



# Amazon In Focus

FALL 2021



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## MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Dear Friends of the Amazon,

As I reflect on 25 years of work to protect and defend the Amazon I am so proud of the work we have accomplished together over the years in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and allies committed to corporate accountability and climate justice. Together, we are building a global movement to permanently protect the Amazon from increasing threats and multiple crises and we are generating widespread support for Indigenous-led solutions.



Photo: Rucho Chitnis

The Amazon is at a tipping point. It is not near, it's here. To reverse/halt this tipping point, we have joined the call from Indigenous peoples and global scientists to protect 80% of the Amazon by 2025. Not 2030 and definitely not 2050. The time to act is now! Together, we are calling on global leaders to declare a state of emergency in the Amazon to stop further destruction of this vital rainforest. This requires real commitments from governments and corporations to stop deforestation, exit Amazon oil and gas, and put an end to attacks against Indigenous and forest peoples defending lives, rights and territories. This requires supporting calls for the demarcation and recognition of Indigenous ancestral territories.

As outlined in our 2021-2025 strategic plan, we are fully committed to advance and amplify Indigenous rights, resistance, and solutions to protect and defend the Amazon basin; denounce false solutions, including carbon offsets; elevate Indigenous women's voices and solutions; develop and implement rapid response protocols and campaigns to defend earth defenders of the Amazon, and to redirect \$1.5 million+ per year in solidarity and emergency rapid response funds via our Amazon Defenders Fund. We also commit to practice and actively work for decolonization, justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work, internally and externally.

With a growing U.S.-based and international team in Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador, we will expand regional and international advocacy and communication campaigns to halt and hold accountable the global drivers of Amazon destruction, including governments, corporations, extractive industries – such as fossil fuel and agribusiness – and their financial backers. We will expose investors of Amazon destruction and dissuade them from investing in agribusiness, mining and Amazon crude. And, we will work in collaboration with regional and international allies to build a pan-Amazon and global movement to act for the Amazon, Indigenous rights, and climate justice. Thank you for standing with us during this critical and transformative time for the Amazon, our climate, and all of humanity.

With deep gratitude for your support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Leila Salazar-López".

Leila Salazar-López, Executive Director

## OUR WORK

# Protecting the rainforest and our climate in solidarity with 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 destruction of the Amazon rainforest, which is perilously close to reaching a tipping point of ecological collapse, by challenging and bringing global media attention to government, corporate and financial actors complicit in deforestation, resource extraction, land grabs, rights abuses, and disastrous development projects.

## Amplify Indigenous-led Solutions

Amazon Watch amplifies the voices, stories and solutions of Indigenous peoples to uphold rights, lives and territories. Amazon Watch uplifts and invests in Indigenous-led solutions for forest conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and regenerative, local economies.

## Advance Climate Justice

Amazon Watch centers the voices and solutions of Indigenous peoples into policies that address the global climate crisis. Amazon Watch advocates for principled climate action that includes proposals and solutions from communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis—especially Indigenous peoples and people of color— who have historically been excluded due to systemic racism and economic oppression.







# Amazon Watch's Strategic Plan and JEDI goals

In honor of Amazon Watch's 25th anniversary, our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan builds upon 25 years of work to protect the Amazon rainforest and defend the rights, lives and territories of Indigenous peoples. We commit to work in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and a growing global movement calling for urgent action to permanently protect the Amazon, defend the defenders, and advance climate justice.

We must take bold and immediate action to shift from a 'tipping point to a turning point.' There is no time to waste. The time for global action is now!





## Goals:

1. Advance and amplify Indigenous rights, resistance and solutions to protect and defend the Amazon Basin.
2. Develop and implement rapid response protocols and campaigns to defend Earth Defenders of the Amazon.
3. Expand international advocacy campaigns to halt and hold accountable the global drivers of Amazon destruction.
4. Support movement building for Pan-Amazon protection.
5. Amplify a global narrative of the integral role of the Amazon rainforest and respect for Indigenous rights to advance climate justice.
6. Deepen engagement and broaden base of donors to support mission fulfillment.
7. Increase and strengthen internal capacity to support team well-being and the successful delivery of the strategic plan.

We recognize that the destruction of the Amazon is rooted in historic and perpetual colonization that began with the Spanish and Portuguese, and continues via government and corporate exploitation. The driving factors of colonial, white-supremacist and capitalist ideologies provide the justification for treating Indigenous peoples and their territories as sacrifice zones. As Amazon Watch grows in staff and influence, the organization is adopting new measures and practices to actively work for decolonization, justice, equity, diversity and inclusion internally and externally across the organization.

Amazon Watch commits to these critical decolonization guidelines and justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) goals:

## Decolonization Guidelines

- Shift power to frontline communities
- Lift up Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous systems thinking
- Build equitable relationships
- Practice humility and integrate lessons learned
- Engage in clear and transparent communication
- Be accountable to harm

## JEDI Goals

- Staff diversity at every level and on every team of the organization
- Commitment to ongoing learning and transformation
- Institutional implementation and active practice of JEDI objectives
- Multi-lingual accessibility
- A culture of self and collective care
- Equitable timelines and expectations
- Skills and systems for constructive feedback and generative conflict

# Threats and Solutions, Mining on Indigenous Lands

By Ana Paula Vargas

Last year, Amazon Watch and the Association of Brazil's Indigenous Peoples (APIB) revealed in our report, *Complicity in Destruction III*, how industrial mining has impacted Indigenous lands in the Brazilian Amazon, and how extractive corporations, backed by some of

the world's largest financiers, are behind those threats.

A study has shown that legal mining alone has caused the loss of 11,670 km<sup>2</sup> of the Amazon rainforest in one decade, the equivalent of 11 cities the size of São Paulo. Last year, mining devastated a total of 125 km<sup>2</sup>, an increase of 62% compared to two years ago. Mining also leaves behind a trail of human rights violations, as one of the extractive activities mostly linked with murders of environmental defenders. It contaminates the water, soil and blood of the communities around it, and can wipe out entire communities in a few minutes, as we have seen in the

cities of Mariana and Brumadinho within the Brazilian Amazon. And now, mining companies have their eyes on Indigenous territories once again, emboldened by the Bolsonaro administration.

The government of President Jair Bolsonaro has implemented an agenda to promote wildcat and industrial mining, by passing and promoting policies to open up new areas that are currently off limits for mining. One of the main instruments that reflect this impetus of the current government is Bill 191, which allows mining in Indigenous lands, eliminating the veto power of native peoples. The bill violates the Brazilian Constitution, the provisions of ILO Convention 169, and has been denounced several times by the powerful Indigenous organizations in the country.

At Amazon Watch, we have worked on several strategies with our partners to denounce Bill 191 and hold the mining sector accountable for its attempts to mine on Indigenous lands. In December 2020, following the launch of our joint groundbreaking report, we launched the campaign "Tell Anglo American to Stay Out of Munduruku Territory!" alongside APIB, where we confronted the company's hundreds of requests to research minerals which overlapped with Indigenous lands – some of which were even granted. In March of







2021 we celebrated our first victory, when Anglo American publicly announced that it would stop seeking 27 research authorizations that overlapped the Sawré Muybu territory, in the state of Pará, home to the Munduruku people. While this was a first step in the right direction, we want Anglo American and other mining giants to go beyond, and commit to stay out of Indigenous territories for good.

In July 2021, Amazon Watch also led, alongside civil society organizations from Brazil and abroad, a campaign against the mining company **Belo Sun**. The company intends to open the largest gold mine in Latin America, near the Xingu River, already impacted by the construction of the Belo Monte reserve. In a letter to the press and the Ontario Securities and Exchange Commission, our coalition revealed a series of false information released by the Canadian company Belo Sun Corp and its CEO, Peter Tagliamonte, that downplayed the socio-environmental, legal, and financial risks of the project near the Xingu River. Soon after the

denunciation, there was a drop in the mining company's shares. Due to pressure from civil society, public defenders, Indigenous and riverine communities, the company continues to have its construction license suspended.

Everywhere in the Brazilian Amazon, Indigenous peoples are organizing to resist mining, and Amazon Watch is supporting their struggle, projects and solutions. Rejecting mining and illegal mining, known as *garimpo*, was one of the main calls during the historic mobilizations undertaken by the Brazilian Indigenous movement. Between June and September 2021, our partners took to the streets for the Rise for the Earth and the Struggle for Life camps, and the second March of Indigenous



Women. In addition to national mobilizations, Indigenous peoples have found different ways to resist mining in their territories, and to build alternatives to this predatory economic development model. Their solutions put the sustainability of life, and not profit, at the center.

Among important territorial resistance strategies are the self-demarcation and territorial monitoring of the Sawré Muybu land, by the Munduruku. After waiting years for the government to recognize their lands, and besieged by the advance of *garimpo* and the interest of large mining companies, the Munduruku have taken upon themselves the task of defining the limits of their territory, and protecting it. During self-demarcation, Indigenous peoples travel through the territory's borders, identifying and denouncing invasions, installing signs indicating the region is Indigenous land and reaffirming their ties with the land. Self-demarcation requires intense logistical, political and spiritual organization, and today it is carried out periodically by the Munduruku, with support of allied organizations such as Amazon Watch.

Together with international allies, we have accompanied and amplified Indigenous calls, so that one day mining and other extractive threats to Indigenous peoples ends and *Fora Garimpo (Out Illegal Miners!)*, will be a rallying cry of the past.



## Ecuador Doubles Down on Extraction

By Kevin Koenig

Some hundred days into office, Ecuador's new right-wing President Guillermo Lasso laid out his plan to "save" Ecuador's economy from the financial ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic, oil price collapse, and crushing debt. His solution? More oil and more mining – the root of much of its current crisis.

At a time when scientists have alerted that the Amazon biome is at an ecological tipping point, and when its Indigenous defenders face life and death threats in their daily defense of their territory, Ecuador plans to double oil production and mining exports, the majority of which come from its Amazon region.

With Executive Decree 95, Lasso green-lit policy reforms to attract private sector investment in its oil industry in hopes of boosting its current production from 450,000 barrels per day to 1 million barrels per day. This new crude will primarily come from new expansion





in Yasuni National Park, where plans to drill some 600+ wells are underway in the Ishpingo, Tambococha and Tiputini fields. The park is a UNESCO Biosphere reserve and is widely considered one of the most biodiverse places on Earth. It is also home to two Indigenous peoples – the Tagaeri and Taromenane – living in voluntary isolation. But drilling now surrounds them. A new road cutting a wide swath through the canopy to open new wells is only a month away from reaching the no-go-zone protected area for the Tagaeri and Taromenane.

Lasso also dusted off plans to open up some 7 million hectares of mostly intact primary rainforest and titled Indigenous territories in the country's southeastern Amazon to new exploration. These oil leases are exactly the kind of new extraction the recent International Energy Agency report says are incompatible with the 1.5 °C global temperature increase we must remain below as our best hope at averting climate catastrophe. The pursuit of new oil reserves underneath standing tropical forests essential for climate change mitigation – in a country where the industry is a major driver of deforestation – is a double whammy for the planet's climate budget.

Plans to double oil production when Ecuador is averaging almost

a spill per week and its largest oil spill in 15 years has yet to be fully remediated, is a disaster for local communities and the country's high levels of biodiversity. The decree also ignores the multiple cases sitting before the constitutional court over the country's ongoing violations of free, prior, and informed consultation and consent of Indigenous peoples threatened by the extractive industry.

Like the oil reforms, Decree 151 lays the groundwork for similar changes in the mining sector aimed at courting investment and boosting exports by some 74%. With the 2020 oil price crash that sent a barrel of oil to -\$37, "stable" commodities such as gold and copper became more appealing.

Millions of acres of mining concessions now criss-cross the southern Andean-Amazon region. This area is known as the *Cordillera del Condor*, a unique and fragile ecosystem of major biological importance with high levels of biodiversity and endemic species. In this region, mining concessions now cover 50% of the ancestral territory of the Shuar Arutam people. The Shuar are adamantly opposed to the multiple projects slated for their lands, and their resistance has brought threats from company officials against their President Josefina Tunke. Mining conflicts in the past have brought rights

violations and led to a months-long state of emergency for two provinces.

But the government's aspirations to expand extraction are meeting resistance from all sides. On the ground, Amazon Watch is partnering with local Indigenous peoples and the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of the Ecuadorian Amazon, a regional Indigenous organization, to support organizing, legal action, and communications capacity to keep fossil fuels, gold, and copper in the ground. Internationally, we are using finance and market strategies to cut off funding and investment for new extraction. The U.S. is the largest consumer of Amazon crude and Ecuador is now the largest source of foreign oil for California, surpassing Saudi Arabia in 2020.

These decrees are a threat to the Amazon, its peoples, and the climate. They pave the way for a massive expansion of extraction in some of the most ecologically fragile and culturally sensitive areas, and if history is any lesson, promise continued rights violations of Indigenous peoples and nature. We have been successful at stopping wholesale oil and mining leases before. Now, we must stand with them in defense of their territories, their rights, and the Amazon that we all depend on.

# 25 years of Defending the Amazon in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

Amazon Watch  
would like to  
acknowledge  
the many  
people who  
have supported  
our work over



the past twenty-five years. We are forever grateful to our Indigenous allies across the Amazon and globally, our staff, international team, volunteers, consultants, board members, interns, allied organizations, and especially our donors. We will continue to work in solidarity with this growing community to permanently protect the Amazon rainforest and the rights of its inhabitants. Thank you!

Special thanks to Cristina Mittermeier for the use of this photo and many others.







# The Narco-Threat to Peru's Indigenous Leaders and Territories

By Vladimir Pinto

Though 60% of Peru's territory is in the Amazon, most of its inhabitants live in the Andean or coastal regions and don't know that our rainforests are constantly invaded by extractive industries, agribusiness, illegal loggers, miners, colonizers, narco-traffickers and land traffickers. Over its 25 years, Amazon Watch has worked with Peruvian Indigenous organizations to demand respect for their rights by the Peruvian government and private companies. We are proud to have accompanied our partners' successes against the historic abuses perpetrated by oil companies and stemming from the lamentable "Baguazo" violence in 2009.

In recent years, one of the threats has gotten worse. A report on Peru by the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy documented a 20% increase in coca production, from 72,000 to 88,000 hectares.

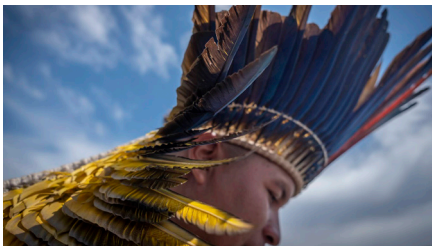


These illicit crops are proliferating across the rainforest, but in Peru's central Amazon region, especially in the provinces of Huánuco and Ucayali, the situation has become critical. According to a recent report, coca crops were the main driver of deforestation in 2020 and 2021. Narco-traffickers have settled into these areas, corrupting local organizations and governments, carving out at least 54 clandestine landing strips, and controlling rural roads. They have also built a network of hit men, threatening anyone who opposes their interests. One of their main objectives is to invade and control the extensive forests

of Indigenous territories, targeting those that don't benefit from the legal recognition of their territory or that don't have any protections from the Peruvian government.

The Kakataibo and Shipibo Indigenous peoples are now on the front line of resistance against this phenomenon. According to Peru's human rights ombudsman, at least 10 Indigenous environmental defenders have been assassinated since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. One emblematic case is that of Arbildo Meléndez, a leader from the community of Unipacuyacu who was killed in April of 2020. His





confessed killer walks free, while Arbildo's widow, Zulema Guevara, continues to seek justice at grave risk to her own safety.

Responding to the constant threat, Indigenous organizations and their allies have advocated for the inclusion of threatened Indigenous leaders within the government's new "Protocol for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders," which was approved in 2021. The protocol should contribute to the design of holistic protection strategies and should regulate immediate actions by different government institutions to confront imminent threats. But the system is very new and doesn't yet have dedicated funding.

Peru's counter-narcotics policies, supported by the United States Agency for International Development, are failing in the central Peruvian Amazon. Not only have the areas under cultivation expanded, but according to diverse community denunciations and journalistic investigations, it has been proven that government funds, through Peru's National Commission for

Development and a Drug-free Lifestyle (DEVIDA) and the regional governments of Huánuco and Ucayali, have benefited the same colonizers that invade Indigenous territories and expand the coca frontier. Indigenous communities that are protecting the forests and resisting the narco-traffickers have requested support from the government with little reply, while the colonizers linked to the illegal drug trade are receiving resources and money from the government and international donors.



In collaboration with many local, national, and international organizations, Amazon Watch has been accompanying Indigenous leaders as they denounce this situation to the Peruvian authorities, the United Nations, and the

United States government. We have also provided some support from the Amazon Defenders Fund for emergency gatherings and protection measures for threatened community leaders.

Together, we must amplify our partners' recommendations to confront the advancing narco-trafficking activities within Indigenous territories. A big part of the problem is that the government has not respected or taken into consideration the rights of Indigenous peoples. Therefore, the design of counter-narcotics policies should include Indigenous organizations, in accordance with the ILO convention 169 and USAID's own PRO-IP policy for the rights of Indigenous peoples. Another huge issue is legal recognition and security for Indigenous communities. If the Peruvian government issued the collective land titles that they have been requesting for decades – as opposed to issuing individual titles for the colonizers – and if the government provided effective protection to fend off invasions of third parties, the communities would be less threatened by illegal economies. All this should go hand-in-hand with projects for Indigenous communities, according to their own vision for economic development, that won't destroy the forests as done by colonizers.



## Greenwashing Net Zero into a False Solution

By Moira Birss

It seems that nearly once a week there is news of another company or financial firm issuing a “net zero” climate pledge. It could be easy to believe that the corporate world is finally acknowledging and taking responsibility for its role in the climate crisis.

Unfortunately, the reality is not so rosy. When we dig into those “net zero” pledges, we find loopholes the

size of the Amazon rainforest.

The concept of “net zero” comes from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the United Nations scientific institution that provides updates on climate science, which in 2015, following the signing of the Paris Agreement, released a report on how to curb global warming. Its findings showed that to keep rising temperatures below 2° Celsius, with a target of 1.5°C, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions must be halved by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050. The “net” in net zero indicates that emissions reductions or removals must balance out emissions production to meet the 1.5°C target.

Subsequent IPCC reports and corroborating scientific research

unequivocally show that in order to keep global average temperature rise below 1.5°C—and thus have a shot at avoiding the worst impacts of climate change—requires deep and immediate cuts in the burning of fossil fuels, the complete phaseout of fossil fuel use before mid-century, and drastic reductions of emissions from industries like agribusiness, whose current business models rely on deforestation.

In practice, however, many companies and financial institutions, and even some governments, are attempting to appear as if they are reducing emissions without actually doing so. Instead, they want to perpetuate business-as-usual while supposedly compensating for it with so-called offsets.



Take BlackRock, for example. The world's largest asset manager has fostered a "climate-conscious" reputation through actions like joining the Net Zero Asset Managers Initiative. It has also committed to using a small portion of the revenue from its so-called "sustainable" investment funds to purchase carbon offsets to use against its own emissions. What BlackRock is more reluctant to advertise, however, is that it is the world's largest investor in companies engaged in deforestation in the Amazon rainforest. BlackRock invests \$8.2 billion in companies involved in deforestation and conflicts in Amazonian Indigenous territories and holds at least \$6 billion in debt and \$24.2 billion in equities in oil companies currently operating in the Amazon.

Corporate actors like BlackRock seem to think that they should get to keep drilling for oil or razing forests for commodity production, but that they can "offset" that by doing things like planting some trees to supposedly suck that carbon out of the air. But carbon science doesn't actually work like that, and such schemes do not address the root causes of climate change – the primary cause being the extraction and use of fossil fuels – and forest loss, and often lead to land grabbing from Indigenous peoples and other violations of their right to

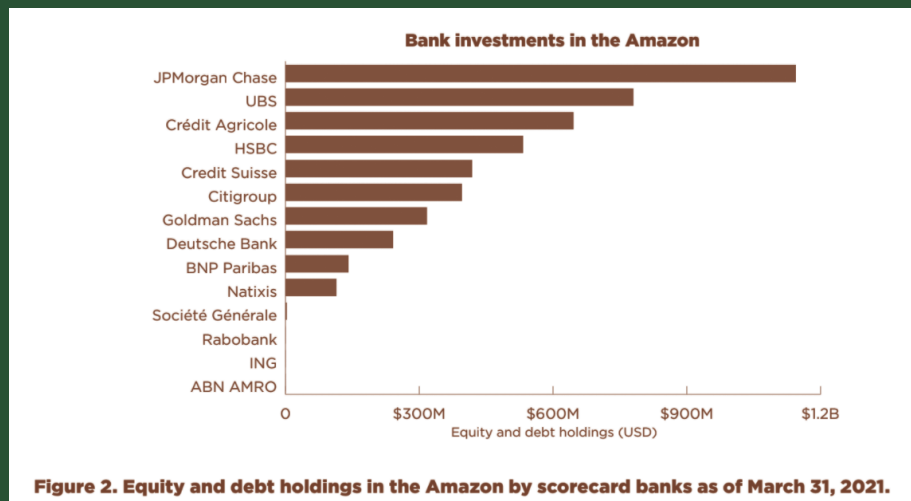


Figure 2. Equity and debt holdings in the Amazon by scorecard banks as of March 31, 2021.

self-determination.

JPMorgan Chase is another major culprit of corporate greenwashing. Despite releasing a series of carbon reduction targets for Paris-aligned financing in May of this year, the bank continues to be the largest financier of fossil fuels worldwide, and the largest financier of oil and gas expansion in the Amazon rainforest specifically.

It is a major target of Indigenous leaders and climate campaigners calling on banks everywhere to adopt an **Amazon Exclusion Policy and Exit Strategy** to stop financing or investing in any oil or gas activities in the entire biome. Any bank that continues to support the expansion and operation of fossil fuel industrial activity in an area as vital to global climate

regulation as the Amazon rainforest is an enemy of our movement to protect people and the planet.

That's why at Amazon Watch we're actively campaigning for companies, financial institutions, and governments to keep their climate plans simple and transparent, with separate targets for rapid reductions in emissions from the burning of fossil fuels and other industrial activities, first and foremost in key ecosystems like the Amazon; rapid elimination of commodity supply chains that drive deforestation, like logging in the Amazon rainforest; and increased commitments and contributions to rights-based nature protection and restoration so that Indigenous peoples are deciding for themselves how their ancestral territories are protected.

# Defending Amazon Defenders

By Andrew E. Miller

At its heart, Amazon Watch's work is supporting the efforts of Amazonian leaders who represent

communities, organizations, and Indigenous peoples more broadly. Given those relationships, often lasting decades, we have always done our best to accompany them in difficult moments of threat and peril. As of last year, however, that support was explicitly codified within our Strategic Plan.

For centuries, communities have faced collective threats to

their rights, environment, and territories, manifested by extractive industries (legal and illegal), mega infrastructure projects, and invasions of their lands. The political and economic interests behind those invasions will single out leaders and others who resist those threats and target them with intimidation, criminalization, and often deadly violence.





The statistics are stark. Global Witness documented 227 assassinations of environmental defenders in 2020. Colombia led the list, with Brazil and Peru also in the top ten countries. “In Brazil and Peru, nearly three-quarters of recorded attacks took place in the Amazon region of each country,” stated the report.

Amazon Watch’s response varies depending on the local context. In Brazil, we have staff dedicated to the protection of partners, who work in close collaboration with the broader team. This year, they have carried out field assessments in the Tapajós region and provided legal and communications accompaniment at national Indigenous mobilizations in Brasilia. One priority case is Alessandra Korap, just one Mundurucu leader among many others under threat.

In the Western Amazon, we have also been supporting the efforts of Amazon protectors. Another emblematic case is that of Josefina Tunki, a Shuar Indigenous leader



from the Ecuadorian Amazon who has been resisting mining companies such as Canada’s Solaris Resources. She has denounced threats received directly from company representatives and is calling on the Canadian Ambassador to take action in defense of Indigenous rights.

In Peru, killings of environmental defenders have increased dramatically, with eight assassinations in 2020 alone. As part of the Amazon Climate Forum, held in mid-April, we worked with actor Rosario Dawson to highlight the cases of Arbildo Meléndez, killed in 2019, and his now threatened widow Zulema Guevara. As part of a broader



publicity campaign, we helped secure national media coverage of defenders like Herlin Odicio of the Kakataibo Indigenous people.

To expand international pressure for the protection of these and other defenders, this year we launched the Accompany Amazon Defenders program in Washington, DC. We are working to engage Congressional offices to take action and featured Zulema Guevara and Colombian defender Jani Silva in a virtual Congressional briefing, attended by staff of both House and Senate offices. Members of Congress like Rep. Raúl Grijalva have spoken out in letters, video statements, and social media posts at critical moments.

Finally, Amazon Watch has greatly increased financial support to partners through the Amazon Defenders Fund. This flexible solidarity fund has helped provide funding when communities have found themselves at increased risk from invasions, COVID-19, or climate-related disasters such as flooding. In some cases, as threats to particular defenders have increased, ADF funding has supported protection measures like emergency relocation. We will continue to collaborate with many other organizations in this urgent campaign for the lives of the Amazon forest guardians and the life of the Amazon rainforest itself.

# Mobilizing Struggles, Solutions, and Hope

By Angela Martinez

For the Indigenous peoples of the Amazon, mobilizing and organizing is a long-term process that needs to be nourished daily. It is aligned with their collective spirit and way of living that counteracts the aggressive and destructive extractivism imposed against their ancestral territories and lives. Amazonian Indigenous movements and peoples did not even stop their organizing and mobilizing efforts during the different waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their vibrant efforts coupled with ancestral knowledge continue to be crucial as they care for each other, advocate for intercultural health systems, access to care, and vaccines. Otherwise, they would have lost much many lives.

Our Amazon Defenders Fund (ADF), is an activist led-fund, that mobilizes unrestricted, timely, and safe solidarity funds with a year-round open grant cycle. Due to the flexibility of the ADF, it adapts towards the most pressing immediate, mid, and long-term



priorities of our partners, including organizing and mobilizing direct actions, which they regularly found challenging to get resources for. Mobilizing is part of the holistic strategic framework from both our partners and the ADF.

## **Women's March in Brazil "Reforesting Minds and Hearts to Cure the Earth"**

Most recently, the ADF was in solidarity alongside Indigenous women in Brazil that gathered and mobilized as a part of Brazil's National Association of Ancestral Indigenous Women Warriors (ANMIGA). The ADF mobilized funds for 11 delegations of women from different nationalities, namely, Arará, Apinajé, Guajajara, Guarani, Kaingang, Kraho, Munduruku, Parakatege, Tembé, Terena, and

Xokleng from Brazil, and including a delegation of Women Defenders of the Amazon, known as the *Mujeres Amazónicas*. The march was a place where women's bodies wrapped each other up in a vital space to build new possibilities.

*"We present Reforesting Minds and Hearts to the world. It is a great call that we make to humanity to provide all peoples of the world with a new possible way of relating to Mother Earth and, among us, beings who live on it." – National Association of Ancestral Indigenous Women Warriors (ANMIGA)*

During the four days of the Women's March, our field team in Brazil witnessed an immense diversity of cultures, languages, spiritualities, and resistance. They gathered to draw attention to the



emergency in Amazonia. Indigenous women across the rainforest face threats to their existence, communities, and territories, due to the uncontrolled advancement of deforestation, illegal logging, mining, land grabbing, and gender-based violence. These women are on the front lines of protecting their communities. The ADF is honored to have been able to be a part of this transformative process where women came together to weave their agendas and mobilize global solidarity for their political movements during this crucial moment.

### **Holistic Strategies For The Well-being and Protection of Earth Defenders At Risk**

After accompanying our partners in an intense Indigenous-led pressure campaign demanding immediate action from the government, in the face of the tragic wave of murders and attacks against, mainly, the Kakataibo, Shipibo, and Asháninka Earth Defenders, we were able to celebrate a small victory. The Peruvian government finally created a public policy for protecting Defenders at risk, known as the “Protocol for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders.” Amazon Watch’s partners advocated for the formal creation of the protocol because it would function as a powerful political message against the interests of drug trafficking in



their territories. Although, for them, the most crucial resistance strategy is to keep their communities united to sustain their capacities for mobilization, safeguarding, and timely information exchange to protect their invaded ancestral territories. Amazon Watch amplified our partners’ assessment, provided advocacy and communications support on the ground in Peru, and provided ADF’s solidarity funding for their media and political advocacy strategy to strengthen their organizational structure and efforts to prevent violence against women.

ADF’s solidarity fund has been accompanying Earth Defenders at risk with diverse immediate, mid-and long term strategies. The

spectrum of the strategies varies depending on each country’s social and political context. Collective holistic strategies are at the center of one of the main goals of the ACF to accompany Defenders at risk with protection, safety, healing, well-being, and legal strategies for them and their communities. In all ADF work, we remain grounded in Amazonian ancestral knowledge, that guides Indigenous peoples’ strategies and ultimately our solidarity grantmaking.



## Chevron's Poison in the Amazon and the U.S. Judicial System

By Paul Paz y Miño

There is an open wound in the rainforest. While Chevron admitted to deliberately dumping more than 16 billion gallons of toxic oil waste into the Ecuadorian Amazon as a “cost-saving measure,” close

to 1,000 unlined open-air pits remain and it has not been held accountable for this massive ecological and humanitarian disaster. This wound, the worst of its kind in history, has caused daily pain, suffering, and death to the people, plant life, and animals of the Amazon for decades. Yet, the U.S. government and its judicial system have long since turned a blind eye to this suffering, and Chevron's responsibility for it.

However, a newly reinvigorated movement for justice in the decades-long battle has emerged as a result of the oil company's arrogance and viciousness, coupled with concerning levels of judicial corruption that have caused civil

society to question the legitimacy of the U.S. legal process.

Environmental justice and human rights communities were shocked on October 1, 2021, when human rights attorney Steven Donziger was sentenced by Judge Loretta Preska to six months in jail on a petty misdemeanor contempt of court charge filed by Judge Lewis Kaplan, a pro-Chevron former tobacco industry lawyer. Donziger has already served over two years on house arrest. Both his detention and prosecution were labeled a human rights violation by the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention which said that Judges Kaplan and Preska had shown “a staggering lack of objectivity and impartiality” regarding the case.



Judge Preska handed down her sentence despite multiple calls for Donziger's release, including from the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, several members of the U.S. Congress, the European Parliament, 68 Nobel Laureates, and virtually every large international environmental justice and human rights organization, including Amnesty International. These organizations and individuals see the Donziger case for what it is, an extension of Chevron's environmental racism at play with the full support of the U.S. judiciary.

“The fight against corporate power and greed is one of the key environmental and economic justice challenges facing our planet. Indigenous Amazon communities won one of the most important class-action lawsuits ever, holding Chevron accountable for environmental devastation with nearly \$10 billion in damages, and ever since Chevron has sought to use its money and power to illegitimately nullify this result.”

—Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib



By the time you read this, Donziger will likely be in jail for his “crime” of helping to win the landmark \$9.5 billion Ecuadorian judgment against Chevron, making it frighteningly clear that in the U.S. those who take on the fossil fuel industry and win, will be vilified and criminalized with no actual protection under the law.

Although it was not Chevron's intention, the international coverage of this story and the growing outpouring of support for Donziger and the affected communities in Ecuador has grown exponentially since the trial began. This movement will continue to place considerable pressure on the Biden Administration to intervene and put an end to the farce that has placed

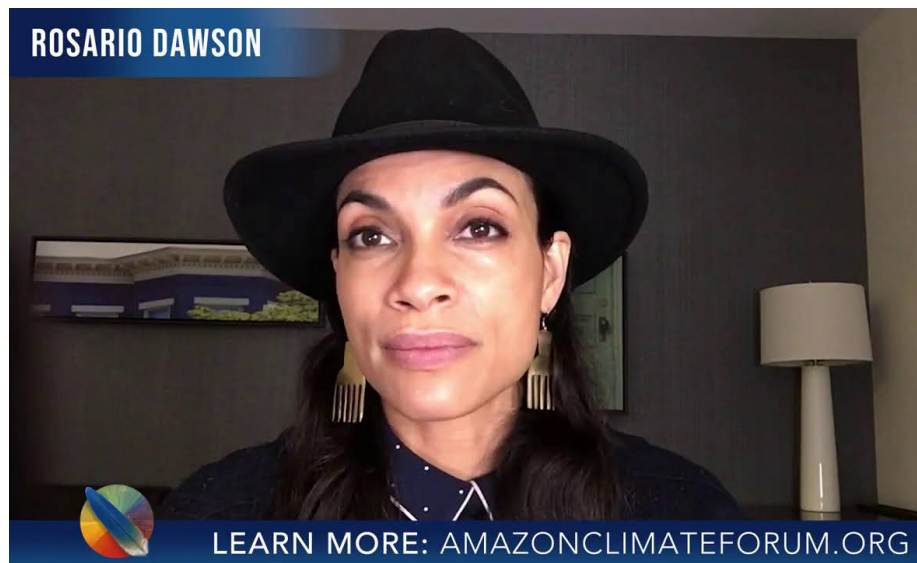
the rights and profits of the second-largest oil company in the U.S. over those of affected communities and their advocates.

Their inaction and inability to address the gross attacks against Donziger have laid bare the depths of Chevron's corruption, indeed that of the entire fossil fuel industry, and its power over the U.S. government – including its courts. As long as Chevron is not held accountable, and advocates like Donziger are silenced and jailed, this case will stand in the way of any dreams for climate justice.

# Artists for Amazonia

Since Amazon Watch began its campaigns in 1996, we have allied with many artists to help draw greater attention to the situation in the Amazon and our work to advance Indigenous rights. People such as Cary Elwes, Ed Begley, Jr., Daryl Hannah, Martin Sheen, James Cameron, and Honorary Board member Peter Coyote have lent their talents and energy to our work many times over the years.

In the fall of 2019, due to the global attention brought on from the crisis of the fires in Brazil and Bolivia, Amazon Watch was contacted by many influencers and allies seeking to lend their support. In response we greatly expanded this program and formally introduced the Artists for Amazonia campaign. This effort is harnessing the power of creative and entertainment influencers to mobilize global action in response to the crisis in the Amazon and threats to Indigenous earth defenders. Artists for Amazonia supports movement-building and collaboration from high-profile celebrities like Barbra Streisand, Joaquin Phoenix, Sting, and Peter Gabriel, to scientist leaders like Dr. Jane Goodall. This campaign allows us to band together to generate quick and effective action to protect the rainforest and Indigenous rights in this time of extreme climate crisis and pandemic.



This past year the campaign catalyzed the creation of the Amazon Climate Platform and the Biden/Harris Administration - Amazon Rainforest 100 Day Action Plan to point political leaders towards real solutions for Amazon protection. These efforts culminated in the

Amazon Climate Forum in April where Indigenous leaders were joined by elected officials from Brazil, Europe, and the U.S. along with scientists, religious leaders, NGO leaders, youth climate activists, and prominent international artists in promoting the plan to the Biden administration.





## Amazon Watch-Sweden

Since 2013, Amazon Watch-Sweden has been a dedicated partner in our work to protect the Amazon and defend Indigenous rights. AW Sweden amplifies and supports our work by engaging the Swedish NGO and philanthropic community and has recently contributed to local and European-wide climate justice advocacy efforts. We are immensely grateful for this growing partnership during this critical time for the Amazon.

# Amazon Watch Team

## Board of Directors

Andrew Beath

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(Secretary)

Michelle Chan  
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## U.S. Staff & International Team

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Christian Poirier, Program Director

Joseph Kolb, Controller

Kathy LeMay, Director of Philanthropy

Erica Brown, Human Resources Director

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Caelin Weiss, Development and Partnerships Specialist

Alejandra Yépez Jácome, Ecuador Communications Advisor

Michael Zap, Web Manager









## 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.

## VISION STATEMENT

We envision a world where the collective rights of Indigenous peoples and the rights of nature are respected; where healthy forests, biodiversity, and the global climate are fully protected.

We strive for a movement of global solidarity rooted in interconnectedness and practices of decolonization to respect the rights of Indigenous peoples and to permanently protect the Amazon rainforest, a vital organ of the Earth's biosphere, which is perilously close to a tipping point of ecological collapse.

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 are critical to sustainable and equitable stewardship of Mother Earth.

We seek solutions that will lead to the transformation of our economic, financial and political governance systems to ones that are life affirming and regenerative.

We commit, in the spirit of partnership and mutual respect, to support Indigenous, forest, and traditional peoples in their efforts to protect life, land, and culture in accordance with their aspirations and needs, by advocating for true solutions that respect the principles of climate justice.

25 years of Defending the Amazon  
in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

[amazonwatch.org](https://amazonwatch.org)

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