



# WRM Bulletin

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## Resistances struggles and women's voices confronting territories destruction and false solutions



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## OUR VIEWPOINT



### **Genetically Engineered Trees: A technology that expands monoculture plantations**

The January 2017 bulletin focused on the numerous initiatives being announced worldwide that promote the expansion of millions of hectares of tree plantations ([Bulletin 228](#), January 2017). At the same time, the plantations and pulp and paper industries, among others, are strongly pushing for Genetically Engineered (GE) trees – eucalyptus and poplar in particular – to be licensed for commercial use. Consequently, this time, the editorial of the WRM Bulletin warns about the promotion of GE trees.

As the WRM has pointed out on many occasions (1), GE trees would primarily benefit the plantations and pulp and paper industries. GE trees would grow more uniform fibre faster, with fewer branches and straighter trunks, generating shorter cycles for cut and re-plant and thus more profits. GE disease resistant trees would serve large-scale monoculture plantation companies, as their large monocultures are particularly susceptible to diseases. Trees engineered to be sterile would grow faster since the trees would focus on growing rather than producing flowers. Certain areas not suitable for large-scale tree plantations, such as areas with occasional frost or droughts, could be covered with freeze-tolerant or drought-tolerant GE eucalyptus trees. Moreover, GE trees with reduced lignin would simplify turning the wood cellulose into a liquid fuel (ethanol), raising the interest from companies in the energy sector. Likewise, burning of wood pellets from “biomass plantations” is being promoted across the EU as ‘renewable energy’, and GE trees would result in faster growing plantations producing more biomass in shorter time, the argument goes.

This is very bad news for forests and the communities dependent on forests. It is also bad news for communities living within and in the vicinity of monoculture plantations since GE trees would only exacerbate the already known devastating impacts on land, water, biodiversity, livelihoods and cultures. Poplars and eucalyptus trees are extremely flammable. Within situations of drought, these monocultures of flammable trees at large-scale create the perfect recipe for disaster. A large wild fire just swept through a region of Portugal where vast areas of land are covered with eucalyptus plantations. The fire took the lives of more than 60 people. In Chile, fires in early 2017 burnt over 600



thousand hectares along with entire villages and people's livelihoods. Such fires will be more frequent and forceful as areas planted with tree monocultures expand.

In June this year, the Tree Biotechnology Conference of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) was held in Chile. At the Conference, the latest advances and developments in forestry biotechnology are promoted. IUFRO's biennial Conference provides a platform that facilitates the link between the tree biotechnology companies, monoculture plantations companies and biotechnology university centres, working hand in hand to advance GE tree technology.

This year's Conference, organized by the University of Concepción, was held in the Bío Bío region which experienced the worst wildfires in the country's history in early 2017. One of the largest extensions of monoculture plantations in the country is found in this region. The plantations industry planting mainly eucalyptus and pine trees has been heavily criticized for increasing the likelihood and severity of the fires which burned entire communities. As a press release from the Stop GE Trees Campaign states, the fact that the IUFRO Conference was in the same region as the disastrous fires "was a slap in the face to those people who lost everything." (2)

A look into the Conference sponsors reveals the interests at stake in these events. These include:

\* FuturaGene: a subsidiary of pulp and paper company Suzano, controlling almost 900 thousand hectares of land in Brazil. In 2015, a FuturaGene application for the commercial use of GE eucalyptus trees was approved in Brazil despite strong local, national and international resistance and evidence of GE eucalyptus trees intensifying industrial plantations' impacts. This was the first approval of GE trees for commercial release in Latin America. (More information in an [article from Bulletin 213](#), May 2015)

\* ArborGen: a US developer of biotechnology tree seedling products. In 2015, the US Department of Agriculture gave this company permission to sell a GE loblolly pine with increased wood density (3). And it is currently seeking approval for a freeze-resistant GE eucalyptus tree, with the intent of growing vast plantations across the southern US. This species is known by the US Forest Service to take up 20 per cent more water than native tree species and it is also highly flammable. (More information in [an article from Bulletin 206](#), September 2016)

\* Arauco Group: One of the five biggest industrial tree plantation companies in the world, with pulp mills in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, the US and Canada, and commercial presence in more than 80 countries. (4) In Chile, Forestal Arauco is one of the most influential economic groups in the country and owns vast extensions of tree plantations. Between 2004 and 2007, the University of Concepción and of Andrés Bello developed GE frost-tolerant eucalyptus experiments for Forestal Arauco. (More information in [an article from Bulletin 212](#), April 2015)

Despite the companies' and governments' efforts to use GE technology for tree monoculture practices, communities directly affected by these plantations continue to strongly oppose what is an intensification and expansion of a destructive industry.



Traditional and indigenous Mapuche communities in Chile, together with national and international groups, opposed the IUFRO Conference and denounced that GE trees will deepen the already proven harmful consequences of industrial tree plantations. Moreover, several groups in the US are organizing to prevent ArborGen from receiving approval to commercially release a freeze-resistant GE eucalyptus tree. You can [support this struggle by signing here](#).

It is time to stop the expansion of monoculture plantations!

- (1) <http://wrm.org.uy/browse-by-subject/tree-plantations/genetically-modified-trees/>
  - (2) [http://wrm.org.uy/highlighted\\_post/declaration-from-the-campaign-to-stop-ge-tree/](http://wrm.org.uy/highlighted_post/declaration-from-the-campaign-to-stop-ge-tree/)
  - (3) <http://www.mintpressnews.com/usda-moving-toward-less-oversight-regulation-regarding-new-ge-trees/202163/>
  - (4) <http://www.arauco.cl/informacion.asp?idq=626&parent=625&idioma=21>
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## RESISTANCES STRUGGLES AND WOMEN'S VOICES CONFRONTING TERRITORIES DESTRUCTION AND FALSE SOLUTIONS



### **Women in the anti-mining struggle in El Salvador: "We are that swarm of bees"**

In March 2017 the people of El Salvador won a huge victory. The Metal Mining Ban ruled absolute prohibition on mining exploration, exploitation and processing—whether open-pit or underground—as well as the use of toxic substances like cyanide and mercury. The legislation is retroactive, and thus completely cancels permits that might be in process. The potential harm to rivers and water sources has been one of the reasons social movements are battling the extractive industry.

Passage of the law comes after over ten years of struggle by grassroots organizations and community leaders, who especially opposed the El Dorado mine located in the central state of Cabañas, and operated by the Pacific Rim company—now Australian-Canadian OceanaGold. Opposition to the El Dorado mine was brutally repressed, leaving a tragic toll of deaths and injuries.

Even though their active participation in the resistance is almost always rendered invisible, the women behind the anti-mining struggle in El Salvador have not only kept up the fight, but have also taken on a leadership role.

On this occasion, we spoke with Rhina Navarrete, general coordinator of the Friends of San Isidro Cabañas Association (ASIC, by its Spanish acronym).

**Why did people resist the El Dorado project so strongly and for so long?**

One of the main reasons was the defense of our water, since most people understood that the municipality would be left without this vital liquid. There were also other incidents, such as the death of livestock in areas of exploration. Also some wells dried up.

**How did you organize the resistance? What was the strategy?**

There were several stages. First, we collected all possible information on the mining project, in order to understand firsthand the impacts that it would have on the region and the country. Later came fieldwork aimed to inform communities about the negative effects of metal mining. We held information forums with specialists on mining (Dr. Robert Moran and Dina Larios), and with people who had experience with the harm mining causes, as in the case of Honduras (Dr. Almendares). We designed written, audiovisual and radio material in popular language so that the entire population could easily understand it. We also forged strategic alliances with other organizations at the national level.

**How did the company react?**

The company did not stand idly by. They also launched a whole promotional campaign in the communities, seeking to convince people that cyanide was not deadly; but most people did not believe them. They also employed a strategy that is used worldwide: buying authorities, local governments and community leaders; and doing social projects, etc. Occasionally they would show up at forums we held in order to challenge the presenters, but they did not count on these people being expert scientists on the subject.

**What was women's role in this struggle? How did it differ from men's participation?**

First of all, most participants in the various information spaces were women. As people became more informed and aware of the magnitude of the problem, women led the struggle. (There were about 10 women leaders) They participated in a strategy to make public denunciations and organize demonstrations.

**Why do you think women take on such a leadership role in these struggles?**

In the first place, because we represent a greater percentage of the local population. Second, we are the ones who suffer the onslaughts of disasters and any kind of conflict, as well as economic, health, and other problems. A woman knows how necessary water and food are in her home, whether she is a single mother or not. I am not saying that a man does not know, but rather that a woman is the direct provider of goods for survival; she is the caretaker of the family, house and gardens; and she raises the domestic animals.

A woman is more sensitive to the problems that afflict humanity, and she is an excellent caregiver and administrator of all resources (of for example, Mother Nature, the Sea Goddess, etc.) A woman is very determined in her convictions, and it is not so easy to buy her will when she knows that life is at stake.



**In order for women to participate actively in the resistance, did they also have to fight within their own communities or homes?**

The women earned their own space. Only in special cases was their participation overshadowed by a male element. Having said that, I believe that their greatest struggle was indeed inside their homes, since they had to leave their families in order to join the fight.

**Do you think the fight is won, or should we remain vigilant?**

A law banning metal mining in El Salvador does not guarantee anything, since it is a secondary law that can be vetoed or modified at any time. As long as El Salvador adheres to free trade agreements, we will remain exposed to any threat—not just from the mining industry. Also, legislatures change every three years; so no one can guarantee whether the next legislature will change things or not. For the time being we can be a little more calm about this issue, but the future of Salvadorans remains uncertain. This is especially true now with the Public-Private Partnership Law, which aims to increase private investment, especially foreign direct investment. The president made public his position to comply with this Law.

**What message would you share with other women and communities that are fighting mining companies seeking to take over their territories?**

That we are the majority. We are that swarm of bees or ants, and we have the ability to change the course of history if we remain united. I insist, women are the majority. It is our right and also our responsibility to defend life and land. I think humanity must recognize that the enemy is the same throughout the world, and it is called CAPITALISM. We must reclaim our role as caretakers of creation, or evolution (depending on each person's ideological perspective). It is a struggle between the conservation and destruction of human beings. We know that wealth is private, but its consequences affect everybody. We people pay the price. They sell back to us what they steal from us, and throughout history, those who get killed are always the same. We cannot eat gold. It is not an indispensable good for humanity. Water is a finite resource. Most of all, we women have an immense capacity to love—and love with our hearts—and to strengthen love for our neighbors, life, family, humanity, nature and creation or evolution. The key to victory is LOVE.





## The Philippines: Defending the defenders, defending their rights

Juvy Capion was an indigenous B'laan mother of three, and a staunch defender of their ancestral domain in South Cotabato, Philippines, against the Tampakan Mining Project. Her house was strafed at in the early morning of 18<sup>th</sup> October 2012. The men of the 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) who led the shooting, said that it was a legitimate military operation against a bandit. The “bandit” was Daguil Capion, Juvy’s husband, who was a tribal leader also strongly opposed to the mining project. The shooting left Juvy dead, along with her two sons: Jordan, 12 years old, and John, 8 years old. Vicky, 4 years old survived the attack. Daguil, on the other hand, was not at home at that time.

This case, known as the “Capion Massacre”, is one of the 31 extrajudicial killings related to mining and other extractivist campaigns under the previous government, led by Aquino, which remains unsolved.

Meanwhile, the Tampakan Mining Project of Sagittarius Mines, Inc., which has shareholdings from Indophil Resources NL, an Australian company, continues to be in the pipeline. The project site covers around 10,000 hectares, overlapping with agricultural lands and ancestral domains of the B'laan indigenous peoples. It is touted to be the largest copper-gold mining project in Southeast Asia.

The new government, under President Duterte, committed to only allow “responsible mining” in the country, and to close all mines which have adverse impacts on the environment. The President appointed Regina Lopez as the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Ms Lopez is known for her anti-mining campaign work, so the news was welcomed by the mining-affected communities and environmental organizations. Ms Lopez ordered mining audits and, as a result, 23 mining companies were ordered for closure, and 5 more for suspension. Later on, she also ordered the cancellation of 75 mining contracts, one of which was the Tampakan Mining.



These actions earn the ire of the mining industry, which lobbied the Congressional Committee on Appointments to reject Ms Lopez as DENR Secretary. Even though local communities, environmental movements and the general public supported Ms Lopez, after a long series of congressional hearings, Ms Lopez was finally rejected. The Secretary of the Department of Finance, Carlos Dominguez, heaved a sigh of relief when Ms Lopez left the DENR. The Dominguez family has strong ties with different mining companies. His brother, in fact, is an executive of Sagittarius Mines, Inc.

The President, who once favoured Ms Lopez, just sat in the sidelines as his appointee was rejected. And so was his campaign promise of “responsible mining”. The mining industry lobby won and the corporate agenda is firmly installed. With all the closure orders on appeal, Secretary Dominguez assured the mining industry that everything is back to normal, and that such actions adverse to the industry will never happen again. “Never again,” said Dominguez. Duterte’s next appointee as DENR Secretary is General Roy Cimatu, a retired chief from the Armed Forces. While he is still mouthing “responsible mining” and “balance between environment and mining investments”, Cimatu held back the administrative order of Ms Lopez which bans open pit mining in the country.

Apart from further boosting the investments of retired generals and other military personnel who are deeply involved in the mining industry, appointing a military man in the environmental agency militarizes the mining conflicts as well as others related to natural resources. This is very alarming. To date, based on the documentation of the national campaign against mining or *Alyansa Tigil Mina* (ATM), during the 10 months of the Duterte administration, there were already 15 human rights defenders murdered while defending their land and territories. Most of them were community leaders with ongoing campaigns against mining and land grabbing. One of the most recent victims was a woman lawyer on environmental and human rights, Attorney Mia Mascarinas. These killings are in addition to the more than 8,000 women, men and children who have been killed under Duterte’s on-going war on drugs.

Further alarming is the declaration of President Duterte of martial law in June 2017 in Mindanao, purportedly as a response to Islamic State (ISIS) militant group’s terrorism in the region. Mindanao is home to a big population of Muslims, as well as indigenous peoples. It is also considered the mining capital of the country.

As local communities in Mindanao are experiencing the harsh impacts of the on-going war against terrorism – airstrikes killing civilians and destroying homes, thousands of families fleeing their communities, lack of food and basic needs in the refugee centres, and civilians being caught in the crossfire – the mining industry is quick to support Duterte’s war and martial law. The large-scale mining operations in the region, which are mostly included in the closure order of the then Secretary Lopez, have announced that they are in “business as usual mode”, and that the increased military presence in the region has made them feel more secure.

It is not coincidental that with the human rights deterioration in the country, and the severe, violent and militaristic governance of the Duterte administration, the confidence of the corporations and foreign investors in the country has increased. This is because the dissent from local communities, peoples’ organizations and social movements will



be silenced. Indeed, the statement of President Duterte against human rights (1) and his threats against human rights activists and defenders (2) are at the very least chilling: “Do not believe these human rights activists. I’ll kill you along with drug addicts, I’ll decapitate you. You cannot taunt me with that. Try to place me behind bars” (3). His over protection to the police and military forces, assuring them that in the implementation of their war against drugs, and criminality, he, the president, has their backs, is a commitment to impunity. He gave the same assurance to the soldiers when he declared martial law: “I will go to jail for you. If you happen to have raped three women, I will own up to it”. These statements are clear incitement to violence, especially against women. Duterte has also been using women as part of the incentives and rewards to military soldiers. He is a violent, militaristic and misogynist president (5).

With this political landscape, the situation is very challenging for human rights defenders, particularly those who defend community rights. Corporate interests are well entrenched in the Duterte government. Human rights and human rights activists are demonized. Killings, rape and objectification of women are normalized; the culture of violence and impunity are firmly being fostered. Furthermore, Duterte remains to be popular among his 16 million Filipino voters, whom he uses to justify his creeping authoritarianism.

It has only been a year since President Duterte ruled this country. For Juvy Capion and her sons, and the increasing number of women, men and children killed in defence of their rights, their land, their lives – justice remains elusive.

But there are communities, groups, organizations, who, despite fear and security issues, continue to speak up. They come together for organized actions against all of these abuses, and go to communities for deeper discussions on the links and connections of the continuous ravaging of our natural resources and the militarism of this government.

Hope lies within the communities, and peoples, who continue to resist.

June 10, 2017

*Judy A. Pasimio*

*LILAK (Purple Action for Indigenous Women’s Rights)*

(1) Aljazeera, Rodrigo Duterte: “I don’t care about human rights”, August 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/08/rodrigo-duterte-human-rights-160806211448623.html>

(2) Inquirer, Duterte threatens to kill rights activists if drug problem worsens”, November 2016, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/848933/duterte-threatens-to-kill-human-rights-activists-if-drug-problem-worsens>

(3) Manila Standard, Duterte vows to kill EU ‘rights activists’, May 2017, <http://manilastandard.net/news/top-stories/237140/duterte-vows-to-kill-eu-rights-activists-.html>

(4) The Washington Post, Duterte jokes that his soldiers can rape women under martial law in The Philippines, May 2017 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/05/27/duterte-jokes-that->



[his-soldiers-can-rape-women-under-martial-law-in-the-philippines/?utm\\_term=.2a4d86247043](http://his-soldiers-can-rape-women-under-martial-law-in-the-philippines/?utm_term=.2a4d86247043)

(5) <http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2016/04/20/duterte-complaint-womens-rights-group-chr.html>



## The Seed of Despair: Communities lose their land and water sources due to OLAM's agribusiness in Gabon

"In these supposedly win-win contracts, I would like to know what our communities are gaining. On the contrary, we are losing and even dying a slow death." With this cry of despair, Célestine Ndong (1) describes the bitter situation in Mouilla, Gabon, where the GRAINE ["seed" in French] program has been underway for several years.

This program, whose name GRAINE is the French acronym for "Gabonese Initiative for Achieving Agricultural Outcomes with Engaged Citizenry" (*Gabonaise des Réalisations Agricoles et des Initiatives des Nationaux Engagés*), began in December 2014. The objectives of this Public Private Partnership (PPP) with multinational agribusiness company—OLAM—are to reduce poverty and create jobs, achieve food security, and support the development and economic diversification of Gabon (2).

This program—launched with financial support from the FAO—covers **200,000 hectares of community-occupied land** (3, 4). The program says that of these 200,000 hectares, 120,000 will go to small-scale farmers and 80,000 to industrial agriculture.

The rural and agricultural development company (SOTRADER, by its French acronym) is a key actor, and OLAM Gabon is its technical adviser. This joint venture, which is 51 percent owned by the Gabonese State and 49 percent owned by OLAM International, is the "backbone" of the program.

The lack of clarity between the entities involved makes it difficult for Gabonese communities and citizens to distinguish between them. For many people, GRAINE is nothing more than OLAM Gabon's justification to continue controlling the country, as it



has been doing since 2010 (5). Its strategic objectives are not only focused on oil palm, but also on rubber, timber and other resources.

On the GRAINE page of OLAM's website, one can read what it says about this **initiative that celebrates agribusiness, in a country struggling to overcome dependency on basic food imports for its people** (6). These imports cost the country about 300 billion CFA francs per year [around US 514 million dollars] (7).

On Wednesday February 8, 2017, we went with a group of peasants and Gabonese and international civil society organizations toward Mouilla-Fougamou, to see the results of OLAM and its partners' promises.

**Rivers buried along with their fish stocks, nonexistent jobs, increasing insecurity, dispossessed lands, contaminated water, and villages whose young people have abandoned them: Such is the daily reality of people there.**

"Here we are in this OLAM palm grove, on land that has been filled in, where there used to be a river with fish and all kinds of fish products that we could consume; but as you see, this river no longer exists. OLAM destroyed it," bitterly says a woman over sixty years old, who has trouble standing up.

Mboukou, which is about 32 kilometers from Mouilla, pays a high price for OLAM's goal to establish **"the largest oil palm plantation in Africa"** in Gabon, when the country's priority is to achieve food self-sufficiency (8).

It is apparent that industrial and export-based agriculture is the priority for the GRAINE program. In areas granted by the State, production efforts are only concentrated in those suitable for palm cultivation. Indeed, there are already 42,000 hectares of oil palm plantations; meanwhile food crops (banana, cassava, tomato, pepper) cover only 8,000 hectares, for example in the Ndendé region.

Along with land grabbing and the destruction of rivers, **we also found that there were no jobs for young people in the villages, as had been promised.** On our visit to the plantations we could see that the labor came from Asia. Even the most routine tasks in the palm groves were done by foreigners.

Thus, local labor becomes scarce and appears to be on the verge of extinction.

In Yamba, another village where OLAM has plantations, the situation is equally bleak. OLAM plantations are "in front of peoples' houses," even though the country's legislation mandates that companies maintain a regulated distance. **"The management and forestry operators had proposed a five-kilometer buffer zone, which communities already considered to be insufficient; Today, as you can see, plantations are less than two kilometers away from our huts,"** says an indignant farmer from Saint-Martin, another equally-affected village.

Nonetheless, GRAINE continues to claim it is a unique program, aimed at local development and the diversification of the Gabonese economy. Meanwhile, GRAINE actors like OLAM have exported palm oil to Spain, Cameroon and Nigeria.



"Clearly, this program is a scam to make us lose our lands, through contracts that are hard to understand, and hard even to obtain copies of," reiterates an incensed member of a cooperative that receives a monthly allowance from the GRAINE program.

He goes on to say: "SOTRADER technicians explain to us the risk we run if we do not achieve a production that allows us to pay back the pre-financing from OLAM and SOTRADER—that is the seeds, fertilizers, machinery and wages of 100,000 CFA francs."

While having granted some property titles, which many people contest due to the lack of involvement and consultation with local peoples (and which are actually decrees he signed), the President of the Republic—hand in hand with OLAM—claims to be effecting development in Gabon (9). Yet this new era, in which peasants become wage workers on cooperatives promoted and created by the GRAINE program, foreshadows numerous obstacles towards achieving the goal of Gabonese people depending on their own farmers for food.

*RADD Cameroon; SEFE Cameroon; YETHIO Ivory Coast; SYNAPARCAM Cameroon; GRAIN and WRM*

- (1) This name has been changed for security reasons.
- (2) Report from the GRAINE Forum, held from November 5 to 7, 2015.
- (3) <https://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/news/progression-des-plans-gabonais-en-mati%C3%A8re-d%E2%80%99agriculture>.
- (4) <https://www.farmlandgrab.org/post/view/25462>.
- (5) [http://49tmko49h46b4e0czy3rlqaye1b.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/nov152010-gabon\\_palm-ppt.pdf](http://49tmko49h46b4e0czy3rlqaye1b.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/nov152010-gabon_palm-ppt.pdf).
- (6) <http://olamgroup.com/products-services/food-staples-packaged-foods/palm/upstream/graine/>.
- (7) <http://gaboneco.com/projet-graine-ces-plantations-de-l-espoir.html>.
- (8) Interview with Gagan Gupta, in African Business N° 40, August-September 2015.
- (9) <http://gabonreview.com/blog/des-agrements-des-titres-fonciers-et-des-graines-prometteuses-dans-la-ngounie/>.



## Dercy Teles on the popular movement of rubber tappers in Brazil

Dercy Teles of Carvalho was the first female president of a Brazilian Rural Workers' Union, in the town of Xapuri, Acre in 1981. Xapuri became known nationally and internationally because of the union leader who succeeded Dercy: Chico Mendes. We spoke with Dercy at the recent gathering—"Effects of environmental and climate policies on traditional peoples: forest management, REDD, PES [Payment for Environmental Services]"—about the rich history of the rubber tappers' popular movement, including difficulties, lessons learned and challenges (1).

Dercy is the daughter of a traditional rubber tapping family. Her father, like most rubber tappers, came from Northeast Brazil in search of a better life. Dercy's father taught her how to read, and also how to do basic math exercises. Dercy began her activism during the military dictatorship, in the Grassroots Ecclesiastical Communities (CEBs, by their Portuguese acronym). Inspired by liberation theology, it was in the CEBs that she began to reflect on how to make a difference in the communities. She later became one of the popular education teachers that worked in the communities for free. Inspired by Paulo Freire's methods (2), they developed didactic materials specific to the reality of rubber tappers, using the language of the community. She says that this work was very fun, even though they sometimes had to walk 12 hours to get to the classrooms.

When cattle ranching began to appear in Acre state in the 1970s, the conflict arose between rubber tappers and large landowning ranchers. It was at this time that the rubber tapping community, which depended on the forest, began to successfully use the 'empate' tactic: a collective action involving a large delegation to raise awareness among the workers who drove the tractors that destroyed the forest.

In 1981, Dercy was elected president of the Rural Workers' Union by over 900 delegates. In those days, union leaders were not paid. Their comrades helped them with trips and meetings. At that time they also formed the Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, PT in Portuguese), which has been in power in Acre for more than 20 years.



**Question: What were the main lessons you learned from the rubber tappers' struggle?**

**Dercy:** During the process of struggle which developed in Xapuri starting in the 1970s, we built many tools to strengthen the struggle; consequently Xapuri came to be known nationally and internationally for its labor movement, with the participation of Chico Mendes, etc. We could see that the rural workers' union did not address the specific reality of rubber tapping communities. So we created specific organizations, such as the Amazonian Workers Center, which worked on issues of health and commerce. In 1985, at the University of Brasilia, we held the first national gathering of rubber tappers in Brazil, and with the help of several collaborators, we created the National Council of Rubber Tappers (CNS, by its Portuguese acronym). From that point on, we began to ideate the RESEX (Extractive Reserve), which was a kind of agrarian reform, but different, since it met the specific needs of people who extract/collect. The CNS elected a direction, and we began to think about action areas aimed to help people who extract live their way of life. But in the end, it failed, because we were not vigilant and did not control the process. We ended up giving everything away. We built a whole structure and handed it over to people outside the organizations and from the government—who used it in a way that was completely counter to what we had envisioned. The PT government co-opted everybody; and while it claims that everything is wonderful with "sustainable development," it has become the rubber tappers' worst enemy. Today we see how the government's intervention has destroyed social movements. Even though teachers today receive a salary, with the PT, the liberating schools of before have become traditional schools—schools that prepare people for the city, not to remain in the forest. It is very challenging to mobilize people. Lack of credibility is significant. People only go to meetings if they get something material out of it. If the purpose of the meeting is to learn something, they don't go. Today, the leaders of the Rural Workers' Union of Xapuri receive a salary, which distances them from their bases. The Xapuri union's recent elections have made it so that the union now works for the timber companies. (3)

Therefore, what I have to say today—mainly to the youth, to the people who are building a movement to defend their rights and their territories—is that we must trust, but we must be vigilant. And when we choose a citizen to assume any position that represents the community, they must really represent what the community wants. They cannot speak for the community without having first had a discussion with the community; otherwise they are acting illegitimately and not representing the community's wishes. This is very important, because that is what made us lose a lot of what we had built—by putting people in charge who we trusted, but who actually did not act in accordance with that trust.

**Question: What does an extractive reserve (RESEX) mean for you all—not as it ended up becoming, but in the way you imagined it? What was most important about that idea?**

**Dercy:** The main idea behind the extractive reserve was to institutionalize a model of agrarian reform that would meet the specific needs of the culture and traditional population. It wasn't meant to be a parcelation, since parceling land does not meet the specific needs of the culture and traditional population. Hence, the reserve was designed in that way, to promote an agrarian reform appropriate to the reality of the rubber tapping population, at a time in which this activity was still quite significant.





**Question: What was the vision about decision-making—about what to do within the extractive reserve, and about who would make those decisions?**

**Dercy:** A key point of the original extractive reserve project was that the inhabitants themselves would manage it. This was so important that we developed a land use plan with the participation of inhabitants, wherein they determined—point by point—what could and could not happen within the reserve. And they would be main people responsible.

**Question: And what has the extractive reserve become today?**

**Dercy:** Look, with the intervention of the government, of outsiders to the reserve, and of external agents operating within the reserve, the whole project became distorted. Cabinets in Brasilia [the capital of Brazil] gradually modified the land use plan for the reserve, with the participation of people claiming to represent the community. But really they do not represent anything, because today they are government officials, serving the government and not the community. Therefore the whole land use plan collapsed, and today it serves the interests of the government and not the workers. And living in the reserve has now become a miserable situation: people are constantly terrified and criminalized, they must pay exorbitant fees to maintain their subsistence gardens, and they receive only 100 reales per month [around USD 30 dollars] from the "forest market" (4). And there is no one to turn to for help, since the Chico Mendes Institute—which manages the reserve—only enters the reserve to punish, fine, criminalize and threaten people. There is no educational process to help people live in harmony with nature. The government does not create the conditions for people to be able to live from extractivism without harming nature; even though it has been proven that one of the activities that *is* harmonious with nature is the extraction of rubber and Brazil nuts. Yet Brazil nuts do not even figure into land use plans, and rubber extraction is bankrupt, because there is no market to absorb it. All of this leads to a process of soft expulsion: people are spontaneously leaving.

**Question: In addition to what you have already said, what else would you say to other struggles, and to young activists who are inspired by this struggle in Xapuri. How can we rescue what was lost?**

**Dercy:** It is always necessary to be the yeast in the dough. Regarding lessons learned, I would transmit the following message to young people: we have to learn by doing and do by learning, because only then do we value our environment, culture and territory. The purpose of this meeting here is to unite indigenous and non-indigenous people living in the forest. Without the forest, we cannot live. The only thing left in the city is drug trafficking. We shall forget our differences, and we shall do so not for ourselves. Forty years of struggle have passed, and today I have the pleasure of encouraging others to fight. Our main enemy is capitalism; and we are not fighting it because we are not united.

1. See several interviews conducted at this gathering, including one with Dercy Teles (in Portuguese: [http://encontrodexapuri.blogspot.nl/2017/06/blog-post\\_7.html](http://encontrodexapuri.blogspot.nl/2017/06/blog-post_7.html))
2. Brazilian educator, famous for his contribution to the field of popular education.
3. See the article about how communities within the Chico Mendes RESEX in Xapuri denounce so-called “community-based forest management” at <http://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section1/brazil-voices-of-local->



[communities-in-acre-denounce-violations-in-community-based-sustainable-forest-management/](#)

4. A payment of 100 reales per month [about USD30 dollars] which the State gives to forest-dwelling families, on the condition that they do not touch the forest; for example, that they not set fires to prepare for crops.



## **Crisis and oil depletion in Venezuela: Mega-mining and new frontiers of extraction**

Venezuela is well known for being one of the main oil exporters in the world, and now also because of the major crisis it is currently facing, which is affecting all areas of social life in the country. Despite extensive international news coverage about what is happening in Venezuela, dominant versions of the story are notably biased, manipulated and incomplete; and they rarely highlight the root causes of the situation (1).

Beyond the major political parties' election campaigns in Venezuela, which are well known, there is a dispute among political and economic elites. This dispute is largely over control of the petroleum state (Petro-State) and management of extraction in the country. But the problem runs deeper, because the national oil accumulation model is facing landmark depletion. This signifies a turning point for the Venezuelan economy, which is looking to colonize new frontiers of extraction, with a special focus on mining.

Despite violent confrontations and the high level of volatility and uncertainty about the future—an outcome of the Venezuelan crisis—the main contenders for political power seem to agree on one thing: expanding extraction. That is the focus of this article.

### **The dilemma of oil depletion: Mega-mining and new frontiers of extraction**

Venezuela's historic oil extraction—that which has fueled the myth of 'Saudi Venezuela' or 'Great Venezuela'; that which has given the country a certain geopolitical influence (In 1960, it was one of the founding members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries - OPEC); and that which colonized the north of the Orinoco River



where the major oil basins are located, and where 95% of the population lives, far from the Venezuelan Amazon—is in clear depletion.

This is due to several reasons, of which we highlight the following:

1. The progressive decline in profitability and stability of the oil business, due to a decline in conventional sources (medium and light crude). Currently, almost 60 per cent of the crude extracted from the country is heavy or extra-heavy, which is more costly to remove and requires high and relatively stable prices for investments to be viable;
2. the volatility and instability of international oil prices, making Venezuela's fragile and dependent economy volatile too;
3. changes in power groups in the international oil world, particularly the importance of non-OPEC producers, such as Canada (because of the Alberta tar sands) or the United States (due to the rise in shale oils). This in turn means a decrease in OPEC's influence;
4. and late effects of the so-called 'Dutch Disease,' which exacerbates vulnerable aspects of the national economy linked to the extreme primacy of oil (crude constitutes 96% of the country's exports); extreme dependence on food imports; and growing imbalances in domestic consumption levels, the capture of oil revenues and their distribution mechanisms.

These and other factors have created a historic dilemma regarding the direction and form in which the development model should take. At least since 2005, the national government—initially under the leadership of Hugo Chavez and now Nicolas Maduro—has proposed reviving the national economy by increasing extraction of extra-heavy crude in the Orinoco Oil Belt (FPO by its Spanish acronym). The project aims to bring national extraction quotas to 6 million barrels per day over the next decade, with the FPO contributing 4 million barrels per day (it is currently producing about 1.2 million).

At the time, this proposal was not challenged much by the national government's support bases, or by opposition parties, who were proposing the exact same objective in their government programs.

Nonetheless, this bid appears to be incapable of solving the current and historic dilemma the national model of capital accumulation is facing, due to the factors mentioned above. This situation has contributed significantly to the new and growing valuation of mining, perhaps unprecedented in Venezuelan history.

In 2011, President Chavez proposed the 'Guayana Mining Arc' mega-project (subsequently known as the 'Orinoco Mining Arc') for the first time. This is an extensive mineral belt spanning 111,843.70 km<sup>2</sup> (12 percent of national territory, or the same size as Cuba), located in the south of the Orinoco River (part of the 'Venezuelan Amazon'). The project proposes to extract gold, diamonds, iron, coltan, bauxite and other minerals, and has been proposed as a 'development hub', along with the Orinoco Oil Belt (together comprising 175,000 km<sup>2</sup>).

The major crisis beginning in 2013 seems to have led to a period of more voracious accumulation, with the re-launch of deregulated extraction. This re-launch proposes not



only to revive the Orinoco Mining Arc, but also foment a whole set of projects in new frontiers of extraction; including in highly conserved areas, relatively untouched areas, and areas where socio-environmental impacts and degradation processes will be intensified more than ever.

Geopolitical disputes over 'natural resources', and the potential trade war between China and the United States create significant and growing pressure to boost extraction. It is mainly Chinese capital, but also other multinational corporations like Canadian Barrick Gold, that are brokering deals to open up new mining enclaves and expand old mines. Meanwhile there is a simultaneous relaxing and deregulation of traditional nationalist requirements for businesses operating in the country, which have been in place since Hugo Chavez's government was inaugurated in 1999.

One example of this has been the creation of 'Special Economic Zones' in late 2014. These are entire areas of the country that have been completely opened up, with all barriers to development removed. This involves giving up sovereignty to sources of foreign capital, who would have practically unlimited jurisdiction over these areas.

An example of the new mining push in Venezuela is the project to certify all national mining reserves, which the government—along with Chinese companies like Citic Group Corporation—has been promoting since 2012. The idea is to formally quantify all reserves in order to promote what President Maduro has called the 'Mining Engine.' This project was launched in February 2016 within the framework of the 'Bolivarian Economic Agenda'.

In addition to the Orinoco Mining Arc mega-project, there are proposals to recover and expand coal mining in the Sierra de Perijá mountains (in Carbozulia, in the western state of Zulia), to rekindle nickel mining in the south of Aragua State (Loma de Niquel), and to revitalize smaller metal and non-metal mining projects throughout the country, such as silica mining in the Torres municipality in Lara state.

In short, we are facing a significant geoeconomic reorganization of the national territory, involving the widespread and intense incursion of mining into new frontiers of extraction. (Mega) mining would have a historic new role, and the Venezuelan Amazon would be greatly threatened, causing major impacts in the lives of thousands of Venezuelans.

### **Consequences and indigenous and popular resistance**

The negative impacts of mining are already well known, and there are extensive reports of its consequences. The intensity of extraction proposed for the Orinoco Mining Arc project is unprecedented in Venezuelan history, and it would occur in one of the most biodiverse regions of the country, where the largest number of indigenous peoples live. It is important to note that these areas are already suffering the onslaughts of the significant growth in illegal mining, which has occurred over the last ten years.

Open-pit mega-mining in the Orinoco Mining Arc would entail massive deforestation and loss of biodiversity. Likewise, the large amount of water that would be used—for example to extract gold—along with severe cyanide, arsenic and other toxic pollution, threaten many of the vital rivers that comprise the Orinoco River basin, one of the



country's most important water reserves. Similar denunciations have been made about how coal mining would pollute the rivers that feed the main reservoirs of Zulia State, where millions of people live.

Documented cases show how mining projects threaten the food sovereignty of affected peoples. This occurs, for example, by affecting local producers' livestock and the water they use to irrigate crops, and through mercury poisoning that increases mortality of fish—the major food source for many indigenous peoples of the Venezuelan Amazon. Meanwhile, there are already documented cases of militarization in extractive and border areas, and violence against indigenous peoples, who also suffer threats from illegal mining networks operating in the region. Indigenous peoples are most affected and threatened by reviving extractivism.

In different ways, and sometimes with different objectives, native peoples are resisting. For example, the indigenous Yek'wana and Sanemá of the Cuara River basin have protested the Orinoco Mining Arc, while denouncing and fighting the scourge of illegal mining in their territories. A similar situation exists with the indigenous Amazonian peoples that comprise the Coalition of Indigenous Organizations of the Venezuelan Amazon (COIAM by its Spanish acronym).

Meanwhile, the indigenous Yukpa and Wayuu in the Sierra de Perijá mountains are firmly resisting the expansion of coal mining. Within the Pemón people's struggle, some villagers are mobilizing against territorial invasion but are practicing mining themselves (such as the Pemón located in Alto Paragua or Urimán), and other villagers are completely opposed to and mobilized against this activity (such as the Pemón of the Carrao River).

Despite their impetuous expressions of resistance in recent years, some involving direct action methods (such as Pemón and Caura River peoples detaining soldiers), indigenous peoples are facing terrible threats; and they are undermined by disease, displacement and violence perpetrated against them. In 2013 the Yukpa chief Sabino Romero, who was leading his people's resistance, was assassinated. To this day the intellectual authors of his death remain unidentified. In recent months indigenous leaders of the Venezuelan Amazon have also been killed by illegal mining agents.

The formalization of the Orinoco Mining Arc project on February 24, 2016, via decree 2.248, has brought exposure to the environmental issue in the country, as well strengthened the environmental cause within social mobilizations (similar to the Tipnis case in Bolivia starting in 2011, or the 2009 'Baguazo' in Peru). The campaign against this project has succeeded in bringing together diverse political actors, forming an interesting community that is critical of extraction. Since late 2016 though, mobilizations seem to have lost strength.

Undeniably, the serious crisis in the country creates a complicated scenario for these struggles, and presents us with a rather tangled panorama that is difficult to resolve. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that this situation simultaneously opens up possibilities to shape new kinds of organization, social valuation and struggle. Venezuela's worrisome socio-environmental instability, its growing territorial disputes, and the risk of severe ecological damage that a boost in mining poses, will likely create the conditions to re-politicize access to—and use and management of—the commons.



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(1) In May we presented a detailed analysis of the current situation in Venezuela, available at this link: <http://www.alainet.org/es/articulo/184922>



## **Amazonian and Andean women in the VIII Pan-Amazonian Forum**

### **How to make the sustainability of life the center of debate**

The VIII Pan-Amazonian Forum, held from April 28<sup>th</sup> to May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 in Tarapoto in the Peruvian Amazon, aimed to bring together and coordinate social movements, indigenous peoples and traditional communities from the nine countries of the Amazon basin: Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela, Bolivia, Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Suriname, Colombia, Peru and French Guyana. A construction process—which took place for a year and half prior to the Forum—made it possible to establish spaces for dialogue and debate with the objective of organizing collective, horizontal and intercultural discussions.

These spaces were tasked with deepening the Forum's thematic foci and contributing proposals and actions. They met for two days, and each participant was able to choose the group in which she participated. Each group analyzed the issue in question using an overarching lens: on the first day, *Territoriality and Amazonian-Andean Peoples*, and on the second day, *Stewardship of Natural Resources*. The discussion groups included the following: Pan-Amazonian-Andean Women: Diversity and Intercultural Dialogues; Climate Change and the Amazon; Food Sovereignty and Security; Megaprojects and Extraction; Intercultural Community Education; Pan-Amazonian-Andean Youth; Cities



for life in the Pan-Amazonian Andes; Decoloniality of Power and Community Self-Governance; and Pan-Amazonian Communication for Life.

The dialogue process enabled these women, from diverse Amazonian and Andean groups of the region, to analyze how extraction and state-backed multinational mega investments impact their lives and bodies, and lead to dispossession of their territories and environmental contamination and depredation. Analyzing differential impacts on women's lives gives voice to social experiences silenced by patriarchy. Some areas of reflection included daily violence, religious fundamentalism, and the territories where communities live. It is their relationship with nature, and the defense of their territories, which give women the strength to resist companies and states who respond with repression and criminalization.

During discussions in the Amazonian and Andean women's dialogue space, women reiterated their understanding of territory as not just what is on the surface: "For us it is a holistic concept that includes all life within a territory. The capitalist system, in alliance with patriarchy, wants to control our bodies and territories to reproduce capital. We want to control them to generate life. We recognize nature's limits and want to strengthen relationships that ensure the sustainability of natural resources and of human life. (...) Our bodies and territories are contested by capitalism and patriarchy. Companies and the state violate us, and churches and fundamentalism promote a culture of subordination and control of women. Instead of protecting us, our governments are accomplices."

Aymara, Awajún and Quechua women, as well as others from several indigenous groups in Brazil, talked about how they care for the land, water and forests as part of their cultures and worldviews to protect natural resources. "Our relationship with nature and its resources is indispensable for life. We women are a part of it, and we need territorial sovereignty in order to sustain life," stressed another woman during the Dialogue.

Despite the rich dialogue and construction process, and the visibility of women's struggles in their territories, a broader articulation of women's perspectives on the thematic areas addressed in the Forum is still weak. Many ecological activists, environmentalists, and leaders of social movements continue to see extraction, climate change or decoloniality as gender-neutral issues. For this reason, the proposal to hold an Ethics Court for Women emerged, to symbolically bring to trial various situations that women suffer from and resist in the Pan-Amazonian Andes, and to make the role of women in resistance struggles visible.

The Court analyzed the repression and violence that indigenous and peasant communities experience, and also how "women are a central target in the state-business-media front's expansion strategies, since women are the center of gravity of the community structure." (2)

The cases presented before the Court exist within the framework of a capitalist, colonialist and patriarchal system—which is both structural and structuring of inequalities and violence that affect the lives of Pan-Amazonian and Andean women.

Regional women's organizations established the Court and selected the following cases:



**Peruvian Case:** Amazonian leader Beatriz Caritimari testified, denouncing how the government and multinational companies pushed forward the Moybamba-Iquitos Transmission Line megaproject without consultation. The project would affect the territories of 14 districts and 6 states, damaging biodiversity, causing deforestation, and placing communities' food security at risk.

**Brazilian Case:** Daniela Silva of the Free Xingu Forever Movement presented the case of women's resistance to the construction of the Belo Monte hydroelectric project on the Xingú River, Altamira region, state of Pará. The project, which exposed corruption between construction companies and the government, and which was inaugurated in 2016, has displaced thousands of families from their territories; caused cultural genocide; destroyed ecosystems and traditional lifestyles; and increased violence against women—including through prostitution and sexual exploitation of girls and adolescents.

**Ecuadorian Case:** Cristina Burneo Salazar, from the National Platform for Women's Rights, Ecuador, presented the case of police forces displacing Shuar indigenous women and girls from their community. She also underscored how the Amazon is being militarized to make way for extractive mega projects for open-pit mining by the San Carlos Panantza company, a subsidiary of the Chinese company Tongling Nonferrous Metal Groups and CRCC.

**Chilean Case:** The Chilean feminist organization, La Morada Corporation, presented the case of Lorenza Cayuhan Llebul, from the indigenous Mapuche community Ahuidanche. She was forced to give birth in a public health center with her ankles shackled and in the presence of two armed men. This act that violates Lorenza's dignity and integrity is part of an institutional political practice of persecution and alienation of Mapuche communities in Chile.

Two emblematic cases from the region were also presented:

- **Berta Isabel Cáceres Flores**, indigenous Lenca leader and Honduran feminist, murdered in March 2016 for defending natural resources and the rights of indigenous peoples. She was leading a movement to stop the Agua Zarca dam, which would affect the Gualcarque River—which is considered sacred by indigenous peoples. The movement is still pressuring to get foreign capital to withdraw from the project of the Desarrollos Energéticos SA company, which has been blamed for Cáceres' murder.

- **Máxima Acuña de Chaupe**, villager from Cajamarca in the northern Peruvian highlands. Since 2011 has been defending her land from the Yanacocha mining consortium, which constantly harasses her, trying to evict her and extract the gold underground. The company claims to own the Tragadero Grande property, located 4,000 meters above sea level; and it denounced Acuña de Chaupe for aggravated usurpation, a crime for which she was legally acquitted in May 2017.

The cases heard, as well as many others presented before official national and international courts, and those presented in courts of conscience that preceded the Forum and constitute ethical jurisprudence, allow us to verify the systemic way in





which women's lives and bodies are a *strategic target* for aggression against the continent's indigenous peoples and traditional communities.

As the Court's verdict states: "That is why scholars on the subject agree that the current informal wars are 'feminized wars' and 'wars of desecration'. The physical and moral demolition [of women], and objects that represent them and symbolize their position and significance in communities, reaches the heart of collective life and rips up and destroys the community fabric. They are surgical actions similar to those that implode buildings, in which engineering, through precise calculations, identifies the center of gravity in order to install dynamite there. This is why we have heard in this court about: how Shuar women's pots were kicked and destroyed, an eminently profane and demoralizing gesture toward them and their role in the community; Lorenza's nudity in front of her captors in the Mapuche case, like showing off a war trophy; the threats toward Máxima Acuña in Cajamarca about harming her children, domestic animals and crops, and the attempt to delegitimize her struggle by slandering her moral reputation through rumors about her honesty, sex life and that of her lawyer.

"Men are frequently revealed to be more fragile and vulnerable to the seduction of the colonizing front, today the state-business-media front. As spokesperson for deliberations that take place within the home, and facing representatives of the outside world, a man is the *hinge piece*—split between loyalty to his people and subordination to the conquering front. Thus the intermediary subject of the chief emerges—both violated by and vulnerable to corruption by the white world. By community logic, this position is inaccessible to, and thus “preserved from” the feminine role.

"For this very reason, women are the *community subject* par excellence. The genetic marker of community life gets passed down through the feminine line. This is why communities', peoples' and movements' active action is required to defeat patriarchy and ensure the sustainability of life."

As an urban feminist, participating in this court was an intellectual, political and emotional challenge for me. Building a decolonizing and intercultural perspective comes after listening to and understanding the thousands of voices and resistance practices of indigenous and peasant women, from the most diverse lands. The experience allowed us to take a step further in understanding the sustainability of life as the central axis of our struggles. Now the challenge is to deepen these perspectives, and particularly our alliances among struggles.

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*Marcosur Feminist Articulation*

1. Coloniality / Descoloniality is a perspective within Latin American critical thinking that has opened new spaces of production and reflection, where the question of power in modernity is reviewed.
2. The Court's Verdict: <http://www.forosocialpanamazonico.com/hermosa-edicion-del-veredicto-del-tribunal-de-mujeres-del-viii-fospa/>



## Chile: Rebuilding productive resistance after the forest fires

At the beginning of 2017, the south central region of Chile suffered a wave of fires that lasted for several weeks and affected around 500,000 hectares—including forests, monoculture tree plantations and small family farms.

Dozens of hot spots spread throughout a large region of the country, where the flammability of pine and eucalyptus plantations, high temperatures and wind made the fire reach uncontrollable dimensions. The town of Santa Olga of about 5,000 inhabitants was completely burned; hundreds of people lost their homes in other towns; thousands were evacuated; and 11 people lost their lives in the areas directly affected, as well as firefighters who voluntarily fought the fire.

The planting of large tracts of pine and eucalyptus trees began in Chile in the mid 1970s, during the military dictatorship. Since then, the state has promoted and encouraged them through Decree Law 701 and the so-called "forest subsidies." This has unleashed a process of destruction, and the replacement of native wet forest with large-scale eucalyptus and pine plantations. Among the numerous impacts they cause, these plantations have affected the water, diminishing its quantity and quality. Drought and water scarcity, coupled with large tracts of monoculture plantations, favor the emergence and rapid expansion of forest fires. These plantations are essentially in the hands of two large national economic groups: CMPC of the Matte family, and Arauco of the Angellini group, who together own about two million hectares of land.

After the fires, false news about "Mapuche terrorism" was rapidly disseminated, blaming this indigenous group for the disaster, even though the fires did not begin in Mapuche territory. However, this was nothing more than an attempt by the implicated plantation companies to evade their responsibility for the fires, according to some social organizations and popular movements. (1)

In this case there is an additional aggravating factor, a fact which—despite being known even by public institutions—has not been considered. And this is that most of the fire-



affected areas coincide with pine and eucalyptus plantations that have been in quarantine for years, because they are affected by uncontrollable pests. This fact is even more salient when we note that the insurance companies do not cover plantations affected by pests; but they do pay for insurance for fires. (2)

After several popular demonstrations that denounced plantation companies for their responsibility and demanded that the Mapuche people not be criminalized, the Public Prosecutor—despite all evidence—dismissed the possibility of investigating the companies themselves, focusing instead on determining individual responsibilities.

In March 2017, a small international delegation, accompanied by students from the popular movement "Only the People Can Help the People" and members of the Latin American Observatory on Environmental Conflicts (OLCA, by its Spanish acronym), traveled to the Bío Bío and Araucanía regions to more deeply understand the reality of the families who are victims—not only of the impacts of tree plantations but also of the recent mega forest fires. (3)

The "Only the People Can Help the People" Movement has emerged in the city of Concepción, in response to the chaos caused by the fires, and to provide support to affected families. It is comprised of the Student Federation of the University of Concepción, and the Coordination for the Defense of the Territories, among other groups.

"The restoration of soils affected by fire is a long process. Aid is focused on family farms where there is productive resistance to tree monocultures. The idea is not to say what people should plant, but rather support the productive culture of the place, using native or non-GMO seeds whenever possible," explains one of the student members of the Movement.

"The eucalyptus or pine plantations here mostly belong to large timber companies, and some to small land-holders who planted them but who do not live on the land. This used to be an area where people planted wheat, potatoes, beans, lentils, and fruit trees. People gathered medicinal plants, and they had farm animals like chickens. As tree plantations encroach, farming and indigenous families are displaced, or they see how the lands become degraded and the water disappears," says Lucio of the OLCA.

We visited the property of Leonardo and Ruth, farmers who live on a half-hectare plot in the middle of the burned area, a few kilometers from the city of Concepción. (4)

Leonardo and Ruth warmly welcomed us into their home. After introducing us, Lira, a member of "Only the People Can Help the People" told us: "In this area, the fire came from behind, passed through here, razed everything, and continued its course, even crossing the highway. The few families who managed to save their houses did so because they remained alone fighting the fire, risking their lives, with their faces covered—constantly drenching themselves and their homes in water. It was chaos. The National Forest Corporation (CONAF, by its Spanish acronym) did not come, nor did the firefighters; it was such a state of emergency that they assumed the whole territory was destroyed. The families who evacuated the area lost everything."



"For the timber companies this is nothing," said Leonardo, "but we smallholders are the ones who are suffering. I had a very lovely cherry orchard, but everything burned down. We picked cherries for our own consumption, and to make jams and preserves to sell. We also had plum, apple and peach trees. You can still see some burned fruits. The apples were very good quality..."

Both Leonardo and Ruth are herbalists, connoisseurs, collectors and defenders of local medicinal plants. "We gather plants in the areas surrounding our property, lands that are now burned. We would collect lemon balm, mint, pennyroyal, rose hip, *palo negro*, *bauhinia*, *maqui*, and many more. We had a storage room with the whole year's harvest, and when the fire came through it burned everything—in the storage room and in the fields. There is no place to gather plants now. The fire also burned the chicken coop with chickens inside. This house was only saved because it is covered in metal plating," he said, indicating the small two-room ranch we were in.

"I managed to free some birds," added Ruth, "but others were burned. The birds were what fed us; they provided us with eggs and meat. Eucalyptus is to blame for the fact that everything burned here. The fire came from the timber plantations. We lost everything we had on our land."

Leonardo showed us the adjacent field where one could see the rows of burned eucalyptus trees. "I always argued with my neighbor, to try to get him not to plant eucalyptus or pine trees, but it was the first thing he did. That is why I lost everything here. When they received the state subsidy to plant, there were native trees, but the eucalyptus killed everything; and the same thing happened with pine. Also, when they spray 'the liquid' [agrochemicals] on the plantations, they would kill all of the plants that we gathered. They kill everything in the ground, and also the bees. Imagine how many liters of water each eucalyptus tree uses every day, and look at how many eucalyptus trees are here. Nowadays we have a lot of problems with water. My parcel used to have a lot of water, but not anymore; we have to give the animals water from the tap."

"I believe the fault lies with the timber companies, who have lost nothing with this disaster. They get paid even if the trees burn down, because they have insurance. They are taking out the timber anyway; they will use it to make wood chips or whatever. The companies work to profit, they never lose. We want to know how to fight the timber companies. We don't want them planting any more trees."

"The fire lasted about four days here. I didn't want to leave my house. When I finally decided to leave in my car, I had to go under the flames...I thought I would burst into flames, but I just dove in." After the fire they returned to their land, and they are trying to restore the soil. "Now we're going to have to keep fighting. I'm going to plant my orchard and fruit trees again," said Leonardo, convinced. "It is going to cost a lot to recover what we had. Some people say that I won't be able to plant anything here for a year, but I can't wait a year. I'm going to try it anyway."

The government provides 1,000,000 Chilean pesos in aid (US 1,800 dollars) to each affected family to help them resettle, but this amount is a pittance for those who lost everything. Under these circumstances, popular solidarity through donations and volunteer work is essential. "We are very grateful to the volunteers who brought us wire, screens, nylon and stakes, and who helped us a lot," admitted Leonardo, moved.



"The voluntary brigades worked on fencing the properties, studying the soil, and seeing what each family's needs were; but at the same time we learned from these families about life in the country. And most of all we accompanied each other in this grief, a painful process for these families," said Lira.

Leonardo and Ruth's situation is just one example of the hundreds of families who were victims of the consequences of a forestry model based on monoculture plantations. This model only benefits those who have the most, and impacts those who don't have a voice or the means to stand up to large companies.

As if this were not enough, in June an international Tree Biotechnology Conference was held in Concepción (organized by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations - IUFRO), to promote advancements in research on transgenic trees, with a view to improving their "productivity." In laboratories throughout the world and also in Chile, research and experiments on transgenic trees continue, in order to make trees resistant to cold, agrochemicals, drought and pests; that is, to most of the problems which the plantations themselves have caused and exacerbated.

If transgenic pine and eucalyptus plantations are authorized in Chile, more forest areas, indigenous territories, and fertile lands will be overtaken by these monocultures. That is why organizations and social movements took to the streets and demonstrated in front of the Conference headquarters: to demand the repeal of Decree Law 701, to denounce the impacts of exotic tree plantations, to denounce the recent forest fires, and to say "We don't want transgenic trees in Chile." (5)

It is time for the Chilean government to stop and listen to the voices of people affected by tree plantations, and to stop benefitting large economic groups to the detriment of farming and indigenous communities and territories.

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1.- *"El 'Terrorismo Mapuche': La campaña de desinformación para desviar responsabilidades en mega incendios forestales"* – Alfredo Seguel

<http://www.mapuexpress.org/?p=16499>

2.- *"Revuelo caso incendios e 'intencionalidad': zonas devastadas estaban infestadas por plagas en plantaciones forestales"* - Network for the Defense of the Territories

<http://www.mapuexpress.org/?p=15847>

3.- The delegation was composed of the following organizations: Biofuelwatch; the Center for Studies and Research for the Development of the Extreme South of Bahia (CEPEDES by its Portuguese acronym); Carajás – Maranhão Forum; International Campaign to STOP Genetically Engineered Trees; GE Free New Zealand; Global Justice Ecology Project; Landless Workers Movement (MST by its Portuguese acronym); Latin American Network Against Tree Plantations (RECOMA, by its Spanish acronym); World Rainforest Movement (WRM). This delegation also exchanged knowledge and experiences on the impacts of transgenic trees. See videos at: National and international researchers and activists against transgenic trees and the Chilean forestry model <http://olca.cl/articulo/nota.php?id=106830>



4.- See photo report here <http://wrm.org.uy/es/files/2017/06/chile-territorio-post-incendios.pdf>

5.- Public declaration against the Chilean forestry model  
<http://olca.cl/articulo/nota.php?id=106817>

International Campaign to STOP Genetically Engineered Trees denounces the violence of the forestry industry: <https://stopgetrees.org/iufro-campaign-denounces-violence-timber-industry-declaracion-de-la-campana-internacional-alto-los-arboles-transgenicos/>

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## TRICKS AND DECEPTION THAT PROMOTE LAND GRABBING



### **From REDD+ projects to ‘jurisdictional REDD+’: more bad news for the climate and communities**

For many people, REDD+ is about projects that save forests. In reality, however, REDD+ has never been about protecting forests and also no longer really is about projects but about programmes covering whole regions or provinces within a country. Though many REDD+ projects continue to exist, causing harm to indigenous peoples and forest communities by restricting their traditional forest use practises. (1)

The idea of REDD+ has its roots in the UN climate negotiations. It was negotiated as a tool that would allow companies and industrialized countries to continue burning petroleum, coal and natural gas while claiming the emissions this causes do not harm the climate. REDD+, its advocates claim, would provide cheap compensation for the release of these emissions into the atmosphere and provide money to finance forest protection. Companies in industrialized countries could burn fossil carbon at home, that



is the carbon stored underground for millions of years, and pay someone in a tropical forest country to keep some trees standing as a replacement carbon store. (2)

The truth is that money alone doesn't stop deforestation; that REDD+ isn't tackling the actual causes of large-scale deforestation and that money from the private sector hasn't been forthcoming at any scale. REDD+ advocates who had advertised REDD+ as a triple-win (cheap compensation for fossil fuel burning, extra money for forest conservation and supporting communities who live in and from the forest and contribution to climate protection that can be realized now while technology for move away from fossil fuel is developed) have also had to grudgingly acknowledge that halting deforestation is neither fast nor easy or cheap. Convincing evidence is missing that REDD+ has made a dent in deforestation despite claims to the contrary.

Another motivation behind REDD+ is the intention of industrialized countries to avoid paying the bill for tropical forest protection although a "development" debt remains. Industrialized countries are increasingly transforming 'development aid' grants into loans and private-public-partnership schemes where the main role of public money is to provide a risk buffer for private capital investments in so-called developing countries. (3) Two reports commissioned by the UK government – the Stern report 2006 and the Eliasch review 2008 - helped governments to claim that 'private sector capital is needed to save tropical forests because public money alone will not be sufficient' to cover the supposed cost of reducing deforestation. It was these two reports that established the unfounded claim that reducing emissions from deforestation is cheap, fast and easy.

For international conservation organisations and the World Bank, REDD+ also provides a tool to expand their 'parks without people' model of forest conservation and ensures corporate and public funding for their conservation projects and organisational budgets. Conservation NGOs and consultants based in industrialized countries have to date probably received the lion's share of public money spent on REDD+ in the last ten years. Even though these groups claim to do 'participatory REDD+' and 'community REDD+' projects, REDD+ is not an idea that originated from communities. REDD+ is also not suitable to address the needs and threats that forest-dependent communities face, as experience has clearly shown during the past ten years. (4) Critics of REDD+, including WRM, have discussed these misconceptions and hidden motivations behind REDD+ many times.

Less has been written about the change of REDD+ from projects to programmes that cover whole regions or provinces within a country. These new kinds of REDD+ initiatives are expected to eventually cover whole countries. They are often called 'jurisdictional REDD+' because they will be implemented not just on the land assigned to individual REDD+ projects but across a whole jurisdiction, like a department, a province, a state or a whole country. This article looks at what is motivating this change from projects to 'jurisdictional' REDD+.

### **What is 'jurisdictional REDD+'?**

Because REDD+ is linked to the UN climate negotiations, the UN climate talks also determine what REDD+ looks like. REDD+ initiatives that want to sell their carbon credits to the UN carbon market, will need to comply with the UN climate agreement rules. In reality, pilot programmes such as the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership



Facility and private sector REDD+ projects that already sell carbon credits to companies in the so-called voluntary carbon market, also have a big influence on these rules. Lobbyists from the World Bank and conservation NGOs are present at the UN climate meetings and meet with government officials that decide on the UN's rules for REDD+.

From 2005, the World Bank, international conservation groups and private companies started to implement REDD+ projects that would be compatible with a mechanism more or less like the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism: individual projects or clusters of projects in countries without binding emission targets in the global South would sell carbon credits to companies and industrialized countries that have binding emission limits. But the UN Paris Agreement from 2015 turned out very different from the Kyoto Protocol (see also WRM [Bulletin 228](#), January 2017). Under the Paris Agreement on climate change all countries have voluntary emission targets and will be presenting their national greenhouse gas balance sheet to the UN climate convention. These balance sheets will show how far a country has advanced in achieving the target they have set for their country. None of these Paris Agreement targets are binding. (5)

But carbon markets need binding targets, or some kind of pressure to limit emissions to function. The assumption that REDD+ could attract private sector funding if REDD+ projects are able to sell carbon credits in a global carbon market will not work anymore. Limits create the demand, hence: no (binding) limits, no demand for REDD+ credits from a UN carbon market.

Moreover, most tropical forest countries in the global South have included reductions in emissions from deforestation into their national commitments under the Paris Agreement. Therefore, they will have to calculate how much greenhouse gas emissions is happening in their country and present these figures in a national balance sheet. Most tropical countries decided to include emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in this national accounting sheet. And they will have to submit their national 'carbon accounts' regularly to the UN to demonstrate their progress towards the reduction goal they set for themselves (in UN climate language, these goals are called NDCs – nationally determined contributions).

From 2020, when the UN Paris Agreement comes into force, every carbon credit sold by a REDD+ project located in a country that also includes (carbon stored in) forests in its national carbon balance will have to be deducted from the country's national carbon balance sheet. If the credit sold by the project is not deducted from the national balance sheet, there is what in UN climate language is called 'double-counting' because the buyer of the carbon credit will also claim a reduction in his own balance sheet – after all, that is why he bought the REDD+ credit. This means that the emissions look lower on paper than they are in reality. And that in turn increases the risk of dangerous climate change.

Double-counting will be very likely under the Paris Agreement if private sector REDD+ projects continue to sell carbon credits. (6) Even a report by the Gold Standard, a company certifying carbon credits, recently warned about this risk. (7) That continued selling of REDD+ carbon credits by private sector REDD+ projects will create a mess under these circumstances can already be seen in the Brazilian state of Acre. There, the German government is funding a 'jurisdictional REDD+' programme called 'REDD Early Movers'. (8)





The German government programme has paid a total of 25 million Euro between 2012 and 2016 to the government of Acre in return for the state of Acre submitting documents showing that emissions from deforestation in Acre had stayed below a level agreed in the REDD contract between the two governments. That level was very generous. It did not require additional emission reductions to those already achieved in previous years because the calculation included the high-deforestation years 2003-2005. Law enforcement measures by the Brazilian state had already led to steep reductions in deforestation rates in the following years. One could argue that the German government was paying Acre for emission reductions achieved in the past through non-REDD+ measures, or that Germany was paying Acre to maintain the forest carbon stock, a concept that had been rejected as unaffordable during the early years of UN negotiations about REDD+.

The state of Acre can use the money for any activity it deems necessary to reduce deforestation. A closer look at what the Acre government has decided to spend the money on reveals among others that much money has gone into consultancy reports and studies and very little has reached communities. This is mirroring many of the widely documented problems with REDD+ elsewhere.

### **What does REDD Early Movers in Acre tell us about 'jurisdictional REDD'?**

Looking at the 'REDD Early Movers' programme in Acre also reveals the contradictions that arise when 'jurisdictional REDD' programmes try to integrate private sector REDD+ projects that are already selling carbon credits on the voluntary carbon market. In Acre, at least three such projects exist: The Purus, Valparaiso and Envira REDD+ projects. The carbon balance sheet prepared by the government of Acre for the 'REDD Early Movers' programme with Germany deducts 10 per cent of the state's emission reductions from the balance sheet to account for the carbon credits sold by these three REDD+ projects. Purus for example sold carbon credits to the FIFA for compensation of part of the emissions from the 2014 Football World Cup. Adding up the numbers, however, shows that these three projects are claiming far more than the 10 per cent deducted in the state's carbon balance sheet. That means, it is possible, if not likely, that some of the reductions (if they happened at all) are counted twice: By the private sector REDD+ project selling carbon credits, as in the FIFA case, and by the state of Acre in its carbon balance sheet. From 2020, that risk will arise in many more countries. Particularly likely are such situations in countries like Peru, Kenya or the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (9) with several or large existing private sector REDD+ projects already selling carbon credits and where the companies running these projects are involved in designing 'jurisdictional REDD+' programmes.

As the example of Acre shows, for communities, the impacts of 'jurisdictional REDD' programmes may well be much the same as those caused by individual REDD+ projects: being first in line to face restrictions on traditional forest use practises and last in line for receiving meaningful compensation or 'benefits' that REDD+ is supposed to generate for forest-dependent communities.

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*Member of the International Secretariat of the WRM*



- (1) REDD stands for **R**educing **E**missions from **D**eforestation and Forest **D**egradation. See WRM's Collection of REDD+ Conflicts, Contradictions and Lies for examples of the many ways in which REDD+ projects are harmful to forest-dependent communities.
  - (2) See "What do forests have to do with climate change, carbon markets and REDD?", <http://wrm.org.uy/books-and-briefings/what-do-forests-have-to-do-with-climate-change-carbon-markets-and-redd/>
  - (3) See also the book Licensed Larceny by Nick Hildyard. <http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/resource/licensed-larceny>
  - (4) How REDD projects undermine peasant farming. Report by GRAIN and WRM. <https://www.grain.org/article/entries/5322-how-redd-projects-undermine-peasant-farming-and-real-solutions-to-climate-change>
  - (5) It's maybe also important to note that the total of these reductions that countries have committed to are far too low to avoid global temperature increases of less than 2 degrees Celsius: The USA, EU, China and India alone would take up the entire so-called carbon budget of fossil carbon that can still be released until 2050 to ensure a 50 per cent possibility that temperatures increase by no more than 2 degrees. And a good part of China's emissions are from producing goods exported to the USA and the EU. [http://www.globalcarbonproject.org/carbonbudget/16/files/GCP\\_CarbonBudget\\_2016.pdf](http://www.globalcarbonproject.org/carbonbudget/16/files/GCP_CarbonBudget_2016.pdf)
  - (6) Who takes the credit? Report by Fern and Third World Network. <http://www.fern.org/whotakesthecredit>
  - (7) A New Paradigm for Voluntary Climate Action: Reduce Within, Finance Beyond. Gold Standard report. <https://www.goldstandard.org/blog-item/new-paradigm-voluntary-climate-action-%E2%80%98reduce-within-finance-beyond%E2%80%99>
  - (8) Economia Verde, Povos das Florestas e Territórios: violações de direitos no estado do Acre. Plataforma Dhesca Brasil. <http://www.plataformadh.org.br/2015/09/22/2015-economia-verde-povos-das-florestas-e-territorios-violacoes-de-direitos-no-estado-do-acre/>
  - (9) Rainforest Foundation UK: Logging in Congo's rainforests: A 'carbon bomb' about to be primed by the Government of Norway? <http://www.rainforestfoundationuk.org/media.ashx/drc-carbon-bomb-briefing-2017.pdf>
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## ACTION ALERTS

### **Mobilization to denounce the abuses of the SOCFIN company, which has the Bolloré Group as major shareholder**



Hundreds of people who live in the vicinity of SOCAPALM and SAFACAM plantations went to SOCAPALM headquarters in Bonanjo, Douala, Cameroon, to request a serious dialogue. Local residents complain that the existing dialogue is very uncertain, and that it lacks a strong framework for effective problem-solving. This is considering the very little progress made in recent years. Local communities, organized through SYNAPARCAM, are requesting to meet with the Director General to establish a

solid framework for dialogue.

Read the press release from the National Synergy of Farmers and Coastal Residents of Cameroon (SYNAPARCAM, by its French acronym). Read SYNAPARCAM's demand to reach a resolution to conflicts (both in French).

### **Defending Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation in Brazil and Peru**



In support of indigenous organizations in Peru, the Indigenous Missionary Council of Brazil (CIMI) expresses great concern for and stands in defense of the lives of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation, who live on the border of Brazil (Acre) and Peru (Madre de Dios). These peoples are currently threatened by the project to build a highway on the Peruvian side, which would connect Puerto Esperanza with Iñapari. If built, the highway would cause huge socio-environmental impacts, affecting indigenous peoples and territories in the region, riverine and farming

communities, rivers, forests, fauna and flora of the region. Read the complete press release in Spanish and Portuguese here:

<https://www.entreculturas.org/noticias/comunicado-del-cimi-en-defensa-de-los-indigenas-de-la-frontera-peru-brasil>

[http://www.cimi.org.br/site/pt-br/?system=news&conteudo\\_id=9298&action=read](http://www.cimi.org.br/site/pt-br/?system=news&conteudo_id=9298&action=read)



## India: Odisha government must not ignore forest rights claims on POSCO project site



The Odisha government gave more than 800 hectares of land to the South Korean steel giant POSCO for building a power plant, jeopardizing around 4000 families. The project has since the very beginning faced firm resistance from local communities as well as serious question marks from human rights and environmental groups on its social and environmental impacts. After POSCO pulled out of the project earlier this year, Odisha's Industry Minister announced that the land would be transferred to the Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO), a state agency. Authorities have begun constructing a boundary wall around the project site to prevent 'illegal encroachments'. The failure to respect Indigenous peoples' right to access and use their land violates not only international law, but also India's domestic laws on land and forest rights. Read further in English with this link: <https://www.amnesty.org.in/show/news/odisha-government-must-not-ignore-forest-rights-claims-on-posco-project-sit>

## Agua Zarca in Honduras: The Banks' Trap



Since 2013, the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) has demanded the withdrawal of the banks—FMO (Netherlands), Finn Fund (Finland) and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE)—from the "Agua Zarca" project on the sacred Gaulcarque River, due to the project's connection to eviction and death in the Río Blanco community. To date, none of the three banks has withdrawn from the project, despite the fact that FMO and Finn Fund have been announcing they will do so since May 2016. COPINH denounces that the lack of the bank's withdrawal means prolonging the aggressions and intimidations against the community. FMO and Finn Fund have spent their efforts on avoiding responsibility for the murders and human rights violations the project has caused. They have promoted a spurious narrative that ignores the role of the DESA company in the violence and repression, seeking to blame the communities as a way to clean up their international image. Read COPINH's press release in Spanish here: <https://www.copinh.org/article/copinh-la-trampa-de-los-bancos/>



## Call for action: Help activists stop large-scale logging of Europe's last lowlands forest



After years of efforts to limit the scale of logging and increase the amount of protected areas in the Białowieża Forest, Poland, the Polish Government has begun intensive logging using the outbreak of the spruce bark beetle as an excuse. In the first four months of 2017, over 10 thousand trees have been cut in parts of the forest with the oldest trees, over 100 years old. The recently imposed legal ban on entering major parts of this UNESCO's World Heritage Site serves to prevent citizen control of the intensified logging. A group of activists have set up a

camp to stop the devastation of the forest and advocate for turning it into a national park, successfully blocking the logging on several occasions. The group calls for people to join the camp, spread the word and donate to support their actions. Read the full statement in English here:

<http://skyddaskogen.se/en/news/2666-action-alert-save-bialowieza-forest-europes-last-primeval-temperate-forest>

## Philippines: Women call to stop the bombings in Marawi and to revoke Martial Law in Mindanao



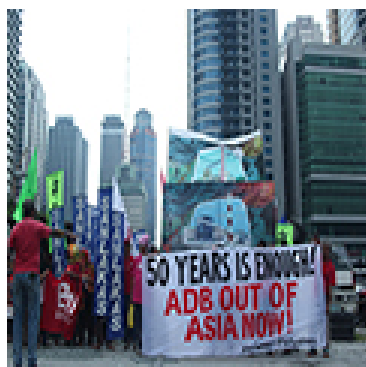
Women leaders from several national, regional and international organizations called for truth about what's happening in Marawi and Mindanao, Philippines, to come out and for perpetrators of violence to be pursued. Around 130 persons have been killed, thousands trapped and tens of thousands more displaced following a botched military operation to capture Abu Sayyaf's leader, Isnilon Hapilon. Martial Law was declared all over Mindanao. The group reminded the public how wars and militarism have always targeted the bodies of the sexually objectified and those

considered to be most vulnerable—the women. Thus prostitution, rape, forced migration, and all forms of violence against women are multiplied exponentially as bodies of women are considered to be weapons of war against perceived enemies. Read the statement in English in this link: <https://hronlineph.com/2017/06/03/statement-women-call-to-stop-the-bombings-in-marawi-revoke-martial-law-in-mindanao-as-both-aggravate-violence-against-women/>



## RECOMMENDED

### 50 years later: a review of the Asian Development Bank's impacts in the region



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) marks 50 years as the second largest source of development finance in the Asia-Pacific region, just after the World Bank Group. Focus on the Global South has released a special newsletter highlighting the Asian people's resistance against the Bank. It shows how the institution has been fostering inequalities and mis-governance while enjoying the highest degree of immunity to legal liabilities and accountability to national laws for problematic investments, faulty policy advice, violation of people's rights and livelihoods, and destruction of the environment. This documentation is aimed at joining people's movements and civil society in building a region-wide challenge to the ADB's immunity. The newsletter, together with earlier writings and materials on the ADB produced by this organization, can be found in English here: <https://focusweb.org/page/adb50/>

### Report on Transparency in the Carbon Market in Pará, Brazil



*Artigo 19* launches its report "I came here to understand: What is carbon? Access to information and the green economy in Pará." The report analyzes and criticizes the absence of processes that facilitate transparent access to information, and social participation, in the existing projects in Pará related to the carbon market and the REDD+ mechanism (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation). You can read the publication in Portuguese here: <http://artigo19.org/blog/2017/03/24/11201/>



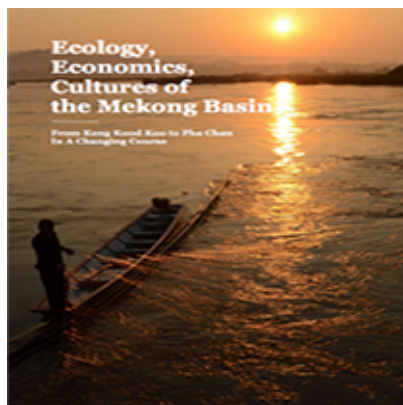
## Oilwatch: New Frontiers of Energy Extraction in Latin America



Focused on what are called "extreme energies," an Oilwatch report brings together ten articles that discuss and challenge governments' and companies' initiatives to sustain the fossil fuel matrix. From extraction of heavy and extra-heavy crude oil, to tar sands, to offshore sources in increasingly deep water, to hydraulic fracturing—extreme energies additionally require a global infrastructure chain and transportation fleet. In addition to serious environmental destruction, this intensifies the violence against traditional peoples and their livelihoods. Read the report in Spanish here:

<http://www.oilwatchesudamerica.org/ultimas-noticias/213-region-latinoamericana/5100-2017-05-15-22-57-27.html>

## Ecology, Economics, Cultures of the Mekong Basin: From Keng Kood Koo to Pha Chan in A Changing Course

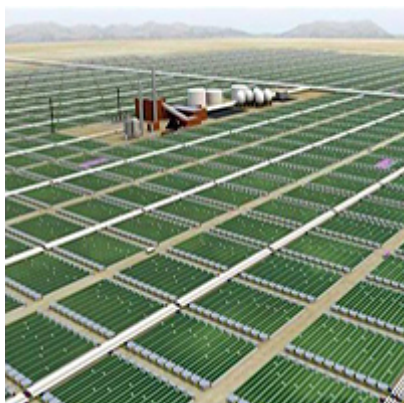


Launched by the Thai organization TERRA, this publication records the story of Mekong riparian communities from 25 sub-districts in 7 provinces of north-eastern Thailand (Isaan). It aims to bring to life the knowledge uniquely shaped by south-east Asia's longest international river, the Mekong River. It illustrates the delicate complexity of the Mekong hydrology and sub-ecosystems and how these provide the basis of life and livelihoods to the people along the river. It also explores the local cultures and socioeconomic values attached to it with a hint of history and ways of life. The publication in English and Thai can be found in this link:

<http://terraper.org/web/en/node/1824>



## “Biotechnology for biofuels” website page



The organization Biofuelwatch is launching a new website page dedicated to compiling their analyses of aspects of the biotechnology push to engineer crops, trees, and microbes for biofuels and the “bioeconomy”. The site includes in-depth investigations of three biofuel companies – Algenol, Mascoma, and Solazyme/TerraVia, and will be updated with forthcoming reports on algae and cellulosic biofuels, followed by further materials.

See the website in English following this link:

<http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/2017/biotechnology-for-biofuels/>

**The Bulletin aims to support and contribute to the struggle of Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities over their forests and territories. Subscription is free.**

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