



Amazon In Focus FALL 2018



AMAZON WATCH

OUR MISSION & VISION

Our Mission

Amazon Watch is a nonprofit organization founded in 1996 to protect the rainforest and advance the rights of indigenous peoples in the Amazon Basin. We partner with indigenous and environmental organizations in campaigns for human rights, corporate accountability and the preservation of the Amazon's ecological systems.

Our Vision

We envision a world that honors and values cultural and biological diversity and the critical contribution of tropical rainforests to our planet's life support system. We believe that indigenous self-determination is a critical component of any successful conservation strategy for the Amazon, and see that indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contribute greatly to sustainable and equitable stewardship of Mother Earth. We strive for a world in which governments, corporations and civil society respect the collective rights of indigenous peoples to free, prior and informed consent over any activity affecting their territories and resources. We commit, in the spirit of partnership and mutual respect, to support our indigenous allies in their efforts to protect life, land, and culture in accordance with their aspirations and needs, as well as the needs of future generations.

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Front cover: Salomé Aranda, Kichwa of Moretecocha, Moretecocha Women's Leader,
Photo: Santiago Cornejo

Photo (this page): Bejat McCracken

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Photo: Rucha Chitnis

Dear Friends of the Amazon:

When I think about the challenges of our time, I turn to the messages and guidance of our indigenous relatives across Abya Yala (the Kuna word for “the Americas”), who remind us to remain united in resistance and solutions to protect Mother Earth and all that is sacred.

While the threats to the Amazon and indigenous peoples seem daunting at times - with reports of increased deforestation due to industrial activity and lawlessness resulting in attacks against Earth Defenders - we cannot lose sight of hope and victories on the horizon. And while the day-to-day isn't always good, there are still many reasons to be hopeful for the future of the Amazon.

Indigenous peoples across the Amazon are resisting extraction and further destruction of their lands and promoting visionary solutions to protect their rights and territories. The Achuar of Peru are standing up, once again, to international oil companies trying to destroy their rainforest homes. And in July the Kichwa people of Sarayaku officially launched and presented their visionary Kawsak Sacha (Living Forest) proposal to the Ecuadorian government and the international community.

Sarayaku and the Achuar are heeding the call of the ancestors and climate scientists to protect forests, biodiversity, and water by keeping fossil fuels in the ground and advancing alternative and renewable energy solutions. I'm also hopeful and incredibly inspired by the rise of women and youth leadership across the Amazon and the world. Women Defenders of the Amazon Against Natural Resource Extraction was formed after attacks on indigenous Earth Defenders and is now a movement growing across the Amazon!

This kind of climate leadership is truly inspiring, and at Amazon Watch we are redoubling our commitment to support and foment this kind of resistance and solution-building. The world needs, and we pledge to be a part of, bold climate leadership committed to no new extraction and a just transition to renewable energy from California to the Amazon.

To do this, we need you! Please join us to stop Amazon destruction, advance indigenous solutions and support climate justice with all of our indigenous partners and allies across *Abya Yala*.

For the Amazon and Mother Earth

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leila S. Salazar". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Leila Salazar-López
Executive Director



Photo: Bejat McCracken

OUR WORK:
PROTECTING THE
AMAZON AND
OUR CLIMATE
BY SUPPORTING
INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES

Since 1996, Amazon Watch has protected the rainforest and advanced the rights of indigenous peoples in the Amazon Basin. We partner with indigenous and environmental organizations in campaigns for human rights, corporate accountability, and the preservation of the Amazon's ecological systems.



Stop Amazon Destruction

Amazon Watch resists the destruction of the Amazon by challenging disastrous development projects and natural resource extraction and by promoting indigenous rights.

Current Priorities:

- Continue to develop our End Amazon Crude campaign, with a particular focus on the financiers of Amazonian oil companies, while deepening ties with California policymakers and forging a diverse and effective campaign coalition.
- Work with Ecuadorian and global partners to halt the country's planned new auction of oil drilling concessions that threaten vast, pristine forests and the peoples who call them home.
- Strengthen our campaign alongside Peru's Achuar people and a coalition of partners to force GeoPark to abandon its Amazonian oil concession.
- Slow Brazil's ongoing assault on the Amazon, environmental regulations, and indigenous territorial rights by exposing and severing international market and investment ties to corrupt government leaders linked to the agribusiness sector.



Advance Indigenous-Led Solutions

Amazon Watch supports and promotes indigenous-led alternative solutions to climate change, natural resource extraction, and industrial development

Current Priorities:

- Scale up a robust and replicable Power to the Protectors program to deliver solar energy, communications, and transport solutions to remote Amazonian indigenous communities.
- Support indigenous-led efforts to advance visions and proposals for a permanently protected Sacred Headwaters bio-cultural region located between the Napo and Marañón rivers in the Amazon.
- Formalize and expand our Amazon Protectors Fund to meet the growing financial needs of both established and new grassroots partners.



Support Climate Justice

Amazon Watch joins with the climate justice movement to address the fact that the most vulnerable -- especially indigenous peoples and people of color -- bear the brunt of environmental destruction, corporate greed, and climate change, and are often excluded from top-down solutions.

Current Priorities:

- Build partnerships with research and media organizations and hone our visual storytelling on the importance of indigenous climate leadership.
- Support inter-ethnic and international alliance-building between indigenous peoples of the North and South calling for climate justice.
- Grow support for Earth Defenders of the Amazon through advocacy before national and international authorities, emergency response, and communications to amplify the message of indigenous leaders and communities that are at the frontlines of protecting the Amazon rainforest.
- Support and advance proposals by indigenous women and youth on the frontlines of ecological destruction and climate change in the Amazon.

PROFILE: JEREMÍAS PETSEÍN PEAS



Jeremías has led 45 Achuar communities in the Northern Peruvian Amazon since May 2015, when he was elected President of The Federation of the Achuar Nation of the Pastaza (FENAP). In that role, he has led efforts to implement the Achuar Life Plan, a bottom-up vision, developed by Achuar community members, for culturally appropriate development. Much of the work is carried out among the communities within Achuar territory, which spans some two million acres. The struggle to defend Achuar rights has also taken Jeremías to advocate before the Peruvian Judiciary and Congress, the international press, and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission.

Jeremías' tenure has been fraught with challenges. Shortly after assuming the presidency, a key Achuar leader and advisor, Lucas Irar Miiik, tragically perished in the Pastaza River while traveling home. Jeremías and the other FENAP representatives have had to manage tensions with neighboring indigenous peoples, exacerbated by the emerging oil activity. Such is the reality of indigenous leadership, which Jeremías has faced with patience and resolve.

This visit is Jeremías' first to the United States, and we are delighted to host him as the Amplify gala's keynote presenter. Our relationship with the Achuar dates back fifteen years and has spanned various presidents. We are honored to have worked with Jeremías and will continue accompanying the Achuar as future leaders assume the mantle.



PERU'S ACHUAR TAKE TERRITORIAL DEFENSE GLOBAL, AGAIN

By Andrew Miller

Earlier this year, Peru received international praise for creating the Yaguas National Park, which covers over 2 million acres of rainforest in the country's northeastern Amazon. To the West and close to the Ecuadorian border, a federation of 45 Achuar communities in the Pastaza River basin are actively working to protect a similar sized area that comprises their ancestral territory. The Peruvian government is much less enthusiastic about the Achuar effort, however, and has actively opposed it at moments. Why?

The Achuar of the Pastaza River provide a different vision than the traditional top-down models of nature conservation, as laid out in the Achuar Life Plan. Put to paper in 2003, the Life Plan outlines the Achuar's own development model which includes a collective title for their ancestral territory, keeping extractive companies and roads out, bilingual education, intercultural health care, reforestation, and strengthening of their governing structures.

Around the world indigenous peoples are finally being recognized as the best protectors of their territories, after decades of their own international advocacy. As UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, recently said, "There is a realization that many of the initial efforts to protect forests and the

climate but exclude communities have failed. In parallel, indigenous peoples have better organized themselves to assert their rights, and there is growing evidence that forests are better taken care of when communities' rights are respected."

Despite this, asserting their rights has positioned the Achuar in opposition to powerful economic and political interests. First, the Achuar are fighting a legal battle to demand a title for their full ancestral territory, not just the current parcels surrounding each community. This would expand the area under their control and strengthen their position against oil, mining, or logging interests. Success for the Achuar territorial claim would reshape the landscape in Peru, opening the way for other Amazonian indigenous peoples to secure titles for tens of millions of acres. Understanding the precedent-setting potential of the case, the Peruvian national government has deployed a team of the country's top lawyers in an attempt to shut it down.

As their long-term legal process is moving forward, the Achuar are fighting off individual oil companies looking to enter an oil drilling concession the government has denominated "Block 64," which overlaps much of the Achuar's ancestral territory. Encouraged by the Peruvian government, internationally-known companies like ARCO, Occidental, and Talisman made efforts to explore for oil over the last two decades. But all ultimately withdrew due to Achuar resistance.

The role of grassroots opposition has even been recognized by conservative Peruvian media outlets. “One of the reasons for Talisman Energy’s withdrawal was due to the conflicts the company had with Achuar indigenous communities in the area of influence, who, along with non-governmental organizations, demanded the departure of the company,” Peruvian financial magazine *Gestión* wrote in September of 2012.

The article references an emblematic incident in early May of 2009, in which dozens of Achuar representing the 45 communities staunchly opposed to oil marched through the jungle to the Situche Central oil platform within Block 64 to demand Talisman’s departure. In response, and mirroring jungle warfare tactics, the company helicoptered in hundreds of armed men from the pro-oil communities, causing a tense situation almost resulting in bloodshed and was later denounced by the Peruvian prosecutor’s office as attempted genocide.

Extraordinarily, even given this conflictive history readily found through a simple internet search, another multinational company called GeoPark has stepped forward with dreams of success in Block 64 where others have failed. This has meant a renewal of tensions between communities living in the area; most oppose drilling, but a small handful support it, operating under the banner



of federations that were created by prior oil companies. Divide-and-conquer strategies die hard.

Having expelled multiple companies over the last 20 years, the majority of Achuar opposed to drilling are not sitting idly by as GeoPark attempts to pick up where Talisman left off. The FENAP federation - representing 45 communities in the Pastaza and Morona River basins - has sent multiple official communiques to GeoPark, though with no response to date. They have protested during various assemblies of Achuar communities, providing visual expressions of their commitment to defend their territory. Recently, the Achuar established a powerful strategic alliance with neighboring Wampis Nation, which has a history of kicking out oil companies. And the Achuar continue to push for Block 64 to be annulled through the Peruvian court system, with the support of the Peruvian human rights organization International Institute for Law and Society.

Internationally, the Achuar are taking the fight to GeoPark and their financiers, accompanied by Amazon Watch. Prior to the company’s July shareholder meeting in Santiago, Chile, we published a short video featuring the Achuar that was circulated through social media and seen thousands of times. An online action alert was signed by over 5,700 people, sending a message to GeoPark senior management that people around the world stand with the Achuar. More recently, the Achuar began direct dialogues with key financial institutions and institutional investors with millions of dollars in GeoPark shares, like JPMorgan Chase, asset manager BlackRock, and the California pension fund CalPERS.

After fifteen years of support for the Achuar people of the Pastaza basin, we are renewing our commitment to collaborate until their territorial rights are guaranteed. Please join us!



DIVESTING FROM AMAZON DESTRUCTION: A NEW STRATEGY TO DEFEND THE AMAZON

By Roberta Giordano

Despite the ongoing war waged by the Trump administration against the planet and the upsurge of a fascist wave across the globe trampling human

rights, people are rising up to the challenge undeterred. And now more than ever, they are creating hope by building alliances from the global North to the South.

One particular area where we have seen alliances growing in strength and numbers is within the global fossil fuel divestment movement. Divestment has been used as a tactic to advance social and environmental justice for decades. In the past, divestment campaigns have targeted tobacco companies and were instrumental

in fighting apartheid in South Africa. More recently, students across the globe have used this tactic to get universities to move their money out of the fossil fuel industry in an effort to curb climate change. The logic behind fossil fuel divestment is simple: stop the flow of capital if you want to stop the root cause of extractive industries.

In early 2016, the No Dakota Access Pipeline movement that emerged from Standing Rock took the fossil fuel divestment campaign to a new level. Witnessing this

movement arising was one of the most powerful and inspiring moments for me. It shed further light onto the major role that financial institutions play in not only perpetuating the desecration of Mother Earth, but also in the violation of indigenous rights and territories.

Despite the fact that international frameworks recognize the right of Indigenous communities to give or withhold their free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) for development that impacts their land, the project financing of the Dakota Access Pipeline showcased a systemic lack of transparency and implementation of FPIC within the world of financing. The call to unite under indigenous leadership for a global divestment movement from companies funding abuses and destruction came forth as a strategy to advance the rights of indigenous peoples. I still remember seeing thousands of people from all over gathering at Standing Rock to stand up in solidarity with the Sioux Tribe and put their bodies on the line to stop the pipeline from being built, and the call from the Sioux Tribe to join them in their efforts to pressure banks to stop the financing of deadly projects to indigenous and frontline communities.

That year, Amazon Watch accompanied people from the Kichwa community of Sarayaku to

Standing Rock not only to show solidarity to the Sioux tribe in their struggle, but to also tell the story about how the battles of indigenous communities in the North are like those in the South. We, and our partners from Sarayaku, also wanted to demonstrate that the culprits behind extractive projects affecting indigenous communities are often one and the same. Recognizing these connections,

in 2017, Amazon Watch decided to take a more active role in this movement calling for shifting capital away from destruction, and released a report exposing the financiers of some of the oil and gas companies directly threatening our partners on the ground.

To no one's surprise, we found that two of the world's largest financial institutions, JPMorgan Chase



Photo: RAN

and BlackRock, have assets in companies like Geopark, Frontera, and Andes Petroleum, all of which hold licenses to explore and/or drill in the Western Amazon. While it is fossil fuel companies that do the actual drilling in the Amazon, in writing the report we began to understand that ultimately the institutions providing the financial resources to drill are just as implicated in the rights violations suffered by communities impacted by the drilling.

This new area of work gave Amazon Watch the opportunity to widen our coalitions and partnerships between the North and South in more visible and creative ways. Even here in our hometown of Oakland, we have supported Defenders of Mother Earth-Huichin, an indigenous-led coalition working to pressure the city to cut its ties with banks funding fossil fuels, the violation of indigenous sovereignty, and mass incarceration. In 2017, because of our united efforts, the Oakland City Council passed strict legislation requiring any bank hoping to do business with the city to disclose its investments in such projects. As a result, JPMorgan Chase no longer provides depository services to the city.

We have also joined forces with other U.S.-based NGOs in targeting these financial institutions responsible for wrecking the



planet and violating indigenous rights. Together with our allies at Rainforest Action Network and the Sunrise Project, we supported Gloria and Manari Ushigua of the Sapara Nation in telling their stories of survival and resistance in front of the CEOs of BlackRock and JPMorgan Chase at their Annual Shareholders Meeting. Gloria and Manari spoke vividly about the impacts of oil drilling in their community and these executives could not help but pay attention. Since then, Amazon Watch has been engaging in conversations with these companies on the impacts of their investments.

With so much at stake for our climate and for our future, we know we cannot let ourselves be paralyzed by the constant challenges arising every day. With this new area of work, Amazon Watch has been able to rise above these challenges by uniting with indigenous communities and other groups across the U.S. in pressuring these financial institutions to recognize that our future lies in protecting our environment, our rights, and our climate and not in risky investments that prioritize profits over people.



ENDING AMAZON CRUDE TAKES ALL OF US

By Zoë Cina-Sklar

The impacts of climate change are all around us, from devastating fires to powerful hurricanes and unprecedented heat waves. Our partners in the Amazon are feeling these impacts as well; they tell us that the rhythms of the seasons are changing, that the Earth is parched during the wet season and that rains drench the land at times when it was

once dry. These sorts of changes have dire consequences, particularly for indigenous peoples whose livelihoods depend directly on the health of their environment.

Our partners' adaptation to a changing climate and continued determination to protect their territories from extractive development inspires us onward. Alongside our indigenous allies, we are speaking out about the imperative of ending Amazon crude as a way to fulfill our mission of protecting the rainforest and the climate by advancing indigenous rights.

This year's natural disasters and the more subtle shifts in the climate remind us that we are living in a moment of planetary and societal crisis. And we cannot address this crisis while continuing to drill for more oil and gas. Period.

Through our years of working on the ground in Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia, we have witnessed the destruction that oil drilling causes to the rainforest ecosystem, indigenous peoples and *campesinos*. We have also supported the Kichwa people of Sarayaku and the Achuar people of Peru in organizing to push oil

companies off of their territories and use legal mechanisms to ensure that companies and governments respect their land rights and right to self-determination. These place-based victories serve as models to communities around the world. They also form key threads of our broader organizational work to stop new oil drilling in the Amazon, a campaign we call End Amazon Crude.

This campaign spans many different aspects of our work at Amazon Watch. It is the work of Carlos, our Ecuador field coordinator, who meets with indigenous peoples around Ecuador to better understand their demands for territorial protection, participates in community-wide meetings, and leads communications skills trainings for youth leaders. It is our decades-long partnership with the U'wa people of the Colombian cloud forests who began the call to keep fossil fuels in the ground over 20 years ago. It is our many international advocacy campaigns in support of our partners' demands. And it is our efforts to help communities build alternative models of development not based on fossil fuel extraction.

The newest addition to this work is our effort to bring the story of oil drilling in the Amazon to the United States in an innovative way. U.S. institutions and corporations play a key role in driving this ongoing destruction because the majority of Amazon crude exports end up in the

U.S. and financial institutions here bankroll oil companies operating in the Amazon. Because of this, we're pushing these powerholders to do their part to End Amazon Crude.

About half of the oil exports from the Western Amazon Basin come to California to be processed by refineries here, and then used by businesses and consumers. This makes California the world's largest purchaser of Amazon crude. Policymakers must play a key role in reducing Amazon crude imports to the state and, in broader terms, accelerating the state's transition away from oil and gas production and processing as a whole.

To this end, we are building relationships with Sacramento policymakers and working in coalition with a large number of California organizations and grassroots groups to push outgoing Governor Jerry Brown and his replacement to commit California to ramping down fossil fuel production and processing in the state in a just and equitable way.

Likewise, we are bringing to light the key role of United States' financial institutions in financing oil companies operating on indigenous territories in the Amazon and putting pressure on them to divest from these companies - and ultimately get out of Amazon oil and all fossil fuels altogether. (See "Divesting from Amazon Destruction" in this issue for more on this work.)

In May 2018, we had the honor of hosting Gloria and Manari Ushigua of the Sapara people of Ecuador. While in the U.S. they shared powerful stories about their community's resistance to oil drilling with everyone from indigenous leaders to Wall Street CEOs - resulting in direct engagement with the high-level executives of financial institutions and new bridges to California policymakers.

The Sapara people returned to California again in the Fall of 2018, along with leaders from Sarayaku, to participate in high-level events surrounding the Global Climate Action Summit. There, they shared their experiences of resistance to oil drilling with a global audience as well as the climate solutions that they propose, from distributed solar energy systems for remote communities to the Living Forest.

While a United States audience continues to learn more about oil drilling in the Amazon, these communities - and many others - organizing to protect the Amazon know they are not alone: they have a growing network of allies who will support their efforts to protect their territories from oil drilling and other extractive development. They - and we - know we are fighting together, creating a web of connections and building solutions and visions for a clean and equitable world, one place at a time.



LIVING FOREST: A VISIONARY MODEL FOR INDIGENOUS-LED CONSERVATION

By Leila Salazar-López & Moira Birss

For the last twenty years, the Kichwa people of Sarayaku have resisted all efforts to extract resources from their territory. In doing so they have kept approximately 100 million barrels of oil in the ground, and inspired us with their steadfast resistance and determination to be a shining light for the Amazon and beyond. However, the people of Sarayaku are not content with keeping their example and wisdom to themselves. In late July 2018, Sarayaku officially launched its Kawsak Sacha (Living

Forest) proposal to the world, and Amazon Watch was there to support and celebrate alongside them.

What is Kawsak Sacha?

Kawsak Sacha - which roughly translates to “Living Forest” - is Sarayaku’s way of referring to their direct physical and spiritual connection with all the beings in the rainforest and the recognition that the forest itself is a living and conscious being with the right to be protected. Kawsak Sacha, in that it embodies Sarayaku’s practice of working with the forest to maintain spiritual and ecological balance, is a declaration of hope for the world’s future.

The Kawsak Sacha declaration is a proposal for conservation and preservation of Sarayaku’s ancestral territory, free from any form of industrial

extraction, based on the life-plans developed by the people of Sarayaku. But Kawsak Sacha is not only the response of resistance in the Amazon; it is a critical solution in recognition of indigenous rights and territories around the Amazon and the world.

While indigenous territories and the rights of nature are recognized in Ecuador, they are often not respected. Case in point: the Ecuadorian government has once again violated the historic Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruling in favor of Sarayaku, which ordered that the Ecuadorian government consult with Sarayaku before initiating any natural resource extraction projects on their territory. In fact, the Ecuadorian government has once again concessioned Sarayaku’s territory to oil drilling, and plans to launch a new oil round across the country’s Amazon region overlapping with the territories of multiple indigenous peoples later this year.

Recognition of indigenous and forest rights cannot just be left to national governments, Sarayaku has realized, so its Living Forest proposal calls for a new international category of conservation based on indigenous worldviews and cosmovision and upholds indigenous self-determination and governance. While indigenous rights and territories are recognized in Ecuadorian and international law, there is no law or international conservation category that recognizes

the interrelationship between indigenous peoples and the forest.

At a meeting with international allies in Quito during the launch events, Jose Gualinga, former President of Sarayaku, explained:

“Protected areas created by the Ecuadorian government and international organizations don’t protect us and in many cases have violated our rights. They are temporary solutions that can be changed and manipulated by those in power. What we are proposing is permanent protection of living forests or other critical ecosystems for which indigenous peoples and the whole world depend.”

Launching Kawsak Sacha to the World

For the six months preceding the launch, the people of Sarayaku engaged in a *minga* like no other. A *minga* is a communal work effort, like building a house or planting a new garden. The Kawsak Sacha *minga* involved the entire community, including Tayjasaruta, Sarayaku’s governing body led by its President Mirian Cisneros; the Kurakas, community leaders; the communications team; the women’s association; Atayak, the traditional school; Wio, the indigenous guard; children; and many volunteers to plan all of the logistics for the

inauguration, launch and conference events. It was no small feat!

The *minga* also involved Sarayaku’s international allies to promote and support the launch, including Amazon Watch, IEN, WECAN, Pachamama Alliance, Rainforest Action Network, Land is Life, Oro Verde and more, as well as author and academic Eduardo Kohn. At the launch, our team worked closely with Sarayaku’s communications team and in coordination with Indigenous Rising Media and Fundación Pachamama to ensure that the Kawsak Sacha launch events and voices of the people of Sarayaku were heard.

The launch included a formal presentation to the Ecuadorian government and international dignitaries, as well as an exhibition and conference in Quito to showcase Sarayaku’s way of life, culture, and alternative vision for truly living well in the world. The launch was timed to coincide with the six-year anniversary of the historic ruling at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

During the launch, Sarayaku officially submitted the Kawsak Sacha proposal to the Ecuadorian government and international representatives of the IUCN to advance their goal of formal recognition of Kawsak Sacha as a new category of conservation in harmony and in respect of indigenous worldviews. Once this



new category is recognized, the people of Sarayaku hope that others around the world will use it as a model to protect rights and territories for all of our collective future.

The people of Sarayaku have called upon local, national and international allies to support the full recognition and implementation of the Kawsak Sacha proposal. Amazon Watch has worked closely with the people of Sarayaku since 2002 and is fully committed to ensuring that their visionary proposal is implemented and replicated across the Amazon and the world.

As global temperatures rise, and greenhouse gas emissions increase, it is clear that solutions to our climate crisis will come from local, indigenous and grassroots communities working to protect rights, defend nature, keep fossil fuels in the ground and advance a just transition to 100% renewable energy.

PORTRAITS: WOMEN DEFENDERS OF THE AMAZON

Photos by Santiago Cornejo,
text by Moira Birss

For decades, oil companies have taken advantage of the resource-rich land of the western Amazon, violating the basic human rights of indigenous peoples while simultaneously inflicting harm and destroying the beautiful rainforest. Indigenous communities have responded with powerful messages, defending their land at all costs. At the forefront of this ongoing battle are the strong, resilient indigenous women Earth Defenders.

Some have faced death threats and attacks for their courageous work to defend their rights and their Amazon territories.



Irene Toqueton Vargas, Sapara, Women's Leader



Rosa Dahua, Sapara Women's Association

The Sapara Nation of the Ecuadorian Amazon is recognized by UNESCO as an "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" because their language and culture are in danger of disappearing. There are about 500 Sapara people still living in their ancestral home; though the Sapara population is small, their territory is quite large and is a critical part of the Amazonian ecosystem. However, Sapara territory -- and the Sapara themselves -- are in serious danger from oil drilling planned for two oil blocks that overlap with approximately 500,000 acres of their ancestral territory.



Catalina Chumpi, Shuar Nation, Coordinator of COMNAP (Organization of Indigenous Women of Pastaza)



Maria Taan, Shuar, Member of the Taisha Association

The Shuar people, whose ancestral territory straddles the border between the Andes and the Amazon, are struggling to protect their rights and territories since the Ecuadorian government sold the rights for an open-pit copper mine project to Explocobres, a subsidiary of two Chinese companies. In recent years the communities have faced violent evictions, criminalization and threats due to their opposition to the damaging impacts of the mine.

Yet instead of backing down, they have redoubled their efforts to assure an Amazon rainforest free of natural resource extraction and an end to threats against them and other Earth Defenders.

These women, united under the banner of "Women Defenders of the Amazon Against Natural Resource Extraction," carried out a series of marches and protests in March of 2018 that eventually took them to Ecuador's capital, Quito, and all the way to an unprecedented meeting with President Lenin Moreno. There, they denounced rights abuses, the environmental impacts of extraction, and the overall climate of violence that the industry has created for women. They also presented the President with a series of demands for the protection of their rights and of the Amazon.

Amazon Watch accompanied these marches and protests, and we continue to stand with them.



The Kichwa of Sarayaku, whose territory lies in the Ecuadorian Amazon, are a visionary people who have succeeded in protecting their territory from oil drilling and are now sharing their model of care and relationship with the rainforest to the world. Elsewhere in this issue you can read more about their groundbreaking efforts to build international models for indigenous rights and forest protection.

Noemi Gualinga, Coordinator of the Kuriñambi Women's Association of Sarayaku



Salomé Aranda, Kichwa of Moretecocha, Moretecocha Women's Leader



Rosa Cuji, Lipuno of Moretecocha

The community of Moretecocha has suffered for decades from the efforts of the government and oil companies to find any and all oil in the area. A principle culprit is Italian oil giant ENI, which has operated in the region for 28 years and has plans to expand its drilling deeper into the rainforest. Community leaders who have spoken out against the impacts of ENI's operations, like Salomé Aranda, have faced threats and attacks. Aranda was attacked while in her home with her family soon after ENI was confronted at its annual shareholder meeting for its drilling in Moretecocha despite lack of community consent. Nonetheless, Aranda and others like Rosa Cuji continue their work to defend their community.



Mercedes Tsamaraint Tukup, Achuar of Pumpuenta



Zoila Irumenga, Waorani of Tobera



Rosario Calapucha, Kichwa of Shiguacocha

Waorani ancestral territory abuts, and in some places is overlapped by, Yasuni National Park in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Despite supposed protections in this region, over the last half-century the oil industry has opened roads for oil platforms and pipelines into the heart of Waorani territory. Now, the government wants to sell rights to exploit oil in one of the last remaining oil-free, roadless areas in Waorani territory.



AMAZON WATCH ON THE GROUND IN ECUADOR

By Carlos Mazabanda

I have had the privilege of working with organizations and indigenous communities for 12 years, and for almost two years now at Amazon Watch as the Field Coordinator in Ecuador. With this work, Amazon Watch hopes to strengthen our mission of closely collaborating with indigenous partners facing government and corporate actions that directly threaten their territories and violate their rights.

56% of the Ecuadorian Amazon's 72,000 square miles consist of

territories belonging to indigenous peoples. Those indigenous peoples have, despite the powerful forces stacked against them, managed to protect much of the rainforest. Case in point: although oil blocks overlap 27% of the Amazon - in the northern region - 84% of the Amazon still retains its natural vegetation.

Amazon Watch has focused its Ecuador field work in the central and southern parts of the western Amazon. These are the least deforested areas in the western Amazon and are home to seven indigenous nationalities that encompass more than one thousand communities, and where pressures to implement oil and mining projects remain strong.

From Working in the Field to Demanding the Fulfillment of Indigenous Rights

Indigenous peoples in Ecuador have been developing their own organizational system since the 1980s, as a strategy that has allowed them to raise their voices and seek respect for their rights. Amazon Watch's advocacy on behalf of our indigenous allies and our work to strengthen their knowledge of and capacity to defend their collective rights is key to this strategy.

This is one of the most rewarding parts of the work I do, because being 'on-the-ground' allows me to have close, direct contact and build trust with our indigenous partners. The men, women, and children of those communities will always have something new to teach us all about the importance of the Amazon rainforest that is their homeland, and in this way we can experientially recognize the importance of the rights they are defending.

An example of this is the support we have provided to the Shuar Arutam people (known by the acronym PSHA), who at the end of 2016 were evicted by security forces from the part of their territory that is overlapped by the "San Carlos-Panantza" copper mine, located in the "Condor" mountain range on the border with Peru.

Since then, Amazon Watch, together with the Ecuadorian organization Fundación Tiam, has worked with the PSHA to provide technical and financial support for their community assemblies.

These kinds of assemblies are of vital importance to indigenous communities because they are where the decisions that govern their future are made. It is there that, through their processes of traditional decision making, they analyze and discuss projects that are affecting, or could affect, their territories.

Another example is that of the communities affected by the oil contracts in the oil concession known as “Block 10.” In 2010 the Ecuadorian government signed a drilling contract with the Italian oil company ENI that included changes in the shape of the block to include new oil fields. In doing so, the government included new indigenous territories within the Block without having properly consulted



with the communities, as is required by law. As with the PSHA, we have supported and participated in various community assemblies, including the one in which leaders of the different indigenous nations affected by Block 10 (Shuar, Morete commune, Sapara, and Sarayaku) officially unified their rejection of the expansion of oil activity in their territories.

Related to this is another aspect of our advocacy, which involves working with indigenous peoples to develop effective strategies to assure their rights are respected and enforced. This often includes legal actions before national and international authorities that must ensure compliance with collective rights.

In support of the PSHA and the communities of Block 10, we have gathered information about rights violations committed against them, then used this systemized information to produce publications that inform citizens about the problem and serve as the basis for legal actions and political advocacy. For example, we produced reports on the human rights situation of PSHA in relation to San Carlos-Panantza mine which we presented before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and submitted as part of civil society’s “alternative report” to the United Nations’ Universal Periodic Review on the human rights situation in Ecuador.

In the case of Block 10, we worked in partnership with ASUD, an organization based in Italy, which presented the information we collected at ENI’s annual shareholder meeting this year. This was the first time that ENI’s shareholders had been presented with concrete information demonstrating that local communities have clearly rejected oil operations on their territories and that their rights have been violated.

Unfortunately, in response to the community’s activism, threats and attacks have been made against some community members and leaders, including Salomé Aranda (read more about Salomé in the Amazonian Women Earth Defenders photo essay in this issue). In support of Salomé, Amazon Watch issued a call to action to our supporters, who sent messages to the CEO of ENI demanding an investigation into the attacks and new measures to prevent future aggression of this company. This call received over 7,000 signatures!

With this work we want to contribute to achieve full compliance of the rights of indigenous peoples and of nature. This is a long and winding path, but one to which Amazon Watch, allied organizations, and especially indigenous people, are committed to traversing.



Photo: Greenpeace

BUILDING NEW STRATEGIES TO STEM AMAZON DESTRUCTION IN BRAZIL

By Christian Poirier

When Amazon Watch reinstated its Brazil program in 2009, we did so at the behest of grassroots partners who urged us to focus on a pressing concern of the indigenous movement: the government's steamrolling of plans for new, large dam projects in the Amazon. We began work on the Madeira River and then focused on the Xingu, where we helped lead a major international campaign to stop the construction of the Belo Monte dam. Our work was motivated by a call to action to stop

one of the planet's most disastrous projects and the politics and industry that underpinned it.

Today, while the Brazilian Amazon's rivers remain endangered by a similar destructive development model, the political will and financial largesse required to push new dams forward has waned, at least for now. As always, our work must evolve to address emerging challenges by leveraging our strengths and diverse partnerships across Brazil and the globe to support the country's indigenous and human rights movement to create positive change.

Currently, a new wave of industrial expansion into the Amazon is causing rampant deforestation and rollbacks on environmental and human rights norms that are unprecedented since the fall of Brazil's brutal military dictatorship, which ruled from 1964

to 1985. As the country descends into a deepening political crisis, an ultra-conservative congressional bloc known as the *ruralistas* has become emboldened. Representing Brazil's agroindustrial sector, the *ruralistas* are waging a relentless campaign to reap extraction-driven profit from the Amazon's forests. As a result, key environmental protections and indigenous territorial rights are being systematically dismantled in favor of agribusiness, industrial mining, and infrastructure complexes such as dams and waterways.

This unfolding ecological and human rights disaster requires a well-coordinated and definitive response. As a member of a broad, largely-Brazilian coalition known as #Resista, Amazon Watch recently launched a collaborative, groundbreaking market campaign that takes a fresh approach to

confronting the roots of this problem.

Our new campaign identifies strategic, emblematic actors among the *ruralistas* based on their particularly retrograde records in politics as well as the private sector, where they produce and sell commodities, from soybeans to orange juice, for export. We then expose the *ruralista*'s links to the transnational companies that purchase and import these commodities and bring them to consumers in Europe and the United States. In doing so we seek to build new tools and leverage points to target and shift major U.S. and European financial and corporate enablers of this anti-environmental and anti-indigenous movement, ultimately rendering today's *ruralista*-driven assault both politically and financially untenable.

Drawn from Brazilian investigative journalism and supply chain research in Europe, a report we published in September 2018, entitled "Complicity in Destruction: How Northern Consumers and Financiers Sustain Today's Assault on the Brazilian Amazon and its Peoples" exposes major brands such as U.S.-based Coca-Cola, Switzerland-based Schweppes and Germany-based Weisenhof, whose operations directly implicate them in the *ruralista*'s regressive agenda. Meanwhile, we've uncovered links to BlackRock and other financiers, tying our Brazil agribusiness campaign findings to our emergent work on the key global financiers

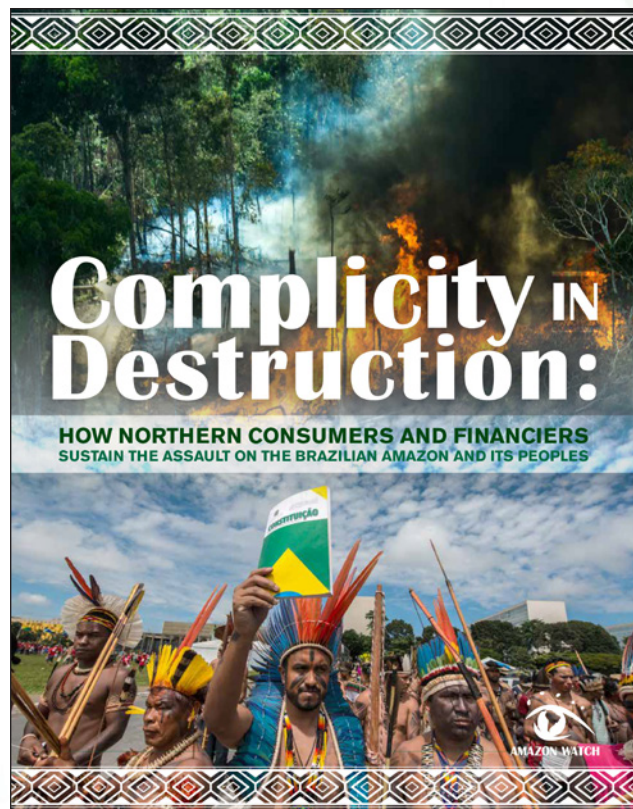
of Amazon crude. Our goal is not only to compel these actors to cut ties with *ruralista* targets, but to send a signal to the worst elements of Brazil's agroindustrial sector that the international community will not tolerate, nor sustain, their unacceptable behavior.

The rationale driving Amazon Watch's new campaigning on Brazilian agribusiness is the same that informed our work to challenge the Amazon dam-building boom: the imperative to lead innovative and dynamic coalition-based strategies that challenge the principal drivers behind attacks on the Amazon rainforest and its indigenous and traditional communities.

As with much of our work, we hope to act as catalysts of a larger movement to defend human rights and environmental sanity not just in the Amazon, but around our planet. Today's troubling global trend of authoritarian politics jeopardizes decades of hard-fought socio-environmental protections.

Global solidarity can make the difference at this critical moment: the government's sensitivity to its image abroad and its increasing reliance on international corporate and financial actors to remedy its ailing economy creates a unique opportunity to apply timely pressure upon the country's reputation, and upon transnational traders that sustain the destructive agribusiness sector, thereby halting threats and advancing urgent socio-environmental reform.

We have the ability, and the obligation, to push back.





CHEVRON STILL FACING ENFORCEMENT RISK IN CANADA FOR POLLUTING THE AMAZON

By Paul Paz y Miño

From 1964 to 1992, Chevron, then operating as Texaco, deliberately dumped 16 billion gallons of toxic oil drilling waste into the once pristine Amazon rainforest to save a mere \$3 per barrel. Indigenous and farmer communities sued and in 2011 Chevron was found liable for \$9.5 billion after years of litigation in Ecuador – the venue of its own choosing. Despite having admitted to the dumping, Chevron has vowed never to pay for a clean up and promised the communities a

"lifetime of litigation" and to fight the judgment "until Hell freezes over, and then fight it out on the ice."

Under former CEO John Watson Chevron spent hundreds of millions of dollars on a strategy of legal thuggery and intimidation to try to stop the Ecuador case and later to escape enforcement. Yet this year when Watson turned over the company to new CEO Michael Wirth, he also left him with an ongoing enforcement action in Canada, a multi-billion dollar liability, continued shareholder discontent and growing grassroots pressure.

Recently 36 institutional shareholders, collectively representing over \$109 billion in assets under management, called on new Wirth to finally redress Chevron's toxic legacy in the Amazon. New grassroots actions against Chevron continues - as close to a million Avaaz members wrote to one of Chevron's largest investors, Vanguard Group, to demand it cut its investments if Chevron does not clean up its toxic waste in the Amazon. In fact, as more Canadian NGOs join the campaign, the movement against Chevron is only growing and Amazon Watch believes it critical that the pressure on Chevron continues in what remains the most important corporate accountability case in history. Indeed, Chevron's legal intimidation tactics are already being used by other corporations to try to stop environmental NGOs from

continuing their campaigns. Chevron's new corporate "playbook" is a threat to corporate accountability everywhere.

In the coming months Canada's Supreme Court will hear an appeal of the ruling of the lower court that Chevron-Canada's assets could not be seized to cover Chevron Corporation's liabilities. The Supreme Court will also be presented with evidence demonstrating that Chevron's retaliatory suit in the U.S. was based on testimony from a bribed witness who since admitted to perjury and evidence disproving Chevron's key claims of fraud and "ghostwriting" of the Ecuadorian verdict. More importantly, Chevron's preemptive legal attack in the U.S. demonstrates why Canada must protect the right to access to justice for the Ecuadorian communities.

These facts will make the Canadian court decision that much more critical to the issues of international comity and access to justice for indigenous peoples and others harmed by corporations. The pressure on the Supreme Court of Canada to take a stand in one of the most egregious cases of corporate crime and abuse of power will be considerable. Amazon Watch continues to support the fight for justice in this case as it approaches a new chapter with the pending ruling by Canada's Supreme Court.



POWER TO THE PROTECTORS: SOLAR SOLUTIONS FOR THE AMAZON'S INDIGENOUS STEWARDS

By Christian Poirier

As the many communities spanning the Amazon's vast network of indigenous territories face mounting threats to their rights, lands, and wellbeing due to the ever-expanding presence of industrial activities like oil drilling, agribusiness, and mining, innovative responses are increasingly needed.

Pressures upon Amazonian ecosystems, which are critical to climatic stability and biodiversity, frequently translate to intimidation and violence against their indigenous stewards. The communities on the frontlines of struggles for rights and resources are largely remote and

isolated, making them vulnerable to repression and limiting their ability to defend themselves and their territories. The Amazon is among the most dangerous places in the world to be an Earth Defender, and our partners routinely face threats for their enduring resistance to industrial development.

To address this concerning reality Amazon Watch launched the Power to the Protectors program, which provides indigenous communities across the Amazon basin with solar and communications infrastructure and builds local capacity and expertise in clean energy solutions. The provision of radio and satellite internet, accompanied by clean and secure energy sources, will enable communities to better monitor their territories and share information with neighbors and external partners on threats and opportunities.

The value of this program lies not only in helping to support our partners' work in remote villages, but also in demonstrating to a broad audience that renewable energy and communication

tools are critical to the forest stewards endeavoring to safely implement their own forms of sustainable development, visions for environmental protection, and territorial and cultural defense. Power to the Protectors therefore strives to set positive precedents for solar-powered solutions across the Amazon basin and around the globe.

Since 2016 we have worked with the U'wa people of Colombia, the Sapara people of Ecuador, and the Mundurucu people of Brazil to deliver a variety of solar and communications hardware in partnership with the NGOs Empowered by Light, the Give Power Foundation, and Greenpeace Brazil. With these successful pilot projects behind us, our coalition now seeks to significantly scale up the program; we aim to bring solar, radio, and internet infrastructure to an expanded circle of partners and implement a robust training and capacity building component to maximize both the longevity and impact of new systems.

With Amazonian Earth Defenders under siege, we must respond. The success of their vision for territorial integrity in respect of rights hinges upon building enabling partnerships to forge innovative solutions that place a premium on preserved ecosystems and vibrant communities. Amazon Watch's Power to the Protectors program hopes to provide tools that further enables this vision, while bringing its emblematic victories to the world's attention.

AMAZON PROTECTORS FUND: **DIRECT SUPPORT FOR AMAZONIAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

Since 2006 Amazon Watch has regularly responded to the urgent needs of our grassroots partners through our Regranting Program. By channeling small grants assembled through institutional and private funders, we have consistently responded to timely and strategic requests from our partners for innovative local initiatives and urgent actions. This year, we formalized this program into our new Amazon Protectors Fund.

With the Fund, we seek to further expand our regranting process, growing our commitment to strengthening the capacity and opportunities of Amazonian indigenous organizations and local NGOs. Our partners seek funding for diverse projects and activities: legal defense; travel to relevant advocacy spaces; convening indigenous-led workshops and community assemblies; community-led territorial and ecosystem mapping; land titling projects; community-led organizing; communications initiatives; non-violent direct actions; and field monitoring of industrial activities and their impacts. With this support, they can continue to defend their collective rights, rainforest territories, culture and livelihoods.

AMONG THE SUPPORT WE PROVIDED THIS PAST YEAR WE HIGHLIGHT:

- Brazil - Amazon Watch has a longstanding partnership with Brazil's Munduruku nation, supporting their successful efforts to stop the São Luiz do Tapajós mega-dam in 2016. This year we supported an assembly of Munduruku youth with Munduruku chiefs to exchange experiences, knowledge and traditional medicine, convened in Sawré Muybu, an untitled, contested indigenous territory under immense pressures from extractive industries.
- Ecuador - After Ecuador's government refused to make any progress or commitments in national talks with the indigenous movement, Amazon Watch provided critical support for indigenous leaders to organize a 10,000 strong, 200+ mile march from the Amazon to Quito. At their historic meeting with President Moreno he committed to no new oil and gas projects without consultation.
- Colombia - Continuing Amazon Watch's 20-year relationship with the U'wa people, we supported a delegation of newly-elected leaders to Bogotá for face-to-face planning with legal allies. The U'wa proposed a community workshop to build capacity around their pioneering indigenous rights case before the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights.
- Peru - Amazon Watch has channelled regular funding to the Achuar People of the Pastaza River Basin for defense of their ancestral territory. We supported activities in favor of their Achuar Life Plan, strengthening their representative organization (FENAP) and promoting bilingual education.

AN INVITATION TO DEFEND THE SACRED:
THE AMAZON WATCH

SACRED GIVING CIRCLE

Giving in a sacred way is central to many indigenous cultures, whether as a means of giving thanks, convening people for a shared purpose, gaining honor, or more equitably distributing resources so that all may survive. In this spirit, we have convened the Sacred Giving Circle, an interconnected circle of supporters with shared values to defend the Sacred Headwaters of the Amazon and keep sacred natural areas free from extraction.

Sacred Giving Circle members commit to bring \$25,000 in annual support to our work and partner with us to expand our community and grow our capacity for enacting change.

“It is truly an honor to partner with Amazon Watch and invest in their critical work to defend indigenous rights, the Amazon and the climate for all of our collective future.”

– Monica Winsor,
Sacred Giving Circle Member

THE AMAZON WATCH IMPACT FUND

Amazon Watch calls upon our philanthropic partners to support our Amazon Impact Fund which seeks to raise \$1 million.

Support for the Amazon Impact Fund will allow us to:

- Expand our on-the-ground team in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru and work more closely with our indigenous partners.
- Launch an Amazon Indigenous Rising Media Team to expand indigenous communications capacity and directly amplify voices and solutions of indigenous peoples.
- Grow our Solar for the Amazon program to support indigenous communities' pursuit of clean energy and communications capacity.

Congratulations Amazon Watch!

I am moved daily by the strength, power, love and beauty of your work – and its positive impact on the children, the elders, medicine people, leaders, mamas, papas, and individuals that you partner with, deep in the Amazon. Thank you for your sacrifices. I am proud to be part of your work as a committed donor and board member. Keep up the good work!

Ana Maria Mahiri Murillo
Fundraising Consultant

Always looking to help your work grow, blossom and deepen!

With a special emphasis on individual donor fund development, Ana brings her twenty years of social justice experience to her consulting practice. She has worked doing community organizing, fundraising and strategic relationship-building for community-based, social justice organizations - large and small. Contact her today to learn how she can help your organization! am415510@gmail.com

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to protect indigenous
communities.



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**Thank you Amazon Watch for over 20
years of dedicated work!**

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For more than 22 years Amazon Watch has brought together people passionate about the rainforest, indigenous rights, and the climate. Our community is broader than our team in the office and it continues to grow. Join us!

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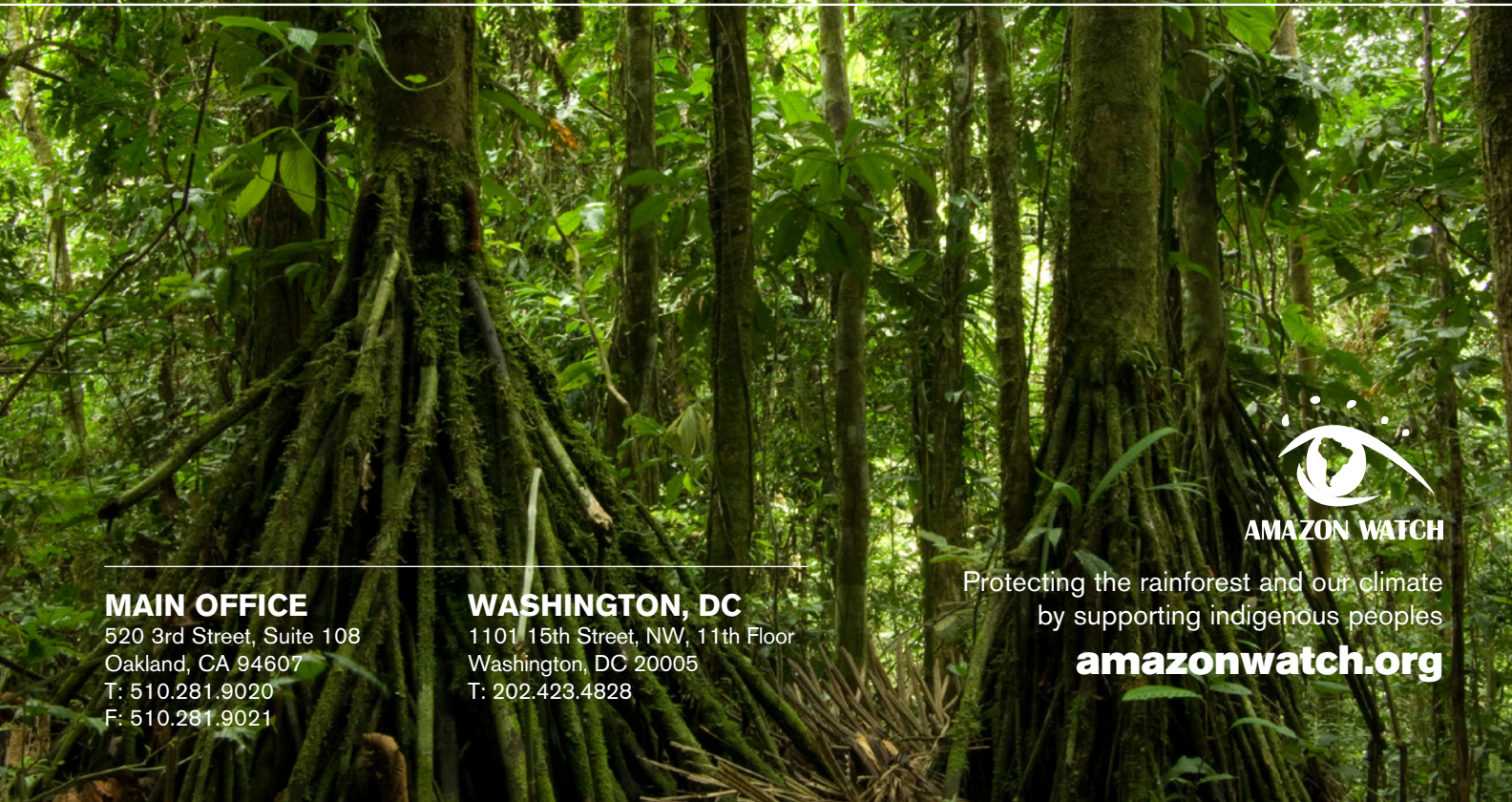
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A special thanks to Honorary Co-Chairs **Benjamin and Peter Bratt** who have supported Amazon Watch and our work in Peru for many years.





AMAZON WATCH

Protecting the rainforest and our climate
by supporting indigenous peoples

amazonwatch.org

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