmental degradation that is facing their ancestral land. Indigenous culture is based off the sentiment that "Land is life," and this destruction of their land deeply affects their livelihood. Many were displaced from their lands, a process that continues today and shows no sign of ending. The effects are felt throughout the Philippines, particularly in the Mindanao region where about 63 percent of the country's total estimated indigenous population are living. The largest group in the region is collectively referred to as "Lumads," a term that used by 18 different ethnic groups to distinguish themselves as the native people of Mindanao and unify the different tribal groups.

READ MORE

<http://asianjournal.com/aj-magazines/salupongan-international-fighting-for-the-rights-of-indigenous-people/#sthash.d3KXVHOC.dpuf>

Religious partner with UN to protect lumad

A religious organization that has long worked with marginalized sectors has partnered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to help address the issue of protecting *lumad* communities affected by conflict in Northern Mindanao. The “*Lumad* Protection Monitoring and Action Network” aims to train *lumad* communities to document and report issues concerning their protection, with volunteers organized in 10 Northern Mindanao communities on indigenous people’s rights and local and international human rights instruments, the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines-Northern Mindanao Sub-Region said. “To address protection issues, the communities themselves need to know what they are entitled to,” Sister Maria Famita Somogod, MSM, RMP-NMR coordinator, said in a statement announcing the partnership. “Then they themselves should know how to react when these rights are violated.” “With the escalation of violence against indigenous communities in the past years, it is difficult to have to wait for external individuals or organizations to come to the communities,” she added. “Actions have to be immediate, the relay of information fast.”

READ MORE

<http://interaksyon.com/article/126464/religious-partner-with-un-to-protect-lumad>

Lumad Killings Brought to Light

The genocide of the Lumad people of Mindanao (the second largest island in the Philippines) could be considered one of the largest human rights violations of this age, yet it is shrouded in silence. Caught in the crossfire between the communist insurgency and the Philippine government’s armed forces, the peaceful indigenous people of the southern Philippines live in fear as their land and their source of livelihood is claimed by these outside forces. The Lumad have the right to defend their claims to their ancestral lands, through the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act of 1997. However, with direct attacks, murders, and harassment from the communist insurgency and the Philippine government, many have been displaced from their lands and face discrimination and further violence.

READ MORE

<https://sffoghorn.org/2016/04/28/lumad-killings-brought-to-light/>

Philippines: Lumad go to the USA – the Aquino Government is killing us

Los Angeles, California – Indigenous peoples (IP) from the Philippines are on a six-week speaking tour in the United States of America to tell their stories. The Lakbay Lumad USA is a continuation of the Mindanao's indigenous peoples' journey for peace with justice. It aims to put forward their calls to stop the attacks against Lumad schools, communities, and people; to demand for food and justice; gather support for the people's resistance against militarization and plunder in Mindanao; and to call to stop US military aid to the Philippines. Lakbay Lumad USA started in Washington DC on April 15 to lobby before congressional offices and draw the support of the country's ecumenical leaders. The tour is now in California and will end in New York for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, after sweeping 7 US cities with forums and protest actions.

READ MORE

<http://iva.aippnet.org/philippines-lumad-go-to-the-usa-the-aquino-government-is-killing-us/>

Filipino tribals issue appeal to presidency candidates

Tribal people in the Philippines have called on candidates in next month's presidential election to heed the plight of indigenous peoples and include them on their electoral agenda. "The lives of 15 million indigenous peoples are in the hands of the next president," said Kakay Tolentino, national coordinator of Bai Indigenous Women Network. "We ask them to include the tribal people's agenda," said Tolentino, a leader of the Dumagat tribe.

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<http://www.ucanews.com/news/filipino-tribals-issue-appeal-to-presidency-candidates/75857>

Philippine rights group brings farmers' case before UN

Authorities accused of destroying evidence by clearing the crime scene, burning personal belongings of protestors

A Philippine human rights group has brought the plight of protesting farmers affected by drought in the southern Philippines before the United Nations Human Rights Council. "It is important that the international community is made aware of these gross human rights violations against the farmers," said Cristina Palabay, secretary general of the rights group Karapatan. Some 6,000 farmers and indigenous people who demanded aid from the government were [violently dispersed](#) by police in the southern city of Kidapawan on April 1. The violence resulted in the deaths of three people while some 60 farmers were charged with direct assault on persons in authority. Palabay said the action of state security forces violated human rights. An independent fact-finding mission launched by Karapatan and various church groups noted that authorities tried to destroy evidence by clearing the crime scene and burning the personal belongings of the protesting farmers.

READ MORE

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/philippine-rights-group-brings-farmers-case-before-un/75809>

Militants demand release of 71 Kidapawan farmers

Militant groups stormed the Department of Justice (DOJ) yesterday to call for the immediate release of 71 detained farmers in Kidapawan City in North Cotabato after the violent police dispersal of protesting peasants that resulted in the death of two persons and scores injured last April 1. Members of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) questioned the arrest of the farmers and slammed the DOJ for recommending P12,000 bail for each farmer charged with direct assault for allegedly beating up some police officers.

READ MORE

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/04/14/1572732/militants-demand-release-71-kidapawan-farmers>

Senate resume probe on Kidapawan dispersal

The Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights resumes on Wednesday (April 20) the probe on the bloody dispersal of protesters in Kidapawan, North Cotabato which left three farmers dead and dozens wounded on April 1.

[Read: What we know so far on the Kidapawan incident](#)

Farmer protesters, provincial police and other local officers are expected to attend the second Senate hearing on the Kidapawan violence at 2 p.m. Militant farmers group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP)-North Cotabato said its members are ready to face Senate inquiry. KMP-North Cotabato Chairperson Jerry Alborme confirmed his attendance, together with three other witnesses and their legal counsels from the National Union of Peoples' Lawyer (NUPL) and United Peoples' Lawyer in Mindanao (UPLM). Among the accused farmers witnessing are: Ibao Sulang, the father of slain protester Darwin Sulang; Arnel Takyawan, a wounded rallyist who was just released from jail; and Valentina Berdin, the 78-year-old grandmother who was among those facing direct assault charges. They were among the 81 protesters released by the Municipal Trial Court of Kidapawan after posting bail. They were arrested by authorities after blocking the Davao-Cotabato Highway to demand the release of calamity aid from the local government.

READ MORE

<http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2016/04/20/Senate-hearing-Kidapawan-violence.html>

To protect Philippine forests, may the 'tribal force' be with you

Indigenous people in the Philippines are calling on the government to authorise a force of tribal rangers to help preserve the country's forests and curb climate change. Forest management and protection are an important part of the Philippines' strategy to reduce its carbon emissions by 70 percent by 2030, a commitment made for the new global agreement on climate change reached in Paris last December. The Southeast Asian country aims to reduce its emissions from deforestation and slash-and-burn farming largely through a scheme called REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), in which developing countries are compensated for protecting their forests.

READ MORE

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/563330/scitech/science/to-protect-philippine-forests-may-the-tribal-force-be-with-you#sthash.mtiFvZhT.dpuf>

THAILAND

High-profile group opposes private gold mining and licence renewal

A GROUP of high-profile academics and former politicians have rallied opposition against the renewal of Akara Resources' gold mining licence and the company's plan to open a new gold mine, arguing that the gains from the new concession would not be worth the environmental pollution and harm to public health. The Civil Society to Reform Resources and Gold also urged the government to designate gold as distinct from other ores covered by the Mineral Act so as to preserve it as a national treasure and forbid private companies from operating mining concessions. The group, including prominent academic Prof Rapee Sagarik, met yesterday at Rangsit University to sign a statement intended for Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha petitioning him to deny Akara Resources' licence renewal, advocate for environmental and healthcare remedies for people affected by gold mining, and oppose the opening of new mines nationwide.

READ MORE

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national/High-profile-group-opposes-private-gold-mining-and-30284445.html>

TAIWAN

Lawmaker protests 'exclusion' of Aboriginal rights

An Aboriginal legislator yesterday said the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) legislative caucus was excluding Aboriginal rights from legislative discussions. "I feel strongly about the Judiciary and Organic Laws and Statutes Committee not inviting the Council of Indigenous Peoples," Non-Partisan Solidarity Union Legislator May Chin said at a meeting of the Internal Administration Committee.

READ MORE

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2016/04/22/2003644543>

SARAWAK (Eastern Malaysia)

Indigenous people hail Adenan's decision to stop Baram project

The unanticipated decision by Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem to revoke the gazettelement for land earmarked for the Baram dam and reservoir has been commended by indigenous leaders around the world. The decision to halt the construction of the Baram dam is timely with mounting evidence that the unpredictable and extreme weather caused by climate change would increase cost and reduce benefits of mega dams, said Joan Carling, a member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII).

READ MORE

<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2016/04/02/leaders-laud-dam-move-indigenous-people-hail-adenans-decision-to-stop-baram-project/>

How did people in 52 rumah panjang become squatters overnight?

Imagine waking up and finding out that your family home that has been passed down from your ancestors no longer belonged to you. Well, something similar [may have happened to the residents of 52 Sarawakian longhouses recently](#). Recently some of the headmen of these longhouses came forward to seek clarification on whether the state gomen ([which has always been BN](#)) had actually taken their lands from them. Because after receiving some beautifully framed maps which were accompanied by some very official looking certificates, they realised that they may have already become squatters in the land that they, and their ancestors, have been living on.

READ MORE

<http://cilisos.my/how-did-people-in-52-rumah-panjang-become-squatters-overnight/>

BANGLADESH

Tortured, Raped, Massacred: Indigenous Tribes Continue To Suffer 69 Years After Partition

The indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in modern-day Bangladesh have only tales of suffering to narrate. They have been killed, tortured, raped and massacred. Their ancestral lands were confiscated following which they were forcefully evicted. Some of them became refugees in India, in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, where they are treated as unwanted elements and considered a threat to the native population. Still, the injustices have not been over and done with. They continue to be treated as 'fallen' people whose only fault was being less in number, a minority; and they couldn't 'imagine' the 'nation' like the majority did. The majority Bengalis called them 'traitors' when they demanded to become a part of India.

READ MORE

<http://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2016/04/chittagong-hills-tribal-human-rights/>

More security for indigenous women

The word "rape" does not exist in indigenous society, but indigenous women are repeatedly being subjected to the act. The most striking of the many instances is that of Kalpana Chakma, the fearless indigenous activist who was abducted allegedly by those who were in control in the hills in 1996 when she was only 20 years old. So many years have passed but the perpetrators were not brought to justice. Thirty-five investigation officers have reportedly investigated the case, but to no purpose. While Kalpana Chakma's case received much media attention, many other indigenous victims' stories have remained unheard. Not many of the progressive people talk about the issue on a national platform. This may lead to a sense of indifference and apathy towards indigenous people's cause. The recent incident of Tonu that shook the country is a barbarous act, more so, because it took place within the secure zone of a cantonment. Even after two weeks, the criminals could not be identified.

READ MORE

<http://www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/2016/04/08/25251/More-security-for-indigenous-women>

INDIA

The Gir wildlife sanctuary, home to the rare Asiatic lion, is facing threats from illegal mining. Five years after RTI activist Amit Jethwa, who was spearheading the fight against illegal mining was shot dead, activity in and around the sanctuary is continuing unchecked, NDTV has found. Mining is not allowed within 10 km of the reserve, since it can upset the fragile ecology of the area. But at Surva village in the Gir Somnath region, barely 2 km from the sanctuary, an NDTV team heard deafening sounds of heavy equipment. A group of labourers, seen mining limestone, feigned ignorance about who owned the quarry. But they stopped work when a man, who came on a bike, asked them to. Questioned by NDTV, the man refused to give his identity, claiming he was a buyer looking for a limestone consignment. At Aankalwada village near the protected sanctuary, no labourers could be seen, but there were tell-tale signs of mining.

READ MORE

<http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/illegal-mining-thrives-a-stones-throw-from-gir-forest-1338602>

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PNG's SABLs will feature in country's human rights review

A critical report by the United Nations Human Rights Council of Papua New Guinea's controversial Special Agricultural and Business Leases, or SABLs, will feature in the country's human rights review next month. The SABLs, which have been declared illegal, have been deemed a land grab which the UN says has been especially harmful to minorities and indigenous peoples. The SABL scheme resulted in over five million hectares of land being unlawfully taken from the rural indigenous people and given to foreign corporations, largely for logging operations. The UN report, completed in March, was prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in for the Universal Periodic Review of the human rights situation in PNG which is scheduled for 6th May.

READ MORE

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/302160/png's-sabls-will-feature-in-country's-human-rights-review>

FII

Traditional land rights

Fiji is one of only two countries out of 200 sovereign states where indigenous people still own the bulk of the country's lands, with the other country being Bolivia, says former career civil servant Jioji Kotobalavu. "This is due to the contribution of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna to protect iTaukei interests as customary owners of their communal lands and associated resources," he said while presenting at the memorial lecture yesterday.

READ MORE

<http://fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=350926>

LATIN AMERICA

200 Latin American Groups Look to Stop Canadian Mining Abuses

Latin American organizations aim to highlight violations and abuses of Canadian mining operations to Prime Minister Trudeau. Over 200 Latin American organizations are calling on Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for greater accountability in Canadian mining operations overseas. The organizations have written a letter to the leader and two organizations based in Canada, Development and Peace and MiningWatch Canada, are urging him to pay special attention to it. "Several of the signatory organizations are partner organizations of Development and Peace whose work in the field has been directly affected by Canadian mining," said Mary Durran, Latin America program officer at Development and Peace, in the statement released by MiningWatch Canada.

READ MORE

<http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/200-Latin-American-Groups-Look-to-Stop-Canadian-Mining-Abuses-20160425-0047.html>

Documenting illegal land occupancy from the air

Indigenous communities use drones to document illegal occupations on their territories and to safeguard natural resources

Throughout the Americas, indigenous forest communities' territories face intensifying threats, as global demand increases for land and forest resources. Non-indigenous settlers and loggers illegally enter indigenous territories to poach valuable timber or to burn and clear large swaths of forest. Emerging technologies, such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) – also known as drones – offer an unprecedented opportunity to empower communities to defend their territories and natural resources. UAV technology allows them to monitor their land in real time, obtain visual evidence of any trespass, and make claims based on this evidence.

READ MORE

<http://ictupdate.cta.int/Feature-Articles/Documenting-illegal-land-occupancy-from-the-air/%2882%29/1461750193>

BRAZIL

A landmark win against hydro dams on Indigenous lands in Brazil FUNAI decision protects Munduruku lands from Tapajós hydro dam destruction

In a landmark victory for indigenous land rights in Brazil, the National Foundation for the Indian (FUNAI) has decided to proceed with the official demarcation and protection of the Munduruku Peoples 700-square-mile ancestral territory on the Tapajós River, in the Brazilian Amazon. The land demarcation is a major political win for the Munduruku Peoples. Under existing Brazil legislation the construction of hydroelectric plants that flood demarcated Indigenous lands is expressly prohibited. This means the Munduruku's historical territory must now be spared from the same dam-driven destruction witnessed in the Xingú region since construction work began on the controversial Belo Monte dam project. The recent move by FUNAI also sets a new legal milestone for Indigenous Peoples demanding land demarcation as a way to protect their territories.

READ MORE

<https://intercontinentalcry.org/landmark-win-against-hydro-dams-indigenous-lands-brazil>

Amazon mega-dam suspended, providing hope for indigenous people and biodiversity

The vast Tapajós Basin dam complex would be a disaster to Amazon biodiversity, and wreck indigenous and river communities, but likely fail to meet its energy and investor goals due to escalating drought due to climate change, according to environmentalists.

READ MORE

<http://news.mongabay.com/2016/04/amazon-mega-dam-suspended-hope-indigenous-people-biodiversity/>

Brazil suspends Amazon dam project over fears for indigenous people

Land rights campaigners have welcomed the suspension of a mega-dam project in Brazil's Amazon basin which would have flooded an area the size of New York City and displaced indigenous communities. The São Luiz do Tapajós dam would have forced Munduruku indigenous people out of their traditional territory while disrupting the Amazon ecosystem, a campaigner said on Friday. The move by Brazil's environment agency IBAMA to suspend construction permits for the dam followed a report by the country's National Indian Foundation which said the project would have violated indigenous land rights protected under Brazil's constitution.

READ MORE

<http://news.trust.org/item/20160422170041-ds8vb/?source=hpOtherNews1>

Fight against illegal Amazon gold mining intensifies

After trekking nearly two hours through dense jungle, Brazilian environmental special forces burst into a clearing where the trees had been sawn and a muddy crater dug: an illegal gold mine on indigenous land in the heart of the Amazon. The miners and gold were already gone, scattered by the whirl of helicopter blades, but armed troopers in camouflage burned tents and generators. When there was nothing left, they moved on to the next. The five-day operation last week, led by Brazil's environmental agency Ibama and Indian foundation Funai, located 15 air strips and destroyed 20 barges used to transport equipment and supplies by the estimated 5,000 illegal miners in the vast remote region.

READ MORE

<http://www.oann.com/fight-against-illegal-amazon-gold-mining-intensifies/>

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READ MORE

<http://www.stabroeknews.com/2016/news/regional/04/27/fight-illegal-amazon-gold-mining-intensifies/>

[A Campaign to Save Brazilian Indians from Genocide](#)

Despite the political chaos currently engulfing Brazil, the campaign aims to bring attention to serious human rights issues and threats facing the country's indigenous people. These threats persist regardless of the political turmoil in the country. The campaign "Stop Brazil's Genocide," focuses on protecting uncontacted tribes of the Amazon such as the Kawahiva people, ending violence and land theft directed against the Guarani Indians in southern Brazil and stopping PEC 215, a proposed constitutional amendment which would seriously undermine indigenous land rights and spell disaster for tribes nationwide.

READ MORE

<http://www.brazzil.com/23937-a-campaign-to-save-brazilian-indians-from-genocide>

Indigenous Continue to Face Violence in Reclaiming Territory in Brazil

After being shot at and having their homes burned by gunmen hired by ranchers, Guarani villagers in northern Brazil are being harassed even while the United Nations, [Survival International](#) (SI) and several Brazilian organizations and officials are trying to help them. The indigenous Guarani people of Taquara village in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul are attempting to reoccupy land stolen from them; they were attacked on a nightly basis for a week in January according to an [SI report](#). “The gunmen, employed by local ranchers, arrived in around 10 trucks and have been firing repeatedly at the Guarani village in Mato Grosso do Sul state. They have also reportedly set fire to several houses. The attacks are continuing on a nightly basis,” SI reported on January 24.

READ MORE

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/04/17/indigenous-continue-face-violence-reclaiming-territory-brazil-164070>

Amazon Indians at risk in mercury poisoning crisis

Illegal gold mining in the Amazon has a devastating effect on indigenous peoples, writes Sarina Kidd. First the miners bring disease, deforestation and even murder. Then long after they have gone, communities are left to suffer deadly mercury poisoning. Now the UN has been called on to intervene.

READ MORE

http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_round_up/2987499/amazon_indians_at_risk_in_mercury_poisoning_crisis.html

PERU'

In a David-and-Goliath battle, community activists in [Peru](#) have, so far, succeeded in shutting down the creation of a \$5 billion open-caste gold and copper mine next to a pristine lake. The story of Maxima Acuña – a farmer who owns a 60-acre plot of land on the exact site where the giant Newmont Mining Corporation has pursued a land grab, is a reminder that even the world’s largest companies can be held in check by activists. The mother of four was awarded one of six

prestigious [Goldman Environment prizes](#) this year for leading the fight. Here is part of [her story](#): With promises of jobs and economic prosperity, the Peruvian government awarded [mining](#) licenses across the country. Despite these promises, rural peasant farmers, who were rarely consulted in the development of mining projects, largely continue to live in poverty. In many communities, mining waste has polluted the local waterways, affecting local people's drinking water and irrigation needs.

READ MORE

<http://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/peruvian-farmer-wins-david-and-goliath-battle-against-mining-giant/>

Peruvian activist battles mining industry to save her homeland

Maxima Acuña, one of this year's six winners of the Goldman Environmental Awards, is doing what many are across the world: protecting the land, water, the rivers and streams from resource extraction. Acuña's fight in defending the earth against multinational corporations intent on raping the land is no light task. Just last month, Berta Caceres—an indigenous Lenca woman of Honduras and 2015 Goldman Award winner—was assassinated for standing up against such powers. When Acuña got up to accept her award on April 18, she sang her story in oral tradition, an achingly vivid description of the destruction of her home, her belongings and the violence she and her family have faced.

READ MORE

<http://eltecolote.org/content/en/features/peruvian-activist-battles-mining-industry-to-save-her-homeland/>

COLOMBIA

Secure territorial rights of indigenous peoples and traditional knowledge must be central to post-conflict initiatives to save the Colombian Amazon and achieve sustainable development. A new report "[Deforestation and indigenous peoples rights in the Colombian Amazon](#)" co-published by

social justice and environmental NGO DEDISE and Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) underlines the critical role of secure land and territorial rights and traditional knowledge in sustaining one of the most culturally and biologically diverse forests on the planet.

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<http://www.forestpeoples.org/topics/agribusiness/news/2016/04/secure-territorial-rights-indigenous-peoples-and-traditional-knowle>

Secure territorial rights of indigenous peoples and traditional knowledge must be central ...

Secure territorial rights of indigenous peoples and traditional knowledge must be central to post-conflict initiatives to save the Colombian Amazon and achieve sustainable development. A new report "Deforestation and Indigenous Peoples Rights in the Colombian Amazon" co-published by social justice and environmental NGO DEDISE and Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) underlines the critical role of secure land and territorial rights and traditional knowledge in sustaining one of the most culturally and biologically diverse forests on the planet. Drawing on grassroots interviews, community workshops and a review of official documents, the study assesses historical and contemporary direct and underlying causes of forest destruction and associated human rights impacts in the region. It finds that current deforestation and associated negative impacts on indigenous peoples are most rampant in Caqueta, Guaviare and Putumayo. Forest loss and rights violations in western and northern areas are driven by expansion of cattle ranching and commercial cultivation of illicit crops. According to the report, deforestation is closely linked to road construction, while mining and oil developments act as poles of colonisation leading to urbanisation, land grabbing, militarisation, conflict and human rights violations.

READ MORE

http://www.businessghana.com/portal/news/index.php?op=getNews&news_cat_id=&id=210401

GUATEMALA

Guatemalan Indigenous Leader Dies Fighting for Water Rights

Jesus Alvarez was one of the 15,000 indigenous people who participated in the March for Water that ended Friday in the country's capital. A prominent indigenous leader died after a 10-day march across the country demanding access to water and land, Guatemalan indigenous authorities reported Tuesday, as the physical strain of the march dramatically weakened the elderly leader who died at a Guatemala City hospital's emergency service.

READ MORE

<http://www.telesur.tv/english/news/Guatemalan-Indigenous-Leader-Dies-Fighting-for-Water-Rights-20160427-0050.html>

Group claims Reno mining firm operating illegally in Guatemala

A progressive group on Thursday called on the Nevada Mining Association to distance itself from a mining operator they say is working illegally in Guatemala. Around a dozen members of the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada attempted to deliver a letter to the Nevada Mining Association asking them to publicly censure Daniel Kappes, president of Kappes, Cassidy and Associates. The group said Kappes is running a mine in Guatemala illegally as well as intimidating locals with violence. "These actions promote an already problematic culture of impunity in Guatemala and we hope the Nevada Mining Association will agree that this type of behavior on the part of Kappes is shameful and not representative of the kind of person it wants to be associated with," said Ellen Moore, mining justice organizer for PLAN.

READ MORE

<http://www.rgj.com/story/news/politics/2016/04/21/plan-claims-reno-mining-company-operating-illegally-guatemala/83364188/>

HONDURAS

Report of 'Justice for Berta Cáceres' International Mission

Report by international mission of 15 parliamentarians, jurists and representatives of human rights, trade union, and popular organizations and networks that travelled to Honduras in mid-March to clarify the context of the assassination of Berta Cáceres and to make recommendations to end the culture of impunity affecting human rights defenders in the region.

READ MORE

<https://www.tni.org/en/publication/report-of-justice-for-bertha-caceres-international-mission>

Stéphane Dion urged to protect Honduran villagers from Canadian mining company

Aura Minerals accused of exposing Azacualpa residents to cyanide leaching through gold mine. A Canadian human rights delegation urged Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion's office Wednesday to come to the aid of Honduran villagers they say are being exploited by a Canadian mining company. The group — including First Nations women leaders, the organization MiningWatch Canada, lawyers and activists — visited Honduras this past week and want to draw attention to the plight of villagers in Azacualpa. The group says in a brief presented to Dion's office that the operations of Toronto-based Aura Minerals are affecting the health of villagers by exposing them to cyanide leaching and from its open-pit gold mine.

READ MORE

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/aura-minerals-honduras-1.3545712>

Stop aid to Honduras, says murdered campaigner's daughter

Berta Cáceres's daughter urges Europeans to suspend aid and investment in hydro projects until human rights are respected The daughter of murdered environmental leader Berta Cáceres has called for a suspension of European aid to [Honduras](#) and investment in its hydro projects until the country complies with human rights norms. The daughter of murdered environmental leader Berta Cáceres has called for a suspension of European aid to [Honduras](#) and investment in its hydro projects until the country complies with human rights norms. Bertha Zúñiga Cáceres is calling on

Dutch development bank FMO, FinnFund, hydropower company Voith and the European commission to take action.

READ MORE

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/apr/20/daughter-of-murdered-bertha-caceres-calls-for-stop-on-investment-in-honduras>

Death Squads Are Back in Honduras, Activists Tell Congress

Honduran activist Gaspar Sanchez spoke at a briefing on Capitol Hill, urging lawmakers to support an impartial investigation into the murder of environmental activist [Berta Cáceres](#). Cáceres had mobilized native communities to speak out against the [Agua Zarca Dam](#), a hydroelectric project backed by [European and Chinese corporations](#), before being killed by two unknown gunmen last month.

READ MORE

<https://theintercept.com/2016/04/12/death-squads-are-back-in-honduras-honduran-activists-tell-congress/>

AFRICA

African land grabs; we cannot expect companies and financiers to regulate themselves

More recently, in 2009, [conflicts](#) between investors, conservationists and local pastoralist communities living near Serengeti National Park resulted in the burning of village homesteads, reported human rights abuses, and thousands of displaced livestock. Four years later, the same conflict erupted again and the Tanzanian government threatened to take 1,500 sq km of prime grazing land away from local communities, and give it to foreign investors interested in using the land for hunting and tourism purposes.

READ MORE

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/apr/27/the-global-land-rights-struggle-is-intensifying>

TANZANIA

Maasai winner of environment prize protects land from grabbers

Dressed in his traditional red shawl, Edward Loure was watching over a herd of cattle grazing on dew-laden grass when he heard that his efforts to protect land rights had earned him one of the world's most prestigious environmental prizes. The 44-year-old Maasai community leader in Tanzania's northern Manyara region is among six winners of the Goldman Environmental Prize, the world's largest award for grassroots campaigners, presented on Monday in San Francisco. "I am very humbled to receive this honour, it's a great honour for the entire Maasai and Hadzabe community," Loure said of the prize which was also awarded to activists from Cambodia, Slovakia, Puerto Rico, the United States and Peru.

READ MORE

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3546179/Maasai-winner-environment-prize-protects-land-grabbers.html#ixzz4793N3TrS>

Securing communal land rights for Tanzania's Indigenous Peoples

Commuting between land rights negotiations in the city and herding goats on the plains, Edward Loure is at once a traditional Maasai and a modern urbanite, writes Sophie Morlin-Yron. That ability to straddle the two very different worlds he inhabits has been key to his success at having 200,000 acres of land registered into village and community ownership - and his own 2016 Goldman Prize.

READ MORE

http://www.theecologist.org/Interviews/2987604/securing_communal_land_rights_for_tanzanias_indigenous_peoples.html

Tanzania: Maasai Winner of Environment Prize Protects Land From 'Grabbers'

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READ MORE

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201604190829.html>

CONGO

Illegal mining in Congo wiping out gorilla populations

Fewer than 3,800 Grauer gorillas still live in the wild, down from 17,000 in 1998. The population of Grauer's gorillas, the world's largest subspecies, has dropped by 77% in the last 18 years due mainly to illegal mining for coltan and other minerals and the civil war that hit the Democratic Republic of Congo, an [extensive report published this week](#) shows. Fewer than 3,800 of these gorillas still live in the wild, down from 17,000 in 1998, which according to the Wildlife Conservation Society, Flora and Fauna International and the Congolese Institute for the Conservation of Nature, should place the Grauer's subspecies on the [international "critically endangered" list](#). The experts believe that violence in the area, such as the Rwandan genocide in 1994 and later civil war in Congo, paired with the establishment of mining camps and the growth of hunting to feed miners, have all contributed to the population decline of the endangered animal.

READ MORE

<http://www.mining.com/illegal-mining-in-congo-wiping-out-gorilla-populations/>

SIERRA LEONE

Kono descendants' global protest against Ocea mining in Sierra Leone

Kono district descendants in the diaspora are calling for a global demonstration this Saturday, 23rd April 2016, to protest against Tiffany & Co.'s financial partnership with the Ocea Group – the sole owner of Koidu Holdings Ltd, for its gross injustice against the people of Kono, in the eastern district of Sierra Leone. Ocea is the largest diamond mining company in the country. In a recent court ruling in Sierra Leone, the high court determined that Ocea is not entitled to pay taxes because the parent company is not legally registered to do business in Sierra Leone. This is an absurdity and a travesty of justice. Furthermore, the same court determined that Koidu Holdings, though mining its diamonds in the Kono District of Sierra Leone, is exempt from paying taxes to the local community.

READ MORE

<http://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/?p=12453>

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa: Killing of anti-mining activist Sikhosiphi “Bazooka” Rhadebe

The Observatory has been informed by reliable sources about the killing of Mr. **Sikhosiphi “Bazooka” Rhadebe**, Chairperson of the Amadiba Crisis Committee (ACC). ACC is an advocacy group launched in 2007 to campaign for the rights of the residents of the Xolobeni community in Eastern Cape, and especially opposing open-cast mining of titanium in this area by Mineral Commodities Ltd (MRC), an Australian-owned mining company, and its local subsidiary TEM, which would result in disruption of the community's way of life. According to the information received, on March 22, 2016, at around 7.30 pm, Mr. Sikhosiphi Rhadebe was shot outside his house in Mbizana by two unidentified men. The two assailants, who came in a white Polo car with a rotating blue lamp on the roof, knocked at his door saying they were police officers. The human rights defender went out to speak with them and was shot eight times including in the head. His son witnessed the murder and was hospitalised along with Mr. Rhadebe's wife, as both were in shock. An investigation into the murder of Mr. Rhadebe has reportedly been handed over to the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation.

READ MORE

<http://www.omct.org/human-rights-defenders/urgent-interventions/south-africa/2016/04/d23714/>

South Africa mining takes a violent turn

The Xolobeni saga, which dates back at least ten years, involves the proposed open-cast mining of titanium ores from a 22km stretch of ochre-coloured sand dunes south of Port Edward in the Amadiba traditional area by Australian company Mineral Commodities (MRC). Should it go ahead, the mining would displace more than 200 households. The future of this open cast operation to mine ilmenite, rutile and zircon on pristine sand dunes, hangs in the balance. In March 2016, opponents of the plan to mine titanium in the Xolobeni area in the Eastern Cape feared for their lives after the chairman of the Amadiba Crisis Committee, Sikhosiphi Bazooka Rhadebe, was assassinated on 22 March 2016. Rhadebe was shot eight times outside his house in Lurholweni Township at Mbizana. The committee represents community members who are anti-mining. They argue that tourism should be the mainstay of the economy in this “Wild Coast”, which holds remarkable biodiversity.

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INDIA

Illegal mining playing havoc in Goa

Goa is one of the smallest of the Indian states, and yet one of the most storied. The beauty of Goa’s natural landscape, and of its traditional homes and churches, the artistic and musical creativity of its people — these have all attracted hordes of foreign and Indian tourists to its shores. But there is a darker side to Goa as well. Away from the beaches, the real estate sharks play havoc with the countryside, and the mining barons loot the dense forests that line the state’s eastern boundaries. Hartman De Souza’s book *Eat Dust* vividly describes the impact of unregulated and/or illegal mining in Goa — its destruction of hills, forests, rivers and springs, its undermining of the social fabric of rural communities, its physical polluting of Goa’s environment and its moral corruption of Goa’s political economy.

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CANADA

Métis, non-status Indians win Supreme Court battle over rights

The Métis and non-status Indians are “Indians” within the meaning of Canada’s 1867 Constitution, the Supreme Court of Canada has said in a unanimous decision that sets the stage for potentially costly negotiations around land claims and enhanced social benefits for nearly 700,000 people. The ruling states unequivocally that the term “Indians,” as it was written into law at the time of Confederation, includes all aboriginal people, not just those who hold status as members of a First Nation. It naturally follows, Justice Rosalie Abella said in writing for the court, that the federal government has a fiduciary relationship with the Métis and non-status Indians, just as it does with status Indians, and that the Métis and non-status Indians have the right to be consulted and to negotiate on matters affecting them.

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FINLAND

Sami Indigenous People Face Unprecedented Land Grab in Finland

Finland's new Forestry Act is poised to rob Sami people of decision-making control over their homelands. Sami Indigenous people in Finland are facing an unprecedented assault on their rights and territory as a new Forestry Act threatens to level swathes of the last boreal forest in Europe, home to the native group and unique biodiversity, Global Research reported Sunday. The Forestry Act passed easily this week in the Finnish parliament, despite the fact that the Sami have insisted that the law must be stopped.

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<http://www.telesur.tv/english/news/Sami-Indigenous-People-Face-Unprecedented-Land-Grab-in-Finland-20160403-0030.html>