

No More Sacrifice Zones!

*For Alternatives
to Our Predatory Natural
Resources Model*



Protect Human Rights
and the Environmental Commons



The term extractivism describes a superlative, obsessive, «addictive», even ideological stage of the extraction process.

Anna Bednik

in « Extractivisme. Exploitation industrielle de la nature : logiques, conséquences, résistances »*

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Foreword

Urgent action is required to highlight a growing phenomenon that is still relatively unknown to the general public: extractivism. Through the many right to water projects that Fondation Danielle Mitterrand - France Libertés has supported throughout the world, our partners have raised concerns about the growing number of large-scale extractive projects being implemented, from open-cast mines to oilfields. In the field, it is the activities of the mining companies that are creating the most concern, as they are hampering the effective implementation of basic human rights, such as the right to water, by having a significantly adverse effect on the quantity and quality of water available. Furthermore, the practices employed by the sector's industries and multinationals can often lead to the violation of people's human rights, particularly the rights of indigenous groups.

Extractivism is a phenomenon that has been growing relentlessly since the years 2000 and it is being met with increasing resistance from both the people af-

ected and civil society. The exponential increase in the number of large-scale environmental exploitation projects and development of the accompanying infrastructure has prompted many NGOs to start taking action. France Libertés is taking part in this collective campaign, specifically focusing on people's rights in general and on the rights of indigenous peoples in particular as, not only are indigenous peoples the primary victims of extractivism, they are also key to helping build alternatives to this system that preys on natural resources and the commons. Through their ways of life and underlying philosophies, indigenous peoples can provide us with solutions to help reshape our extractivism- and consumerism-addicted societies. Thus, the third section of this brochure specifically focuses on opposition to the extractive model and the pursuit of alternatives. Indigenous peoples' cosmology¹ and relationship to nature are central to our strategy.

¹ All the myths that seek to explain the origin and evolution of the universe and how it works.



Aerial view of an oil sands exploitation in the boreal forest north of Fort McMurray in Alberta, Canada (20 July 2009)

Introduction

What is extractivism?



This technical and complex-sounding word in fact defines a phenomenon that has permeated nearly all of our everyday activities. The fabric of our modern lives is now dependent on the large-scale exploitation of natural resources, whether for manufacturing consumer items or producing energy. The term covers the extraction of all minerals, solid materials (coal and ore), liquids (petrol) and gases (natural gas) that occur naturally underground.

The extraction of natural resources has taken place throughout human history and has helped meet human needs over the course of thousands of years. Furthermore, its history is intrinsically linked to that of humans as resources have always been synonymous with power. The struggle over who controls these resources has helped shape world history. New lands were conquered and then colonised, all in the search for precious metals and other raw materials. This was the case in both Latin America (the Potosi silver mines, for instance, and the conquistadors' thirst for gold) and Africa. In North America, this charge to control resources was most notably epitomised by the gold rush. The people living in these areas saw their land taken over by newcomers, who often exploited them to extract the resources and wiped them out to

seize control. In urban areas, resource extraction involved the economic dominance of an entire social group, without rights or protection.

Our ability to extract increasingly inaccessible resources continues to grow as new techniques and technologies are invented. However, instead of making us less dependent on raw materials, these innovations are leading us headlong into a race for natural resources that has no limits. Rather than reducing our impact and only taking out only what we need, we have opted to create new needs and use our new tools to intensify extraction, thereby causing ever greater environmental damage and imbalances.

The term extractivism defines a model that involves the excessive and irresponsible exploitation of natural resources in order to meet the growing 'needs' of our over-consumerist societies. As natural resources become depleted due to their overexploitation, ways of going ever further and deeper are always being sought, using techniques that are increasingly invasive and dangerous for both our health and the environment. Extractivism therefore causes major environmental and social devastation. The unbridled search for and exploitation of natural resources embodied by this term is currently, and ever more rapidly, destroying hitherto preserved ecosystems and creating increasing numbers of 'sacrifice zones'.



A widespread phenomenon

Between 1990 and 2010, around 240,000km² of the Amazonian rainforest was destroyed, an area the size of the United Kingdom. 15% of its land has been given over to hydrocarbon extraction and 21% to mining companies (these figures rise to 84% and 75% respectively for the Peruvian rainforest, which is the most severely affected¹).

¹ Source: Red Amazónica de Información SocioAmbienta Georreferenciada (Raisg), Amazonia bajo presión, Sao Paulo, Instituto Socioambiental, 2012

What is a 'sacrifice zone'?

This is an inhabited area in which natural resources are discovered that have high value on the world market. Such areas thus become the focus of investment, speculation and murky deals between mining companies and governments, and are consequently divided up into mining claims and plots. The whole structure of this 'chosen' area then starts to revolve around this single resource extraction activity. It becomes an isolated production area given over to a single purpose (mining, petrol, shale gas, etc.) that eclipses all other activities (agriculture, tourism, etc.). Stripped of their individuality, their history and their inhabitants, these areas are then abandoned once they have fulfilled their function, i.e. once the last drop of profit has been wrung from the land. The extractive industries simply move on, leaving a desert, desolate landscapes and a destroyed ecosystem behind them.

Local people's lives are turned upside down. Even when they are not forced to move out, they have to contend with a polluted environment that jeopardises their ability to exercise their most basic human rights, particularly their right to sufficient and safe water. The consequences for indigenous peoples are accentuated by the fact that they are directly and highly dependent on their local ecosystems for their food, their livelihoods, their traditions and their spirituality. The people that live in these areas are seldom consulted on projects, despite the overwhelming impact these projects have on their day-to-day and future lives. They are merely presented with a *fait accompli* as if there is no other choice or alternative available, thereby revealing the extent to which the extractive sector has been

able to exert its influence and operate as if it were invincible. We all urgently need to recognize that the extractivism model is not a necessity, but rather an outdated development option.

Contrary to popular belief, people from the so-called 'developed' countries are not immune to this phenomenon and there are already people within these regions whose homes, health, culture and even lives have been destroyed by extractivism. This process of producing sacrifice zones means companies are constantly searching for new areas to mine. Extractivism not only affects indigenous peoples or rural or marginalised communities in countries in the global South, it can also impact any region or community, including those in urban areas. Areas may contain resources that were previously undetectable or out of reach, but which have now become accessible and potentially 'profitable' using new techniques and technologies. Thus, nobody is safe. In France, for instance, there are increasing calls for mines to be reopened or for drilling to start into (the often portrayed as miraculous) shale gas deposits, despite people already having seen the damage caused in those countries that have already embarked on this process, most notably the United States.

It is therefore vital to support affected communities' campaigns and, more generally, to actively oppose this indiscriminate expansion that ignores the human and ecological upheavals it creates. In order to campaign against this process effectively, we first need to examine the extractivism model more closely.



BREAK FREE 2016, CALACA, PHILIPPINES
On 14 May 2016, social and environmental groups demonstrated in front of the public market and coal-fired power station in Calaca in the Philippines. They were calling for plans to expand the power station to be rejected.

PART 1

Extractivism is a Choice of Civilisation that has Devastating Consequences in the Here and Now

**1- Often Irreversible Health and Environmental Damage
and Pollution**

**2- Not Only Devastating Environmental Effects,
But Also Major Socio-Economic Impacts**

3- A Global Process Heading for Disaster

All these projects are carried out with the same single aim in mind: to exploit this land with no regard whatsoever for what this land is or for those who live on it.

Anna Bednik

in Extractivisme. Exploitation industrielle de la nature : logiques, conséquences, résistances.
Ed. Le Passager clandestin, 2016, p168

1- OFTEN IRREVERSIBLE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE AND POLLUTION

The grotesque and irresponsible side of extractive projects is immediately visible in the adverse effects these projects have on the land, as they totally disregard the fact that people live in these areas, and that they form part of fragile ecosystems vital for preserving biodiversity and ecological balance.

Coal Mines in Germany

In Germany, around 300 villages have been wiped off the map since 1945 to make way for lignite mines. By way of example, the village of Immerath, in the region of Düsseldorf to the west of the country and which is home to over one thousand inhabitants, is to be replaced by a large open-cast coal mine in 2017¹. And it is not alone, as it is one of twelve villages currently being cleared and demolished in the Rhine mining basin; a process that is affecting over 6,000 people. Lignite mining involves razing everything within the area, including fields, forests and villages. As if in a living nightmare, people can only look on powerlessly as their houses are bulldozed to the ground. These vil-

¹ Source: Multinationals Observatory. Rachel Knaebel, «En Allemagne, des villages entiers rasés pour laisser place à de gigantesques mines de charbon», 27 May 2015, <http://multinationales.org/En-Allemagne-des-villages-entiers-rases-pour-laisser-place-a-de-gigantesques>

lages are literally being sacrificed for coal, one of the most polluting and highest greenhouse gas emitting energy sources in the world, the use of which is completely out of step with the current trend of minimising environmental and climate impacts.

However, in most cases, inhabitants remain living near to these mines, which are highly contaminated by heavy metals and toxic substances used in the extractive industry. This therefore creates serious health and environmental issues.

«We live here and that means something. Living somewhere is not the same as staying somewhere [...] It is an interlacing of links. It means belonging to places like they belong to us. It does not mean being indifferent to the things around us, it means having attachments: to people, to our surroundings, to fields, to hedges, to trees, to houses. To this plant that always grows back in the same place, to this animal that we are so used to seeing in that spot. It means being attuned to and empowered by our living spaces... Living here means no longer being able to imagine how all of this could disappear, because this is what makes up our lives.»²

² Cited by Anna Bednik, op.cit. p. 161*



Aerial view of an open-cast lignite mine in Germany and mining excavators (23 November 2005)

Oil Sands in Canada



Canada provides a striking example of the devastation that the extractive industry and its philosophy cause to the environment and the people who depend on it. For several years now, the country has been ruthlessly extracting oil sands (also known as tar sands), an unconventional oil that requires huge amounts of capital, energy and, particularly, water to extract and process¹.

We are using every possible means before it is too late to save the land that has supported our people for millennia.

Steve Courtoreille, Chief of the Mikisew Cree Nation (Canada), in a letter to UNESCO².

These highly polluting oil sands mines are located in natural areas rich in biodiversity, as the oil sands reserves lay beneath the primary boreal forests. Before the arrival of the mining companies, nearly two-thirds of the region currently being mined were boreal wetland areas typical to northern Alberta, some of which, like the Peace-Athabasca Delta now the site of numerous mines, were protected. 80% of the Delta region falls within the boundaries of Wood Buffalo, Canada's largest national park, which was created in 1922 and which UNESCO classed as a natural world heritage site in 1982. However, such international recognition has not been able to prevent this environmental disaster.

The indigenous peoples who have lived in these areas for millennia have been forced to leave, as their traditional ways of life have been put at risk by the widespread pollution generated by the oil sands industry. The commercial fishing industry, which hundreds of people from indigenous communities depended on for their livelihoods, has died out due in part to lesions and deformities that made the fish unfit for sale. The trout that used to be caught in the lower reaches of the Athabasca River have disappeared, as have most of the caribou. According to the data collected by Edward Struzik from the Multinationals Observatory, the eggs of Ring-Billed Gulls collected in 2012 contained 139% more mercury than they did in 2009³.

Thus, even though this land is recognised as having special value, industry interests always prevail. And all with the aim of producing dirty energy at an enormous cost. Proponents of the mining projects are targeting production of 5.2 million barrels per day by the year 2030. However, for every barrel of oil produced, around 5 barrels of water, if not more, are required to extract the bitumen⁴. The oil sands mining operations already withdraw 170 million cubic metres of water each year from the Athabasca River alone, enough to satisfy the needs of half the inhabitants of Toronto, which has a population of 2.5 million.

1 Friends of the Earth Europe report, "Tar Sands: Europe's Complicity in Canada's Climate Crimes", 3 December 2015.

2 Cited by Edward Struzik, «In Alberta and Downstream, the Heavy Toll of the Oil Sands Industry on Water and the Environment», 18 June 2015

3 The figures in this paragraph on oil sands are taken from Edward Struzik's 2-part report for the Multinationals Observatory: «In Alberta and Downstream, the Heavy Toll of the Oil Sands Industry on Water and the Environment», 18 June 2015

4 Oil Sands Fever. The Environmental Implications of Canada's Oil Sands Rush, Dan Woynillowicz, Chris Severson-Baker and Marlo Reynolds, The Pembina Institute, 2005.

This disproportionate use of water is exacerbated by the fact that the mining companies do not return their recycled water to the river because it is too toxic. This water is thus permanently removed from the water cycle and is 'lost', unlike the water used by the city of Toronto.

The most common method of removing this water from the water cycle involves storing toxic slurry of bituminous sand, wastewater and other residue behind large earth dykes, in ponds known as tailings. These tailings are so large that they form huge, toxic artificial lakes that currently cover an area about three-quarters the size of Paris.

However, the industry is unable to manage this wastewater. A study conducted in 2014 by Environment Canada revealed that an average of 6.5 million litres a day can seep out of a single tailings pond¹. Furthermore, there is a high risk that the region's indigenous peoples' fears come true, namely that one of these dykes could collapse. And this is a risk that cannot be ruled out as, in November 2015, such a disaster befell the Mariana region in south-east Brazil when the two mining dams constructed by Samarco, a subsidiary of

¹ Friends of the Earth Europe report, "Tar Sands: Europe's Complicity in Canada's Climate Crimes", 3 December 2015.

Vale and BHP Billiton², collapsed.

Mining dams thus pose a risk throughout the world. They illustrate the mining companies' total disregard for the dangers to which they expose local people and embody the extractive industry's incapacity to manage its waste in an effective and environmentally-friendly manner. The accumulation of tonnes of toxic slurry behind dykes that it is not certain are able to contain them epitomises extractivism's irrational headlong rush to expand, using processes that involve creating dumping grounds and other sacrifice zones. It seems that the sector's multinationals' sole strategy is to maximise their profits and so they resort to using the easiest option for as long as possible, i.e. by taking the cheapest route, even if this is also the most dangerous. The industry's lack of disaster preparedness, even as the volumes of waste we are unable to treat build up, demonstrates the sector's refusal to engage in long-term planning and compels local people to live with the sword of Damocles hanging over their heads.

² Vale is a Brazilian multinational mining company and the largest producer of certain minerals, such as iron ore, in the world. BHP Billiton is a producer of iron ore, diamonds, uranium, coal, petrol and bauxite. Operating in more than 25 countries, it is one of the largest mining companies in the world.



In November 2015, two mining dams collapsed in the Mariana region in Brazil triggering toxic mudslides that killed at least 15 people and left 45 people missing.

Salsigne Gold Mine in France

Economic factors taking precedence over people's health, lives and the environment is a state of affairs that the miners of Salsigne in France know only too well. The town of Salsigne in the Aude department was home to France's main goldmine until its closure in 2004 after a century of mining. The chemicals that were used throughout this period to process the ore, along with the fine arsenic dust that has made its way to the surface, have made this a highly polluted area. Today, after a century of mining, there are nearly 10 million tonnes of rocks full of arsenic, lead or sulphur compounds spread across the area that have since been covered in stones and earth before being covered in vegetation and then forgotten¹.

After a century of mining in Salsigne, BRGM experts and academics estimate that the region will remain polluted for at least 10,000 years.

Thus, since 1997, the prefecture has regularly issued the same decree urging people not to use rainwater or river water to water their gardens, not to eat their locally grown vegetables, not to swim in the river and to take care when around dust. This dust, which contains high concentrations of arsenic, and other toxic substances are swept up by streams that run into the Orbiel, a tributary of the Aude River, which in turn flows into the Mediterranean. Sometimes, this pollution becomes highly visible, as it did in January 2013 when a 300 to 500 metre stretch of water turned orange in a stream located downstream of the Montredon storage site where 600,000 tonnes of waste, including 90,000 tonnes of arsenic are stored. Water tests have revealed that there over a thousand micrograms of arsenic per litre of water, far exceeding the WHO drinking water standard.

Despite the funding allocated by the French government to remediate the site, 7 tonnes of arsenic continue to be released into the Orbiel each year. Both this and the ongoing contamination clearly demonstrate the inability of the public authorities and the industry, which often omit the remediation and rehabilitation phase, to manage and control the pollution and waste from mining activities. Local people are thus left to their own devices, only too aware of the fact that, within a 15km radius of the former mine, there is an abnormally high number of cancer-related deaths. After a century of mining in Salsigne, BRGM² experts and

1 Source: Multinationals Observatory, «Salsigne, A Century of Mining, 10,000 Years of Pollution?», 25 January 2015

2 Bureau des Recherches Géologiques et Minières, the public geological survey agency

academics estimate that the region will remain polluted for at least 10,000 years.

Similar examples to these from countries in the global North can also be found in the global South, confirming the perception of extractivism as a universal model whose negative impacts extend across all the areas within its reach, with no consideration for the people who live there.

The Texaco/Chevron Oil Company's Activities in the Ecuadorian Amazon

In Ecuador, the US multinational, Texaco/Chevron, has been mining oil on a massive scale across more than 480,000 hectares of the Amazonian rainforest since 1964. Tens of thousands of people have been affected by the devastating impacts of the company's mining activities. Around a thousand open ponds were constructed to hold oil and contaminated water. The company has dumped 63.6 million litres of oil and 70 billion litres of tailings into the forest, rivers, estuaries and water bodies used by the region's inhabitants³.

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This widespread pollution has caused an exponential increase in fatal diseases among local people, with deaths from cancer and leukaemia, which particularly affects children, being three times more common in this region than in the rest of the country. The number of miscarriages has also considerably increased, as have skin diseases, stomach-related illnesses and digestive problems. In addition, the indigenous peoples have found themselves dispossessed of their lands and had their livelihoods put at risk, which has significantly increased their vulnerability to poverty. Although all mining activities came to an end in 1990, the situation remains unchanged and the area is still polluted, which has led to the extinction of indigenous groups such as the Tetetes and Sansahuaris⁴.

3 Source : <http://texacotoxico.net/#pricing>

4 Olivier Petitjean, «Injustice sans frontière ? Chevron contre l'Equateur», 21 May 2015,



We can see the external evil, how everything has changed, how this forest has disappeared, how this lake has dried up, how this road has destroyed part of the ecosystem. But we can no longer see the spiritual depth to which we all belong. That is why, in indigenous cosmivision, we are taught from childhood how we should act. How should we hunt? Not with ambition, only to feed ourselves. How should we move to live near a lake? With a lot of respect. (...) I believe that the rights of nature need to take this depth into account, unlike those who behave as predators towards the ecosystems under the economic pretext of a false well-being.

Patricia Gualinga (from the Kichwa people of Sarayaku, Ecuador),
International Rights of Nature Tribunal, Lima, December 2014.

The Conga Mega-Mining Project in Peru

The Yanacocha group's Conga mega-mining project in the Peruvian Andes provides another typical example of extractivism¹. Its aim is to create and operate one of the largest open-cast gold and copper mines in Latin America. The Conga mining project's area of influence in the province of Celendin in the Cajamarca department includes nearly 80 lakes situated more than 3,000 metres above sea level that form part of a complex ecosystem that is also made up of hundreds of wetlands and marshes. These, along with the lakes, are the main source of water for the south of Cajamarca. Under this project, five lagoons have been emptied, either to extract gold from below ground or to dump the 90,000 tonnes of toxic mining waste produced each day, every day for the last 17 years². The project has thus destroyed the wetlands and polluted millions of cubic metres of water, jeopardising people's right to a healthy environment and their right to water. To further exacerbate the situation, in order to extract the gold ore, Yanacocha uses a technique called leaching, which involves diluting three grams of cyanide in 3m³ of water for each tonne of rock mined³.

These cases clearly show the pressure that intensive mining activities place on water resources. Firstly, because the different extraction processes themselves require enormous amounts of water. This severely affects local people's water supply by reducing the quantities of water available for everyday use (drinking, washing, subsistence farming) and creates tension over priorities of use as legislation often leans toward the side of the mining companies. By way of example, «the single mining complex of Yanacocha is authorised to pump up to 900 litres of water per second, three to four times more than the regional capital of Cajamarca, which has been forced to ration the drinking water of its 284,000 inhabitants»⁴. Furthermore, because these activities seriously pollute the watercourses, surface water and water tables for extremely long periods of time, the quality of the water available to local people is also adversely affected. This is despite the fact that access to sufficient, safe and acceptable water is a fundamental human right recognised by the United Nations through the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights⁵. Extractive activities thus violate this human right on two counts.

1 For example, read the report by Simon Gouin in Multinationals Observatory, Projet Conga : quand l'or du Pérou attire de nouveaux conquitateurs, 9 September 2013

2 Anna Bednik, op.cit., 2016, p. 163*.

3 UN Human Rights Council, 23rd session, 14/05/13, A/HRC/23/NGO/4

4 Anna Bednik, op.cit., 2016, p. 30*

5 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

2 - NOT ONLY DEVASTATING ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS, BUT ALSO MAJOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The Misconception that Mining Activities Generate Local Development

In the popular imagination, heavily influenced by the multinationals' communication campaigns, extractive companies and their mining projects bring economic development to the areas in which they operate by creating jobs, paying taxes and investing in infrastructure. However, there are numerous case studies that show that poverty actually increases whenever mining companies move in. So much so, that this could even be attributed to the 'resource curse'. Decades of natural resource extraction by multinationals have exacerbated conflicts and violations of human rights, the major causes of poverty, at the same time as making huge profits for the companies involved. Mining projects often go hand-in-hand with political instability, corruption, clientelism, forced migration and militarisation, not to mention the environmental damage highlighted above, all of which harm the local economy and threaten people's livelihoods. Therefore, the reality of the situation on the ground refutes the idea that multinational mining companies bring development to the areas around their mines.

A particularly striking example is to be found in **Nigeria**, more specifically in the Niger Delta, the largest oil producing region in Africa. These petroleum deposits have generated billions of dollars of oil revenue, but the local people continue to live in extreme poverty and have never seen any of the economic benefits from the oil windfall gained from their land. Life expectancy in the region is 40 years and 75% of the population is without access to drinking water. With its 30 million inhabitants, the Niger Delta is far from a 'demographic desert', thus dispelling the often-repeated claim that mining projects are implemented in deserted or sparsely populated areas. This lie is used to minimise polluting practices' impacts on human societies. The regular dumping of hydrocarbons and waste and gas flaring¹ have disastrous consequences for the environment, people's health and the local economy, which includes fishing and farming².

1 Gas flares, or flare stacks, are used to burn off the natural gases released as waste at different stages of the oil mining process. This intentional waste flaring, which has been banned in many countries, has serious environmental and health impacts. It is also a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions and is exacerbating climate change.

2 Read the testimonies collected by Friends of the Earth in their «Special Report on Totals' Negative Impacts on Egiland (Nigeria)», October 2014



And Nigeria is not an isolated case. In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, Muanda is the largest oil city in the world. Unemployment is rampant, malnutrition is rife and the lack of infrastructure and basic services (water, electricity, waste management) makes every day a struggle for survival. As the number of inhabitants grows, due to the influx of people from rural areas displaced by mining activities moving into the city's slums, this already fragile system is weakened still further leading to tension over resources and generating conflict between residents. The few jobs created by these mining activities are mostly with subcontractors and are low-skilled, insecure and low-paid. Between 2006 and 2010, despite the pollution, fishing and agriculture accounted for more than 50% of Bas-Congo province's GDP, compared to only 25% for mining and oil¹. Economic wealth is thus not where the mining companies and governments would have us believe.

¹ CCFD Terre Solidaire Report: Régulation des multinationales. Muanda : la justice au rabais. Etude de cas en RDC, L'impunité de l'entreprise PERENCO et la responsabilité des États face aux impacts sociaux, environnementaux et fiscaux de l'exploitation pétrolière, November 2013, 72p.

Instead of contributing to the development of our country and benefiting our people, our rich mineral resources, oil reserves and extensive forests have become the cause of our misery. How is it possible that our fellow citizens find themselves without compensation or damages, stripped of their land because it has been transferred or sold to mining or forestry extraction companies?

Statement from the National Bishops' Conference of Congo's Commission for Natural Resources².

Ways of Life Turned Upside Down and Social Fabrics Weakened: Imposing 'Development' that People Don't Want

In order to revoke this illusory link between mining activities and development once and for all, we urgently need to listen to the demands and views of the people most directly affected and to examine the impacts of this imposed development on communities' lives.

² Cited in the above CCFD Terre Solidaire report on the situation in DRC, November 2013

Break Free from Fossil demonstrators in Nigeria, 12 May 2016.
The placards contain the same slogans as elsewhere in the world:
«The oil companies don't care about lives, only profit», «Keep it [fossil fuel] in the ground», etc.



Indigenous peoples' experiences and views of nature are incompatible with the extractive model, which is based on excess and limitless profit-seeking and preys on natural resources.

There is a real philosophical conflict between the western worldview and the cosmovision of indigenous peoples. Their cosmovision is often based on the notion that human beings live in constant interrelation with the entities that make up nature, each of which have their own life that needs to be respected in the same way as human life. Many indigenous peoples thus assert that nature is not only composed of trees, lakes, mountains and oceans. It is made up of a multitude of living entities with which we have lost contact and that are necessary for maintaining both local and global balance.

*We are responsible for what nature gives us. To live in harmony with nature, we need to use it sensibly (...)
Nature has its own life; the rivers, lakes, mountains, trees and everything found in nature has its own life.
Harming these is to recklessly cause an irreversible imbalance. (...)*

The oil that is so coveted for its economic value is none other than the blood that gives life to Mother Earth and nature. Some are taking the blood from her body and killing her. Those who mine the oil are asking nature to stand by and watch Mother Earth's throat being cut, it makes no sense. What use will the world's money be to them if the path they are on leads only to death? Are palaces and large buildings immune to nature's reaction; do earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, storms not affect them? Humanity will probably not realise that it has made a mistake and destroyed itself until it is too late. (...) I ask all of you to immediately help to preserve humanity by respecting the earth and Mother Nature. If each person does their bit, life will continue.

Sabino Atanacio Gualinga Cuji, Yachak representative
of the Kichwa Nation of Sarayaku (Ecuador)¹



Sarayaku building

© France Libertés

In Africa, several indigenous communities have joined forces to call for the creation of sacred natural sites in which mining and all other human activities are banned. In these areas, which may appear empty but which are in fact 'full', there is no place for development projects:

The whole earth is sacred. Within the body of our Earth there are places which are especially sensitive, because of the special role they play in our ancestral lands. We call these places sacred natural sites. Each sacred natural site plays a different but important role like the organs of our body. All of life is infused with spirit. Sacred natural sites are embedded in territories, which relate to the horizontal, vertical and energetic domains. A territory includes plants, animals, the ancestors' spirits, all life in the land, including humans, and reaches deep into the Earth including and beyond the subsoil, rocks and minerals, and up into the celestial constellations in the sky. (...) Their role and significance cannot be replaced

Statement by African Custodial Communities – The Recognition and Protection of Sacred Natural Sites and Territories, 24 March 2015, Lake Langano, Ethiopia. *Report by the Gaia Foundation*²

¹ Cited by the official European website supporting the Frontière de Vie project, <http://www.frontieredevie.net> [on the French version of the site only]

² Statement available on the website: http://www.gaiafoundation.org/CalltoAfricanCommission_summary.pdf

Audrey Siegl, a member of the Musqueam indigenous community of British Columbia in Canada, confronting Shell's drilling rig, the Polar Pioneer, as part of a Greenpeace expedition (17 June 2015).



© Greenpeace / Keri Coles

In **Romania**, there was much media coverage of the strong local opposition to Chevron's attempts to drill for shale gas in the village of Pungesti in 2013. The local inhabitants' views on the subject were highly instructive and full of common sense. They claim a strong link to the earth as this is the region's main and traditional source of wealth. They have been making their living through farming and livestock breeding for centuries. What would they have to gain from an industry that is threatening their primary resource?

The people here make a living from farming and livestock breeding. That's our world, rearing sheep, cows and goats. When the drilling platform arrives, we will have no more water for the animals, we won't be able to farm the land. (...) And do you think that my farm will be able to survive once the borehole is here? No, of course not. There will be no more water, it will be contaminated and poisoned. It's not about having compensation, it's about not installing the test drill. Even if they give me compensation, what am I going to do? Where am I going to go? Nobody is asking this question for the future.

Constantin Spiridon, farmer and inhabitant of Pungesti in Romania, interviewed by Antonin Sabot, journalist with *Le Monde*, in 2013¹.

1 Source: Video reportage by Antonin Sabot, journalist with *Le Monde*. «En Roumanie, Constantin Spiridon, un paysan contre le gaz de schiste», December 2013

However, the companies involved think nothing of using underhand tactics to get local people on their side. For instance, local elected officials acting on behalf of Chevron went into the schools to hand out school supplies and sweets, along with a letter to each child and their family stating that: «Chevron has a long history of working with communities and supporting social investment (...), particularly health, education and job creation projects»². Such dubious attempts at persuasion are being replicated all over the world. They are the embodiment of mining companies' schemes to buy social peace and to divide and rule in order to stave off mass protests and the accompanying media coverage, which could damage their image.

We don't want anything from them, no presents, nothing. We just want them to leave us alone to live our lives as we always have: healthily, without their chemicals

Irina, 27 years old, a young mother living in Pungesti in Romania, interviewed by Antonin Sabot, journalist with *Le Monde*, in 2013.

2 Cited by Antonin Sabot, «Un cartable neuf pour les enfants roms», *Le Monde*, December 2013

In **Caimanes, in Chile**, the town's inhabitants are engaged in ongoing protests against the installation of the El Mauro tailings dam, the largest in Latin America. It receives the waste from the copper mine being operated by Los Pelambres, a subsidiary of Antofagasta Minerals. Since the company started mining in the valley, 80% of the valley's water has dried up, including the river and most of its tributaries, which have completely disappeared¹. There is consequently much less water available and the remaining water supply is now contaminated with heavy metals at levels above the standards authorised in Chile. Therefore, when they can, inhabitants prefer to buy bottled water, which financially discriminates against certain segments of the population. Meanwhile, the traditional farming and livestock breeding activities, the heart of the local economy, have gradually been wiped out.

In Caimanes, as in many other communities, there is also tension surrounding the individual financial compensation that the mining company has given to some inhabitants but not others in order to induce jealousy and resentment. In exchange for this money, people are required to support the company and refrain from protesting against its activities, notably by dropping legal proceedings.

Employment blackmail is also widely used to the same end. These tactics work to divide the community by creating diverging interests among the inhabitants and helps strengthen the company's position. In breach of the agreements signed to obtain the required building permits and mining licences, hundreds of workers from the company's subcontractors have been moved into the village. This has placed pressure on water services and created problems with the locals, who resent seeing their village turned into a mining camp. As the mining company has brought in subcontractors

¹ Statement to the UN Human Rights Council, 29th session, A/HRC/29/NGO/18, 3 June 2015

rather than hiring local workers, there is also a question mark over the number of jobs that have actually been created for the inhabitants of Caimanes.

The mass influx of newcomers into such communities brings with it previously unknown or little known social ills, such as alcoholism and prostitution, etc. In indigenous communities, in particular, there has been a disturbing increase in the number of suicides as major identity crises are being triggered by these enforced new ways of life. On the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in the United States, as in many indigenous communities, by bringing cash into the area, mining activities have led to the development of organised crime, drug trafficking and addiction. The large-scale employment of men from outside the reservation who have moved to the region to work has skewed the male to female ratio to such an extent that there are now 10 men to every female. As a result, violence against women has risen by 65%² and prostitution has become more widespread. Acts of violence and racism against indigenous peoples have also become increasingly common. A rise in the number of homicides has been accompanied by a disturbing impunity on the part of the authorities, who have thus far failed to provide any sort of response to this devastating social problem.

Were these tragedies necessary for development, jobs and growth, they could be said to be taking place for the greater good, for the general interest that supposedly underpins these projects. Yet, such discourse would still not be enough to obscure the reality of the sacrifice zones found throughout the world.

² Figures reported by Kandi Mosset (Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Lead Organiser on the Energy and Climate Campaign with the Indigenous Environmental Network in the USA) at the conference entitled «When extractive projects threaten the rights of indigenous peoples and ecosystems: focus on North America» held on 11 December 2015 during COP21.



A devastated landscape in the aftermath of the collapsed mining dams disaster in Mariana, Brazil, in November 2015

Refinery in front of Mount Baker,
Washington State, May 2016



© Victor Moriyama / Greenpeace

People and Land Sacrificed for the Benefit of the Few

We could provide hundreds of other examples of how extractivism causes irreversible damage to ecosystems and the environment, as well as to human societies and people's everyday lives: jeopardising the right to water, health and to a healthy environment; destroying traditional economy and support systems; causing the enforced abandonment of farming and livelihoods, etc. All of these cases follow the same trend and, despite their geographical diversity, clearly illustrate the use of the same devastating approach whereby natural resources are frenetically 'consumed' from land that is then left to become a sacrifice zone; and all to maintain the comfort levels of people living elsewhere. The sacrifice zone strategy involves the unequal treatment of people across the world, as well as of people within the same country. It runs counter to the principle of equal rights for all and effectively tramples on the basic human rights of millions of people.

« Although the large-scale exploitation of nature may perhaps ensure the comfort of some, its impacts pose a serious threat to the livelihoods of many others. (...) the unequal sharing of costs and benefits is characteristic of (...) the division of labour (...) between the 'sacrifice zones' and cities within the same country.

It would appear that, on a scale of usefulness, some beneficiaries are far more important than others »¹. Jewellery perhaps provides the clearest example of the huge disparity between the profit made by its owners and traders and the social, environmental and political cost paid by those who mine the ore required to produce it at the other end of the chain. It also shows the extent to which extractivism fails to systematically meet real needs.

As the multinationals put profit before all else, they cannot possibly consider denting these huge profits by spending money on managing their infrastructure and activities more responsibly and sustainably. Revising their cost to profit ratio to take ethical and environmental factors into account, and for the sake of future generations, is incompatible with their economic strategy. Condemning extractivism is thus to condemn the all-powerful oligarchs and their 'don't-care-what-happens-after-I'm-gone' attitude towards the world and other people. Extractivism proponents' disregard of the climate change crisis is a tangible example of this mindset. As, in addition to the destruction currently taking place, the frenetic mining of natural resources is also precipitating major disasters on a more worldwide scale as it jeopardises the global climate balance.

¹ Anna Bednick, op.cit, p139*

What these communities are going through is what all communities on the planet are going to experience ... now, when you look at the maps, you don't know where the forests are, but you can see the pipelines

Sylvie Paquerot, political scientist and specialist in international law from Canada,
Conference held at COP 21, December 2015, Paris

3 - A GLOBAL PROCESS HEADING FOR DISASTER

Literally devouring raw materials and living environments one after the other, leaving behind long to extremely long-term pollution and producing increasingly high levels of greenhouse gas; extractivism has a truly voracious appetite. And this excessive and ever-growing appetite is steering us towards global disaster by accelerating climate change. A large number of scientific studies have concluded that, for disaster to be averted, the average global temperature rise should not exceed 2°C and, in order to achieve this target, over 80% of current coal reserves need to remain in the ground¹. According to the scientist James Hansen², there is enough oil, gas and coal underground to trigger global warming of over + 10°C to + 15°C.

Therefore, in order to avoid climate chaos, we cannot wait until fossil fuels run out; we urgently require strong political will. Although the situation is clear-cut, in more than 20 years of negotiations within the UN and at climate summits, the issue of leaving some or all of the fossil fuel reserves in the ground has ne-

1 Christophe McGlade and Paul Ekins, "The geographical distribution of fossil fuels unused when limiting global warming to 2°C", *Nature*, n°517, 8 January 2015, p.187-190. Also see the report published by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in 2009.

2 James Hansen, Makiko Sato, Gary Russell, and Pushker Kharecha, "Climate sensitivity, sea level, and atmospheric carbon dioxide", *Philosophical Transactions A*, no. 371, 2013

ver been discussed. No government, multinational or international institution has ever suggested reducing the production of coal, gas and oil at source.

Over 80% of current coal reserves need to remain in the ground.

In the kitchen, when a pot starts to boil over, nobody ever just wipes round it. Everybody knows that you need to turn down the heat (...) Human induced, global warming is the result of an accumulation of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere, more than 67% of which come from burning fossil fuels (80% of CO₂), which are by far the primary cause of global warming. It is thus vital to reduce the use of fossil fuels. And as quickly as possible in order to turn down the heat. National governments (USA, Canada, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Australia, etc.) and multinational energy companies (Exxon, Chevron, BP, Shell, Total, ConocoPhillips, etc.) are doing just the opposite: they are constantly investing and drilling for more and global oil, gas and coal consumption continues to rise³.

3 Maxime Combes, «Sortons de l'âge des fossiles ! Manifeste pour la transition», by Maxime Combes. Edition du Seuil, 2015, p. 22*

Germany, Ende Gelände protest
during Break Free, May 2016





© Gabriel Andrade

The extractivism model has no room for respecting intact natural environments or for ethical boundaries. The fact that projects have encroached on protected and UNESCO world heritage sites, as in the Peace-Athabasca Delta and pristine boreal forests of Canada, clearly shows the extent of extractivism's blatant disregard of anything sacred and its lack of respect for that which is much larger than all of us. The Arctic has become the latest target of these predatory multinationals, eager to get their hands on the deposits of non-conventional hydrocarbons and other much sought-after resources. However, this area is recognised by all as being a crucial balance point for the climate. The speculation, prospecting and massive investment currently being carried out in the region by a range of multinationals, including French companies, such as Total and Engie¹, is utterly irresponsible, particularly in light of the Paris Agreement negotiated at COP21 in December 2015.

Extractivism is akin to the first step of a linear economic system that involves a chain of extraction, production, consumption, waste. Extractivism is intrinsically bound to consumerism and productivism as, without extraction, the subsequent links in the chain would break: «it is to produce over 70 billion tonnes of 'natural resources' each year for the production and

consumption chains that extractive borders continue to advance ever further and faster. Examining extractivism also leads us to explore this often forgotten or hidden side of economic development and growth»².

« It is to produce over 70 billion tonnes of 'natural resources' each year for the production and consumption chains that extractive borders continue to advance ever further and faster ».

Challenging extractivism also means questioning an entire linear economic and consumption system. However, this debate on our ways of life has not yet taken place and is being suppressed by discourse that discredits or systematically silences alternative voices. Extractivism thus makes us question the extent to which people around the world are able to determine their own ways of life. For indigenous groups, this raises the more specific issue of their right to self-determination and to choose their own development model.

¹ Olivier Petitjean, Multinationals Observatory: «L'Arctique, cible des multinationales - 2e épisode Ruée sur les ressources du Grand Nord», 13 April 2016

² Anna Bednik, op. cit. p. 18*

PART 2

Extractivism Creates Authoritarian Practices Incompatible with Human Rights

1- Lack of Public Consultation and Debate

**2- Criminalisation of Social Movements
and Environmental Activists**

**3- The Omnipotence of the Multinationals
and Their Ambiguous Relationship with Governments**

Despite the extractive industry's devastating impacts on ecosystems and inhabitants of the areas mined, the people directly affected are provided with neither the opportunity to object to these projects nor, very often, the chance to even discuss them. Extractivism dispenses with the need for people's consent, not only in countries in the global South where the often weak and sometimes corrupt political systems further complicate efforts to ensure the general interest is taken into account, but also in so-called 'developed' countries, where the people are equally as ignored. The most common reaction to opposition to extractive projects is violence and suppression.

1 - LACK OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND DEBATE

The economic and financial stakes surrounding the extraction of raw materials that have high value on the world market mean that the people are excluded from mining authorisation and development decision-making processes. The government is frequently the only party involved in negotiations with the mining companies and the general public is left out of this bilateral multinational/government discussion. Consultation is firstly denied by the lack of transparency in the process used to award concession contracts and exploration and mining licences. By deliberately concealing their behind-the-scenes deals and negotiations, the government and mining companies prevent not only the people affected and their locally elected officials, but also civil society as whole, from addressing the issue and holding an informed debate, most often presenting them with a *fait accompli*.

Shale Gas in France

This is what happened in France at the beginning of 2011. When whistleblowers revealed that, in March 2010, the government had granted three licences to explore for shale gas in south-east France, a huge grassroots protest movement sprang up, taking both the industry and government by surprise. The area covered by these licences was enormous, stretching from Montélimar to Montpellier and up to Larzac, an

area of nearly 15,000km². The Montélimar (Drôme) licence was awarded to Total SA and Devon Energy Corp (4,327km²). The Villeneuve-de-Berg (Ardèche – 931km²) and Nant (Aveyron, 4,414km²) licences were granted to the Swiss company Schuepbach Energy LLC (which was in the process of merging with Engie)¹. These licences were issued in accordance with the mining code, which includes no requirements for the public to be informed, let alone consulted, at the exploration stage. Bernard Saquet, the mayor of the commune of Nant (after which one of the licences was named), only found about the licences after reading about them in the local paper. In just a few weeks, grassroots anti-shale groups had been set up to share information, work together to find out what the authorities and mining companies were trying to hide and organise protests. The people living near the future exploration sites, and often also their elected officials, were “outraged at having been denied not only the right to decide, but also the right to know”². Thus, even in France, natural resource mining projects are kept hidden from the public; consequently, people are sidelined from the consultation process and prevented from giving or refusing their consent.

¹ Source: Marine Jobert and François Veillerette, «Gaz de schiste. De la catastrophe écologique au mirage économique», Ed. Babel, 2013, p. 20. (First Edition: *Le Vrai Scandale des gaz de schiste*, Les Liens qui Libèrent, 2011.)

² Anna Bednik, op. cit. p.16*



The Principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples

In countries home to indigenous peoples, the lack of consultation and consent takes on a whole different meaning as it violates a right recognised by a number of international bodies, and even by some countries in their constitutions or legislation. Le droit à la consultation découle du droit des peuples autochtones à l'autodétermination. The right to consultation derives from indigenous peoples' right to self-determination. With mining projects, the right to consultation needs to be coupled with indigenous peoples' right to their lands, territories and resources and with their right to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

However, in practice, the right to consultation is often reduced to a simple information campaign or consists of obtaining people's consent to the project at all costs, which can include using pressure and manipu-

lation. In some instances, consultation has taken place after the authorisations have been granted or the work has started. In most cases, the people's verdict has no bearing on the decision to continue with the project or not. It is therefore vital that the right to consultation is fully implemented by the authorities responsible for its application, namely the governments.

Break Free demonstration in Burnaby, Canada, in May 2016



The right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) in the international law

The FPIC is recognised in:

*** The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (non-binding)**

« States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources. »

*** International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 169 (binding on ratifying States) and its Article 6**

« 1. In applying the provisions of this Convention, governments shall:

- a) consult the peoples concerned, through appropriate procedures and in particular through their representative institutions, whenever consideration is being given to legislative or administrative measures which may affect them directly;
- b) establish means by which these peoples can freely participate, to at least the same extent as other sectors of the population, at all levels of decision-making in elective institutions and administrative and other bodies responsible for policies and programmes which concern them;
- c) establish means for the full development of these peoples' own institutions and initiatives, and in appropriate cases provide the resources necessary for this purpose.

2. The consultations carried out in application of this Convention shall be undertaken, in good faith and in a form appropriate to the circumstances, with the objective of achieving agreement or consent to the proposed measures. »

In addition to these key documents, reference to FPIC can also be found in other documents, either directly in human rights conventions or in interpretations drawn up by specific bodies¹.

¹ Communication n°1457/2006, Poma c. Peru, findings adopted on 27 March 2009, § 7.5, 7.7 (interpretation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights); Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, general recommendation no. 23 (1997) on indigenous peoples (interpretation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination); Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, E/C.12/1/Add.74, § 12 (interpretation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights). It is also important to note the case law from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which systematically confirms the right of indigenous peoples to be consulted and which frequently condemns the violation of this right.

It also needs to be converted into an effective right of veto for all plans liable to impact indigenous peoples, whether legislative measures or major projects¹. Since this relates to the right to self-determination, the aim of the consultation process must not be to obtain consent for government or industry projects, but for indigenous communities to determine their ways of life and development priorities. Therefore, it rests with the indigenous peoples to decide how they wish to be consulted, and the process that should be followed in terms of time-scale and representation. Respecting each community's internal decision-making processes and practices and rights is a prerequisite for

successful consultation².

Excluding the people from decisions is to deny them justice and democracy and violates their rights, whether these are indigenous communities or not. In addition, the systematic lack of transparency makes it harder for people to defend their territorial lands. However, the provision of information is the first step in the public consultation process, the primary aim of which is to obtain consent. Once the necessary information has been provided, people must then be given the proper opportunity to effectively exercise their veto.

¹ For more information, please see the written declaration submitted to the Human Rights Council by France Libertés in March 2014: http://www.france-libertes.org/IMG/pdf/decla_generale_fr.pdf

² «Peuples autochtones et industries extractives. Mettre en œuvre le consentement, libre, préalable, informé». Under the leadership of Cathal Doyle and Jill Cariño, l'Harmattan, Collection Questions Autochtones du GITPA, September 2014



When indigenous peoples clearly establish the principles they would like to see implemented in consultations

In the Philippines, the Subanon indigenous tribe considered the national FPIC guidelines¹ and their application to be unfit for purpose. They were rarely properly implemented, which had led to the Subanon's customary rights being violated by mining projects on numerous occasions. The Subanon indigenous peoples thus developed their own FPIC procedures in line with their vision and customary rights. A number of consultation meetings were held with the various Subanon communities, following which the leaders drew up a manifesto setting out the key FPIC principles.

When the Brazilian government issued plans to implement large dam-building projects in the Tapajos river basin, the Munduruku, one of the indigenous communities affected, decided to draw up a consultation protocol. This sets out the procedures to be followed to ensure a culturally appropriate FPIC process is adopted. In particular, the Munduruku underlined the need to hold the consultation meetings in Munduruku territory, on dates of their choosing, in their language, free from the presence of the army or any other security force and in accordance with a clearly defined decision-making process. In January 2015, the protocol was once more submitted to the new Secretary General of the President's Office, Miguel Rossetto, but no response has yet been received from the government².

¹ FPIC is recognised in the 1997 Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA)

² To read the protocol, please see: <http://amazonwatch.org/assets/files/2014-12-14-munduruku-consultation-protocol.pdf> and for more information on large dams, see: http://www.france-libertes.org/IMG/pdf/declaration_bresil.pdf

2 - CRIMINALISATION OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS

The suppression of opposition to extractive projects and violence against the communities who find themselves in the way of these projects is the next manifestation of the industry's disregard of the people and their demands. An increasing number of these projects find themselves facing large-scale grassroots opposition, but defending your land involves significant risks, including persecution, prison, torture or even assassination.

The fact that many governments support the extractive sector serves to exacerbate these social tensions and leaves the people opposing the sector more exposed to violence.

The fact that many governments support the extractive sector serves to exacerbate these social tensions and leaves the people opposing the sector more exposed to violence. Violence, whether carried out by the mining companies and their 'security' forces and/or by public security forces and the army, is a tool commonly used to gain access to sought-after land and to crush dissent.

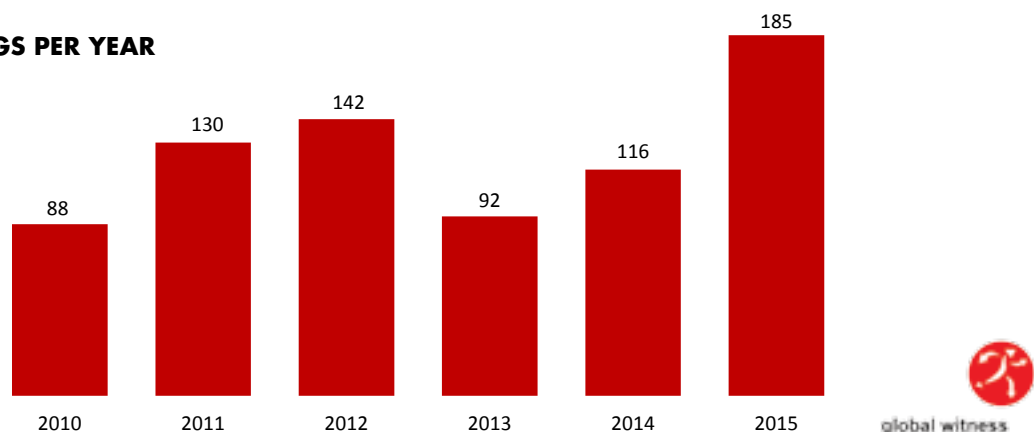
Before Chevron came here, we were just ordinary people. Now, they watch us like criminals. We breathe while we still can.

Doina Dediu, 51 ans, 51 years old, inhabitant of Pungesti in Romania, interviewed by Antonin Sabot, journalist with *Le Monde*, in 2013

Defending territorial lands and ways of life, a high-risk activity

In June 2016, the NGO Witness published its 2015 annual report¹ documenting the killing of land and environmental defenders worldwide, who it defines as «people who take peaceful action to protect environmental or land rights, whether in their own personal capacity or professionally». It identified 185 deaths in 2015, mainly in Latin America. This figure is a 59% increase on the previous year, indicating that suppression and violence are on the rise. While Latin American countries are the worst hit (with 50 killings in Brazil alone), the death toll in other countries such as the Philippines is also of great concern. Nearly 40% of the victims were indigenous peoples and it is these communities who are the most affected. The main driver of these killings is the mining and extractive industries sector (42 cases), followed by agribusiness (20 cases). In dozens of cases, Global Witness also found evidence pointing to the involvement of the armed forces, the police and security guards. Since the NGO began documenting these killings, **it has recorded the deaths of 1,176 «land and environmental defenders» around the world between 2002 and 2015** and highlights the fact that this figure is likely to be an under-estimate due to difficulties accessing data.

**GLOBAL KILLINGS PER YEAR
2010 - 2015**



¹ Global Witness, 2015 Report, On Dangerous Ground, June 2016

Protests by local people in the **Peruvian Andes** against the Conga mega-mining project being implemented by Yanacocha have become a symbol of communities' resistance to the destruction of their lands and ways of life, as well as of the violence to which those opposing extractivism are exposed. In the Cajamarca region where the project is based, many of the local inhabitants have come together to form *rondas campesinas*¹, or peasant patrols, which guard the sites that Yanacocha are seeking to develop, maintaining an almost constant presence to protect them. Since 2011, thousands of people have thus been camping at 4,000 metres above sea level² around one of the lakes under threat from the project. This type of action is just one of a wide range of protests being carried out by the people of Cajamarca to defend their lands. Unfortunately, these acts of peaceful resistance are often countered with violence on the part of the company, supported by a government anxious to ensure that the project runs smoothly whatever the cost and that the money invested remains in the country. These protests have already resulted in five people losing their lives, namely peasant leaders who were victims of the wave of suppression that followed the declaration of a state of emergency in the region in 2012. Many other people have been injured, sometimes with lifelong consequences. In addition, over one hundred opponents of the project, including local elected officials, are being taken to court.

¹ The literal meaning is «round peasants».

² Declaration to the UN Council of Human Rights, 25th session A/HRC/25/NGO/31, 21 February 2014

There is one person who has borne the brunt of the unjust power relations at work in this struggle. And this is Maxima Acuña Chaupe, a local farmer whose land Yanacocha claims to own despite Maxima and her husband having held the title deeds for more than ten years. Because she has refused to hand over her land and leave, and because resistance to the project has built up around her, she and her family have been subjected to daily harassment and persecution from the company and its employees, including the police. Her belongings have been burnt, her pets tortured and her animals stolen. She has received death threats over the phone and she and her daughter were beaten unconscious by the police³. She can no longer move about freely, farm her land or sell her produce at market, which is creating serious financial problems for the family. As a result, Maxima has become a symbol of the Cajamarca protests and of the fight against extractivism in general. She is living proof that extractivism proponents and companies will stop at nothing to make a profit and implement their projects.

³ Numerous reports and articles have been published about Maxima's case. For example:

http://www.lemonde.fr/planete/article/2014/08/11/la-resistance-d-une-famille-peruvienne-au-projet-conga_4469919_3244.html?xtmc=maxima_acuna_chaupe&xtcr=1

<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/profile/maxima-acuna-de-chaupe>

<https://mrmondialisation.org/elle-fait-front-aux-multinationales/>

<http://www.bastamag.net/Maxima-Chaupe-le-combat-d-une>

Protests by the local community
in Cajamarca, Peru, 2013



In countries in the global North, extractivism also employs authoritarian practices. Although these are often disguised and usually less violent, they still seriously undermine the democratic system of the countries concerned as primacy is afforded to multinational interests over those of the general population. As Buaventura Sousa Santos pointed out during the World Social Forum in 2016: «if democracy gets in the way, they will also attack democracy».

In **Canada**, where we have already seen the devastating impact of the oil sands mines, the financial stakes for those benefiting from these mining activities appear to be so great that the principles of the rule of law have simply been conveniently forgotten. This is the case in the municipalities that partially rely on the jobs and fiscal revenue from this industry and who have developed a ‘Far West’ mentality, particularly with regard to water resources. However, it is the Canadian government itself that has been displaying the most blatant anti-democratic tendencies.

For instance, in 2010, a study showing that the oil sands industry was releasing dangerous toxic pollution into the environment was published by the University of Alberta. The federal government attempted to suppress the results by working to prevent scientists from talking about the report¹. It notably endeavoured to prevent government scientists from corroborating these results for the media and to publicly discredit the study’s lead author, David Schindler. This attitude is a continuation of a policy that introduced rules in 2007 requiring federal government scientists to obtain permission from the minister’s office before giving interviews, particularly if these relate to the climate and oil sands. The Canadian environment ministry, Environment Canada, has reported that media coverage of climate-related scientific data fell by 80% between 2007 and 2014, thereby proving that the government’s censorship policy has been effective.

« If democracy gets in the way, they will also attack democracy ».

However, this abuse of power was taken even further by the government of Alberta when it tried to have the medical licence of Dr John O’Connor revoked, a doctor that had spent 15 years serving the indigenous community living downstream of the oil sands. His crime was to have publically expressed his alarm over

¹ See the Friends of the Earth Report «Tar Sands: Europe’s Complicity in Canada’s Climate Crimes», published in December 2015

the abnormally high rates of rare forms of cancer and other diseases found in the community and to suggest a study be conducted to determine if there was a link with oil sands pollution. In May 2015, Dr O’Connor lost the right to treat members of the community after a government agency announced that his services were no longer required². These examples show how «the government’s fixation with tar sands development has eroded Canadian democracy³».

Aerial view of the Syncrude Aurora oil sands mine in the boreal forest north of Fort McMurray, Alberta (20 July 2009)



© Jiri Rezac / Greenpeace

There has been a similar rush for shale gas taking place in **the United States**. It was this that prompted filmmaker Josh Fox to write and direct a documentary called ‘Gasland’ on the impacts of hydraulic fracturing and, in so doing, he has helped raise public awareness of the issues surrounding fracking. As a result, however, Josh Fox soon found himself on the US Department of Homeland Security’s ‘Terror Watch List’, a list that contains the names of «individuals who are known or reasonably suspected of being or having been involved in preparing, helping or carrying out terrorist activities»⁴.

The fact that such authoritarian practices are being used by both the government and the multinationals raises questions over collusion between political and multinational interests and, more generally, highlights the close relationship between the public authorities and mining companies.

² Source: In Alberta and Downstream, the Heavy Toll of the Oil Sands Industry on Water and the Environment», 18 June 2015

³ Friends of the Earth France Report «Tar Sands: Europe’s Complicity in Canada’s Climate Crimes», p.15

⁴ See Marine Jobert and François Veillerette, «Gaz de schiste. De la catastrophe écologique au mirage économique», p.26^{*}.

3 - THE OMNIPOTENCE OF THE MULTINATIONALS AND THEIR AMBIGUOUS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOVERNMENTS

The extractive industries also account for most allegations of the worst abuses, up to and including complicity in crimes against humanity. These are typically for acts committed by public and private security forces protecting company assets and property; large-scale corruption; violations of labour rights; and a broad array of abuses in relation to local communities, especially indigenous people

Commission on Human Rights (2006),
Interim Report of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises; UN ESC, 62nd session.

The Denial of Justice and Non-Enforcement of Sentences: Multinationals Above the Law and Amicable Backroom Deals

In May 2014, the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal stated that « Victims of human rights violations have the right to seek justice: any person or community whose rights have been violated must be able to go to court and have access to effective remedies for the violations. However, international law is focused on state actors: the international system remains reluctant to recognise obligations to non-state actors. While the power of transnational corporations has increased dramatically over the past three decades in the wake of the liberalisation of trade and investment, mechanisms that would render companies accountable for human rights violations have not been developed accordingly.¹»

Despite this legal vacuum, in many cases, the communities affected have no other choice but to take legal action to try to stop projects or obtain redress for damage already caused. When the legal system rules in favour of the victims, the multinationals rarely abide by the judgement and ignore the sentence handed down. They most often attempt to reach amicable settlements with the complainants by offering individual financial compensation. This strategy of buying social peace means the companies are spared having to defend their projects and forfeiting their profits.

The strategy of avoiding the courts is one that has been used to effect in **Caimanes in Chile**. The El Mauro tailings dam is extremely dangerous as it has not been designed to withstand strong earthquakes, despite these being common in the region. Were there to be an earthquake measuring more than 7.5 on the Richter scale, the dam would collapse and the village of 1,600 people would be buried in just a few minutes².

Placards and graffiti denouncing Minería los Pelambres' activities in the village of Caimanes in Chile.

« MLP (Minería los Pelambres) is having a great impact on the village of Caimanes and has also left all the small farmers of Caimanes and Pupio without water. We are fighting to get back the water that MLP is holding in El Mauro (dam)».

On the wall: «The evil called progress cannot be put above communities' rights» (left). On the far right of the photo is a sign that reads "Caimanes resists».



Wikimedia

¹ Extract from the formal request to the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal Session on the Canadian Mining Industry, Organising Committee, Canada, May 2014

² Declaration to the UN Council of Human Rights, 20th session, A/HRC/20/NGO/62, 13 June 2012

In spite of orders from the Court, which has recognised the risk posed by the dam, no public evacuation plan to mitigate for such a disaster has been put in place¹. In 2014, the Chilean courts recognised the high risk posed by the dam for the third time. However, the court judgements have never been applied by the mining company, which instead has undertaken large-scale efforts to reach amicable agreements to avoid having to abide by the legal rulings. Recently, the company has arranged to pay several millions of dollars to selected members of the community in exchange for dropping legal proceedings against the company, or reached agreements in principle to its mining dam plans, all with the aim of dividing the community. These highly questionable methods, used in conjunction with threats to jobs, contradict court decisions and flout the rule of law. The Caimanes case reveals the prevailing impunity of a multinational corporation that can bypass the justice system without redress. Thus, in November 2014, after the community had spent 75 days blocking the main route to the dam to peacefully demand application of the latest court ruling in their favour, namely that the company give them back their water, the mining company blackmailed the community over both jobs and water in order to bring an end to the protests. The Regional Labour Inspectorate confirmed that workers taking part in the protests had been threatened with dismissal.

Were there to be an earthquake measuring more than 7.5 on the Richter scale, the dam would collapse and the village of 1,600 people would be buried in just a few minutes. In spite of orders from the Court, which has recognised the risk posed by the dam, no public evacuation plan to mitigate for such a disaster has been put in place.

In many other cases, mining companies have attempted to persuade the courts to rule against the victims, as in the long-drawn out legal dispute between the indigenous and rural communities from the north of **Ecuador and the multinational Texaco/Chevron**, which has been ongoing for 20 years. The legal battle has been fought in five different countries, as well as in the International Criminal Court. Five indigenous tribes (Siekopai, Cofán, Waorani, Kichua, Siona) and several farmers' associations, totalling tens of thousands of people, filed charges against the multinational to seek redress for the considerable health,

¹ Declaration to the UN Council of Human Rights, 29th session, A/HRC/29/NGO/18, 3 June 2015

social and environmental damage caused by the oil company. This has resulted in one of the largest environmental justice cases in the world².

Damage caused by Chevron in Ecuador, April 2010



© Caroline Bennett / Rainforest Action Network

For Chevron and its allies, the aim during this court case has been to protect multinationals from this type of prosecution. If the courts rule in favour of Ecuador, this would create a legal precedent that the mining companies want to avoid: «We are convinced that this case is of interest not only to Ecuador. Chevron is trying to take advantage of all the impunity that multinationals enjoy. Our fight is a direct threat to this impunity. For Chevron and the other companies that support them, the fear is that if we win this fight, this precedent will help countless communities being victimised by multinationals throughout the world. That is what they want to avoid, it is not about the money. Their annual profits are considerably higher than any fine they have been ordered to pay», says Pablo Fajardo³, lead lawyer for the victims of Chevron and recipient of the Goldman Prize, an international award that recognises environmental activists.

« If we win this fight, this precedent will help countless communities being victimised by multinationals throughout the world. That is what they want to avoid, it is not about the money. Their annual profits are considerably higher than any fine they have been ordered to pay ».

² See the complainants website for more information: <http://texacotoxico.net/#pricing>

³ Cited by Olivier Petitjean, «Injustice sans frontière ? Chevron contre l'Équateur» 21 May 2015*, <http://multinationales.org/Injustice-sans-frontieres-Chevron-contre-l-Equateur>

The complainants' refusal to accept individual compensation reflects their determination to remain on their territorial lands and see their environment restored, rather than take the money and move elsewhere. As Pablo Fajardo says, «We are not fighting for money, but for environmental rehabilitation. We have said to ourselves: what use is money if our water and soil is contaminated? ».

« We are not fighting for money, but for environmental rehabilitation. We have said to ourselves: what use is money if our water and soil is contaminated? »

In 2013, in its final ruling, the Supreme Court of Ecuador ordered Chevron to pay 9.5 billion dollars¹ to the oil pollution victims. This compensation was to be used to cover the cost of cleaning up the environment and to provide financial assistance to the people suffering from cancer caused by the pollution, despite many already having died due to lack of treatment. However, it proved impossible to enforce this ruling in Ecuador because Chevron deliberately withdrew all of its assets from the country. The only option available to the victims and their supporters was thus to take the case to other countries in which Chevron had assets. They consequently brought the case to court in Argentina, but Chevron successfully countered this move by promising the Argentine government it would invest in the country.

Chevron has assigned considerable resources to ensuring it wins the battle with the affected communities, as Pablo Fajardo confirms: «Chevron has 2,000 full-time lawyers working on the case against us. They have hired dozens of espionage and communication companies. In 2013, the corporate investigations company, Kroll, admitted to having 150 people working on this case for Chevron. For that year, it sent Chevron an invoice for 15 million dollars. On our side, we have only three lawyers in Ecuador and about fifteen worldwide»².

« Chevron has 2,000 full-time lawyers working on the case against us. They have hired dozens of espionage and communication companies. On our side, we have only three lawyers in Ecuador and about fifteen worldwide »

1 From the article by Olivier Petitjean for the Multinationals Observatory mentioned above*

2 Cited by Olivier Petitjean, «Injustice sans frontière? Chevron contre l'Equateur», 21 May 2015*

Other companies use private legal mechanisms set up through neo-liberal trade agreements to seek compensation from governments who refuse to accept their irresponsible free trade projects. Investment arbitration, a common feature of free trade agreements, enables foreign companies to take governments to court if they feel are being discriminated against with regard to their investments. This has opened the door to a large number of excuses for litigation on the part of the multinational corporations. This process has led to corporations threatening and blackmailing governments and, at the same time, enabled them to influence policy and legislation, thus seriously undermining the governments' sovereignty.

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As a result, the government of **El Salvador** may be forced to pay 301 million US dollars in damages to an Australian-Canadian mining company, Oceana Gold. This company is suing the country through a private arbitration court overseen by the World Bank after El Salvador refused to grant Oceana Gold a mining licence because the project posed too much of a threat to water resources. As El Salvador has the most serious water supply issues of the entire region, the government stopped granting mining licences in 2008³. In 2011, a strategic environmental audit confirmed that it is not feasible to mine in El Salvador as 95% of all watercourses are already polluted⁴. Should the arbitration court rule in favour of the multinational, El Salvador's government may be forced to overturn its legitimate official policy. Such court cases thus threaten to directly undermine a government's sovereignty and its jurisdiction to rule in the public interest. Free-trade agreements and other pro-corporation and pro-investor mechanisms thus prioritise the multinationals' interests over those of the people. Fighting extractivism also means fighting against these agreements.

3 Gabriel Labrador, «Le Salvador devra-t-il verser 301 millions de dollars pour avoir préféré une eau propre à l'or ?», 20 April 2015

4 <http://www.marn.gob.sv/el-salvador-no-tiene-las-condiciones-adequadas-para-desarrollar-mineria-metalica/>

Free-trade agreements and other pro-corporation and pro-investor mechanisms thus prioritise the multinationals' interests over those of the people. Fighting extractivism also means fighting against these agreements.

Conflicts of Interest for Governments in their Relationships with Multinationals: Anti-Public Interest Permissive Laws and Forfeited Standards

Many countries choose extractivism as an easy short-term solution for development and growth as the mining of raw materials by often foreign multinationals is presumed to bring in huge investment, an influx of money and funding for the government through taxes. Transnational companies' investment is at the core of the collusion between governments and private economic stakeholders. In their eagerness to harness this

investment, governments revise their environmental policies in order to introduce the least restrictive laws possible, at all levels. As a result of the highly flexible regulations applied, the rights of the multinationals are given precedence over those of the local people.

When condemning the violations committed by the extractive industry, it is also important not to overlook the role played by governments in supporting this operating model. For example, **Canada** actively provides both political and financial support to expanding the Canadian mining industry throughout the world. It is complicit in violating fundamental rights through its refusal to adopt a binding legislative framework to improve regulation of these mining companies' practices and to provide effective access to justice for the communities affected. Canada has thus become a legislative and legal haven for the extractive industry and the leading destination in the world for mining capital investment: over 75% of the world's mining companies have their registered head offices in Canada.

As part of Break Free 2016, hundreds of people blocked the entrance to ANZ Bank in Auckland, New Zealand, calling for the group to disinvest from fossil fuels.



Canadian mining companies receive both direct and indirect financial support from the government. Thus, in 2002, the mining sector had the lowest federal tax rate¹ of all sectors and the Canadian mining code is considered to be the most flexible in the world. In addition, government bodies have interfered in the mining laws of other countries hosting mining projects on numerous occasions by lobbying for law reforms favourable to multinational mining corporations. This was the case in Colombia in 2001 and in Honduras in 2013, where the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) actively influenced the reform of the Mining Act. In Colombia, through its 'Energy, Mines and Environment' project, CIDA financially contributed to the development of a new mining code, alongside multinational corporations such as BP Canada Energy, Cargill, Chevron Canada, Conoco, Down Chemicals, Mobil, Shell, Total Fina ELF, UNOCAL and many others. This was highly criticised for its failure to include consultation with indigenous groups, as well as for having watered down the various environmental and social protection mechanisms and introduced a tax reduction.

We have serious conflicts with the State about their mining vision. They say that the subsoil is theirs; we say that the land is one with the subsoil; you cannot separate it from a spiritual point of view. This is the war we are waging ... to have the air, the land, the subsoil, together.

Chief Governor, Resguardo Indígena Cañamomo Lomapieta, Colombia².

Through these practices, the Canadian government has developed comprehensive economic diplomacy akin to interference in other countries' legislative processes. In order to ensure respect of the rights of indigenous peoples, which have been particularly undermined by Canadian mining companies, in 2007, the United Nations urged Canada to take legislative and administrative measures to limit the harm being caused and to ensure those transnational corporations domiciled in its territory are held accountable for rights violations. In light of Canada's failure to act on this request, the United Nations reiterated its demand in 2012, once again without success.

The promise of massive investment and the use of more or less veiled blackmail tactics thus enable mining companies, with the support of their home go-

1 Source: Requête formelle au Tribunal Permanent des Peuples «Pour instaurer au Canada une session du Tribunal permanent des peuples sur l'industrie minière canadienne», Organising Committee, Canada Session, April 2014, p.32

2 Cited in the Global Witness report, «En terreno peligroso, El medio ambiente mortal de 2015: asesinato y criminalización de defensores de la tierra y medio ambiente en todo el mundo», June 2016, p.14

vernment, to put pressure on the countries hosting their projects.

These practices demonstrate blatant interference and undermine governments' sovereignty. For instance, the **Eramet** mining group, which counts the French government as a major shareholder and whose aim is to secure France's access to strategic metals, has been developing a nickel mining project on the island of Halmahera. This island is located in the Maluku archipelago in **Indonesia**, where one of the largest nickel deposits in the world has been discovered. Halmahera is particularly rich in biodiversity, yet the total surface area given over to the 'Weda Bay' mega-mining project covers almost 55,000 hectares of woodland, 45.8% of which is protected forest³. Under Indonesia's 1999 Forestry Law that banned mining in protected forests, these forests used to be sacrosanct. However, in 2004, under pressure from the industry and investors, who were threatening to pull out of Indonesia if there were too many obstacles to developing mining projects in the country, President Megawati Sukarnoputri changed this law by decree to permit mining in the forests that had always been officially protected.

Under Indonesia's 1999 Forestry Law that banned mining in protected forests, these forests used to be sacrosanct. However, in 2004, under pressure from the industry and investors, President Megawati Sukarnoputri changed this law by decree to permit mining in the forests that had always been officially protected.

These future mining areas were home to the Togutil indigenous communities, who make their living from fishing and farming, and the mine was on the territorial lands recognised as belonging to these communities by the Indonesian Constitutional Court. However, these communities were never given the opportunity to exercise their Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). The local inhabitants sold their land to the company for a pittance. The National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) reports that those who refused to sell were threatened by the police, who held a gun to their heads. The mining security zone has been militarised since 2003; one person was killed in 2004, and many more have been injured.

3 The facts and figures included in this paragraph on the situation in Indonesia are taken from the Friends of the Earth report, "Impacts sociaux et environnementaux de la mine de nickel et de cobalt de Weda Bay en Indonésie" (June 2013)

Eramet is merely replicating the same operating model here that it has been using in its nickel mines in New Caledonia and which have led to serious problems with the Kanak indigenous community.

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A further example comes from **Peru**, where the adoption of permissive laws has slowly but surely removed all obstacles preventing the expansion of mining operations in the country. In the spring of 2013, when both commodity prices and investment levels were falling, a range of measures were introduced by decree to revise the conditions under which mining licences could be granted: the guaranteed protection of archaeological heritage was virtually removed and the time limit for approving environmental impact assessments was reduced to 100 days, seriously undermining their importance¹.

¹ Paquetes normativos 2013-2015 y su impacto en los derechos fundamentales en el Perú, guidelines on the new legislation governing investment in the mining and energy sectors, written by the Peruvian organisations Muqui and Grufides, October 2015

At the same time, the Andean communities, mostly Quechua and Aymara, were excluded from the scope of the law that requires mining companies to consult with indigenous peoples. These measures reflected the government's fears that it would substantially lose annuity income were investors to leave as commodity prices were so low. It was therefore willing to do anything to encourage these investors to stay, offering them increasingly favourable conditions at the expense of everything else. These measures also embody an overt political turnaround as President Ollanta Humala had based his 2011 campaign around working with communities to safeguard water, rather than with the multinationals to secure gold.

Thus, extractivism uses a range of authoritarian practices to establish itself as the indispensable 'development' model for people living in sacrifice zones.

Thus, extractivism uses a range of authoritarian practices to establish itself as the indispensable 'development' model for people living in sacrifice zones. It is for this reason that opposition to extractivism is growing throughout the world and that numerous people from very different countries and environments are calling for an urgent move towards a post-extractive society.

Break Free 2016, in Calaca in the Philippines.



PART 3

Resistance and Alternatives to Extractivism as Societal Choice

**1- Grassroots Resistance to Protect Our Land:
How to Get Involved**

**2- The Move to a Post-Extractive Society:
Re-Evaluate Our Ways of Life
and Draw Inspiration from the Philosophies of Indigenous Peoples**

Faced with the growing negative impacts of the extractivism model and its heavy-handed tactics, more and more opposition groups are being formed, led by the people affected and civil society. Throughout the world, grassroots movements are coming together to protest against new destructive projects, call for the closure of highly polluting mining sites or launch legal proceedings against multinationals guilty of seriously violating human and environmental rights. Although the proponents of this model will do anything to keep the current extractive system in place, it is possible to defeat extractivism through grassroots protests, by supporting tangible alternatives that bypass the extractive cycle and by changing our relationship to nature and consumption.

1 - GRASSROOTS RESISTANCE TO PROTECT OUR LAND: HOW TO GET INVOLVED

We are currently at a crossroads in humanity where we must choose either to continue down a destructive path of extracting fossil fuels or transition to sustainable ways of living. What we need is ambitious renewable energy projects, not more tar sands pipelines. These pipelines don't have the support of local communities and the indigenous nations they will impact. If we continue to build fossil fuel infrastructure, we are breaking our promise to do our part in Canada to stem a global climate crisis that is already being felt by communities all over the world.

Melina Laboucan-Massimo, Lubicon Cree First Nation, Greenpeace Canada Climate and Energy Campaigner and 350.org board member, speaking about Break Free 2016.

Grassroots Resistance to Protect Our Land: How to Get Involved

The process of setting up a new mining activity is complex and consists of several phases: licensing, exploration, extracting and processing the raw materials, etc. It is difficult for local people to make sense of, especially as there is a deliberate lack of transparency on the part of the mining companies and public authorities, who want to prevent people from raising opposition and exercising their rights. The people living on land earmarked for mining projects are not always aware of what an oil drilling or mining project involves. Furthermore, many people find themselves unable to understand the documents provided, which can run to hundreds and even thousands of pages, either because they do not understand the administrative and technical language used or simply because the documents are not in their native language or they cannot read. As a first step when campaigning against such projects, it is therefore vital that the local communities are made fully aware of the ramifications of the project for their daily lives and are able to understand what is at stake and the process involved. It is essential to conduct large-scale information campaigns, awareness-raising and training. The information gap between the public and multinationals/governments is the root cause of the imbalance in people's struggle to defend their land.

Thus, in Ecuador, the association **Acción Ecológica**¹ has been carrying out substantive work on the oil sector's impact on water resources to raise awareness of this issue among the inhabitants of Pacayacu (Sucumbios province). To this end, the association involves the local people in environmental monitoring (testing water quality, for example). The involvement of communities living in the Libertador oil drilling area, operated by the state-owned company PetroAmazonas, has led to the creation of a Permanent Social Assembly of the Affected Communities of Pacayacu and Dureno, which brings together 25 communities². The aim of the assembly is to enable local stakeholders to collectively put their claims and demands to the authorities themselves. People previously used to submit their claims individually and, in most cases, demanded a job with the company in compensation. The assembly now means the people are able to present a united front and carry greater weight. They have also been encouraged to consider the future of all communities and lands rather than taking the fallback solution and accompanying exile of individual financial compensation. Acción Ecológica has successfully got the inhabitants constructively involved in the participatory sustainable resource management of their land. It is vital to restore the local people to their rightful place in the decision-making process for projects that affect their lands and ways of life. Only once provided with the relevant information are people in a position to make a fully informed decision on whether to oppose a project or not and draw up alternative development projects.



© France Libertés

1 www.accionecologica.org

2 Information communicated to us directly from our partner in the field.

Inform People of Their Rights and Encourage Them to Take Action

In addition to providing information on the project and its impact, it is essential to raise people's awareness of their rights. People cannot exercise their rights without first knowing what they are. In order to combat extractivism, priority should therefore be given to building people's capacities by providing public legal education in communities.

In Mexico, the research centre **FUNDAR**¹ is providing legal training and rights education to indigenous and rural communities in the Sierra Norte de Puebla region, which is under threat from several mining and shale gas fracking projects. FUNDAR has notably been focusing on the right to prior consultation and provides day-to-day support to those communities requesting assistance with their strategies and legal action to protect their rights from the extractive industry. Thus, in Ixtacamaxtitlan, a licence was awarded to the Canadian mining company Almadens Minerals, violating the right of the communities to be consulted.

A group of lawyers led by the FUNDAR team and working with the local communities filed a *recurso de amparo*² against the Mexican Ministry of the Economy. The resulting court case, which is currently being heard, has led to the company's activities being suspended until the ruling is made and provides immediate protection to communities while awaiting the court's decision.

In the United States, the **Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF)**³ works at the local level to develop Community Bills of Rights, which is local-level legislation (within a municipality, for instance) that recognises the right to water for natural and human communities within its geographical boundaries. This approach is based on the premise that direct action by communities can overcome the threat posed by fracking. In a country that has a corporate right to water but no human right to water, legislation promotes the development of extractive projects at the expense of the most basic human rights. These Community Bills of Rights provide the legal tools required to fight the mining companies. However, this strategy of participatory democracy is under threat from the

1 <http://fundar.org.mx/>

2 The *recurso de amparo* is the Mexican equivalent of an appeal. It is a procedural defence remedy for the protection of basic rights enshrined in the Constitution and international treaties. It is based on the concept of limiting government powers to protect people's basic rights from arbitrary decisions.

3 celdf.org

corporations as it prevents them from implementing their projects. These corporations thus frequently file complaints against communities that have pushed for a moratorium. There therefore looks set to be a long fight ahead to overhaul legislation to ensure that corporations are not the only ones to benefit from the law and can no longer cause harm to communities exercising their right to self-determination.

The aim of all of these initiatives is to find ways to overcome the powerlessness and despondency that can be felt by the people affected. Communities can sometimes assume an understandably fatalistic attitude when faced with the seemingly insurmountable hurdles of the major imbalance of power and complexity of the system involved.

For many of those who have spent a long time living alongside destruction and pollution, the men and women robbed of their livelihoods by the chronic lack of choice and invariable disregard to which they are subjected, injustice and horror are often widespread, omnipresent and "normal" (...). Dying of cancer at 18 or suffering from lead poisoning at the age of 9 is «normal» in some parts of the world; just as having to leave your land overnight because a corporation or government has other plans for it can appear «normal». In these situations where people have already suffered violence, denigration or indifference, collective outrage is often the result of painstaking efforts to take (back) ownership of their lives⁴.



4 Anna Bednik, op.cit. p177*

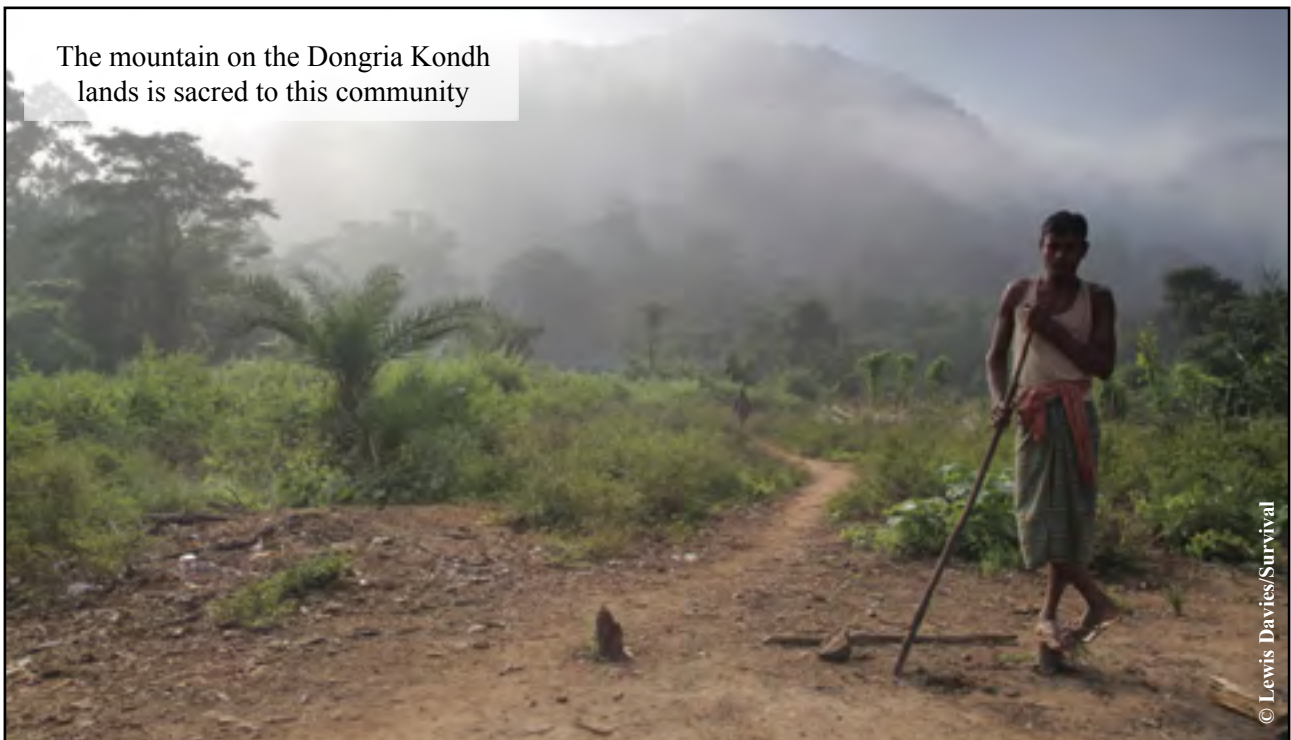
Spread Awareness of Successful Protests

Nevertheless, there are several examples, from both the global North and South, where protests against the extractive industry have ended in victory. In August 2010, in India, following months of intense campaigning, the government refused to grant the Vedanta group authorisation to create a bauxite mine in the Niyamgiri hill range, and notably on the sacred mountain of the **Dongria Kondh**, an indigenous community that lives in Odisha state¹. The mining company appealed the decision, but this appeal was rejected by the Indian Supreme Court in April 2013. The Su-

¹ Source: Survival International

preme Court ruled that a referendum must be held in each of the twelve Dongria Kondh villages affected by the mining project. Despite facing intimidation and harassment, all of the villages voted against the project «on the grounds that their religious, social and cultural rights would have been compromised by the mine». This consultation was the first environmental referendum to have been held in India. The project was permanently cancelled in January 2014 by the Ministry of the Environment. It is hoped that the outcome of this case will set a precedent and enable local communities to effectively exercise their right to prior consultation.

The mountain on the Dongria Kondh lands is sacred to this community



© Lewis Davies/Survival

The Sarayaku Frontière de Vie (Boundary of Life) Project in Ecuador

For over 25 years, the Kichwa people of Sarayaku have been fighting to defend their traditional lands from the intrusion of oil companies in the face of intimidation and financial temptation and within a difficult political environment. This indigenous community of 1,200 people lives in the Pastaza province in Ecuador. They have combined extremely tangible protests (legal, media attention, etc.) with a highly symbolic project to gain the attention of the West. The aim of the project is to plant «Sisa Nambi, the great living way of flowers», a border of flowering trees visible from the air that will mark out the 200km boundary of their lands and thus encircle 135,000 hectares of pristine forest. The first trees were planted in 2006. There are now 15 circles of a total of 350 fruit and flowering trees marking 20km of the boundary line¹. These circles are sacred and have been named after the ancestors of the Sarayaku people. The first area of resistance is called TIAM and is only 15km from the oil well operated by the Italian company AGIP. It will take between 20 and 30 years for the trees to grow large enough to depict the Boundary of Life. This project is also a way of highlighting the temporality of nature, as not all natural processes can be expedited. The Kichwa peoples of Sarayaku want their protests, in which they fight oil with flowers, to become symbolic and give hope to all other communities who refuse to stand by and watch their environments being exploited and ruined by multinational companies that pay little heed to the cultures they destroy.

¹ For more information on this project, see the official European website: <http://www.frontieredevie.net/en/project.htm>

On 13 July 2011, the parliament in **France** adopted a law banning hydraulic fracturing in the country, marking a symbolic victory for all those who, in just a few months, had come together in large numbers to protest against the granting of the three shale gas exploration licences mentioned above. The first public information meeting on shale gas in France was held on 20 December 2010 in Saint Jean du Bruel in the Aveyron region and was attended by 300 people, including José Bové¹. Several ideas were taken up from this initial meeting, such as creating protest groups in all the areas under threat from fracking, twinning French communes with communes in Quebec at risk from similar shale gas projects and creating surveillance networks to monitor the arrival of machinery at the sites in order to start taking action. Pyramid telephone systems were set up and a petition entitled «Gaz de schiste, non merci!» (Shale gas, no thanks!) was launched asking the government to place a moratorium on prospection and on the licences already awarded.

The overriding feeling was that the public authorities had sought to conceal a major project in order to satisfy private interests and avoid public debate. For many people, this project had been forced upon

¹ Source: Marine Jobert and François Veillerette, «Gaz de schiste. De la catastrophe écologique au mirage économique», Ed. Babel, 2013, p.20. (First Edition: Le Vrai Scandale des gaz de schiste, Les Liens qui Libèrent, 2011.)

them, with no prior consultation to determine their needs or wants; hence why such a large number of people, with different interests and from a wide range of backgrounds, all came together to rally round the same cause in such a short space of time. In January 2011, the protest movement became a massive campaign with dozens of communes calling for a moratorium and the introduction of anti-fracking decrees. The general councils of the 13 French departments concerned also took a clear stand against fracking². The region of Picardie unanimously decided «to oppose, through all available means, the exploitation of shale gas/oil on Picardie's soil». The campaign continued to gather momentum as hundreds of shale gas public information meetings were organised by local authorities, who also created a national coordination body, and mass demonstrations were held in remote and sparsely populated areas, culminating in 15,000 people taking part in a march in the Ardèche.

The overriding feeling was that the public authorities had sought to conceal a major project in order to satisfy private interests and avoid public debate.

² Aveyron, Ardèche, Lozère, Hérault, Drôme, Gard, Vaucluse, Lot, Seine et Marne, Rhône-Alpes, Languedoc-Roussillon, Midi Pyrénées, Ile de France. Source: Gaz de schiste, by François Veillerette and Marine Jobert



The experiences of Canada and the United States played a vital role in this emergency campaign. The widespread viewing and circulation of Josh Fox's 2008 *Gasland* documentary filmed in the United States meant concerns quickly spread from department to department. The film's account of the water and air pollution, destruction of land, the industry's culture of secrecy, the resignation of the public authorities and the powerlessness of the people faced with a situation from which there was no going back meant that anger soon mounted. Politicians were disconcerted by the scale of the protests, which culminated in the law banning hydraulic fracturing being adopted in record time. However, in spite of this law, the industry is continuing efforts to exert its influence and make shale gas development socially acceptable, both in France and elsewhere. This can be seen in the industry's regular appearance at court appeals, as companies do not want to be prevented from profiting from this resource, and in its attempts to reassure the public that the techniques used are safe and reliable. Continued vigilance is therefore required.

However, merely protesting against extractive projects that immediately concern us is not enough. During the anti-shale gas protests in France, the slogan «Ni ici ni ailleurs» (not here, not anywhere) quickly gained traction to show that, in addition to people campaigning against local projects, there needs to be a worldwide rejection of shale gas and no area should be sacrificed in place of another. This is why, although victories against extractive projects can sometimes be won by going through legal channels and the courts, the act of opposing extractivism and its system is inhe-



rently political. It involves the fight for a post-extractive society, one that does not prey on natural resources.

Hence the 'victory' against shale gas in France is not at all clear-cut. The 2011 law did not ask the right questions. It has not banned exploitation as such, just a technique. At no point were the utility and merit of the plans to drill for shale gas in France ever called into question. Thus, as suggested by François Hollande¹, these plans have merely been postponed until a technique more 'appropriate' than hydraulic fracturing is developed. This law is therefore not an anti-mining law.

The 2011 law [banning hydraulic fracturing for shale gas] was a technical response to a political and philosophical problem

Marine Jobert and François Veillerette.

Gaz de schiste, de la catastrophe écologique au mirage énergétique

¹ « I will let the companies and researchers do their jobs. And I will carry out my responsibilities if a technical alternative to hydraulic fracturing is developed». Press conference, 13 November 2012, cited by Marine Jobert and François Veillerette, op. cit, p14*

The Illusion of CSR

As the techniques used mean it is not possible to extract natural resources without destroying the environment, willingness on the part of the industry and politicians is also required to minimise any damage. However, companies frequently object to limiting their social and environmental impacts as soon as there is even the slightest risk their profit margins may be affected. As far as companies are concerned, the financial cost of many of the practices that most respect human rights and the environment preclude their implementation, as the ultimate aim of their business model is to minimise costs and maximise profit. This is why Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is more for show than for making any real progress. Rather than compelling companies to respect legislation and set criteria, CSR enables them to create their own standards, outside of any binding framework and on a voluntary basis. Companies can thus highlight their efforts to respect human and/or environmental rights and enhance their image, without any scrutiny from an outside authority. This CSR mechanism thus raises concerns as it bypasses legislative power and enables companies to build their own framework, around whichever standards best suit them, without restrictions. They thus act as both judge and judged and benefit from a highly effective communication tool that they can use to cover up their less honourable practices.

2 - THE MOVE TO A POST-EXTRACTIVE SOCIETY: RE-EVALUATE OUR WAYS OF LIFE AND DRAW INSPIRATION FROM THE PHILOSOPHIES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Thus, the core of the extractivism issue is really philosophical and political. Those that support this system maintain that there are no alternatives and that those who oppose extractive projects are reactionaries, and are naive and irresponsible or selfish and anti-development. However, extractivism is neither necessary nor justifiable as, as we have seen, it does not deliver development. It is entirely possible (and even desirable) to build a post-extractive society by re-evaluating both our ways of life and the economic systems that harm not only the environment but also a large part of the world's population. The aim is not to hinder the extraction of natural resources to meet our basic needs but to put an end to the harmful and intensive extraction of resources that is taking place not with a view to meeting these needs, but with irrational and reckless haste.

Challenge the Popular Misconception that Extractivism is Necessary

Five billion people unquestionably accept their human condition as one of dependence on goods and services.

Ivan Illitch 1988¹

Condemning the devastating impacts of extractivism is one thing, yet condemning the extraction of the resources used to produce the goods we regularly consume is quite another. As, in our so-called developed countries, who does not benefit from these activities, who does not consume the items that are ultimately produced? This is the argument that the proponents of the extractive model have managed to propagate on a massive scale: there can be no alternative to the unrestrained extraction of raw materials because this meets the needs of our modern societies.

¹ Cited by Anna Bednik, op.cit, 2016, p143*

Vancouver Break Free, 14 May 2016
Zack Embree





©Duffernutter

But what, in fact, are these needs? The issue of needs is central to challenging the extractive model. What needs is it actually seeking to meet with its ever-growing quantities of raw materials?

We are not talking about returning to a life with no comforts, but instead «a simple critical examination should enable each of us to do an initial sort through of our everyday objects and services to distinguish between those that appear indispensable (electricity for hospitals) and the gadgets whose sole use is to make money for those who manufacture and market them (antiperspirant socks containing silver nanoparticles?), to differentiate between items that need to be replaced and those that can still be used, between things that increase our autonomy and those that destroy it»¹. The consumer society in which we live has to dispose of the items and services it overproduces. The system works by creating needs that no longer have anything to do with the original meaning of the word ‘need’.

The first step towards a post-extractive society involves reassessing our use of a given technology or raw material, asking ourselves whether we can live without it and who benefits from the decisions imposed upon us and which are made by those working within the economic system. In her work on extractivism², Anna Bednik writes: «The predatory system is not our only option. It would be possible to drastically

reduce our need for newly extracted raw materials: by extending product life, by repairing and reusing old items rather than producing new ones, by designing truly recyclable products, by relocating production and, above all, by conducting a critical examination of all of our ‘needs’ and how we can meet them (...). Many things would be technically possible if we were to alter our objectives and imagination”.

The circular economy and the fight against planned obsolescence are two tangible and constructive approaches that are worth exploring further. They also help counter the arguments of extractivism proponents, as these two approaches would also help create jobs. This is a positive social project that provides a real alternative by considerably reducing both resource consumption and waste while continuing to cover our needs, as it does not automatically involve depriving us of the consumer goods we are used to.

However, by failing to evaluate our ways of life and consumption, we accept as inevitable a system that we often recognise as being harmful as if we have no choice. The idea that there is no alternative to extractivism has taken root in our minds. It is as if a type of wilful blindness has taken hold, which refuses to analyse the constructed (and thus refutable) nature of the notion of “development” and “growth”, etc.

¹ Anna Bednik, op.cit. p.147*

² Anna Bednik, ibid, p.159-160*

Yes, extractivism is necessary for our type of society. But it is not necessary in itself, just as our type of society is not the only or even the most desirable option. It is easy to accept the devastation caused by extractivism when it is not us that pays the price but appear only to reap the benefits. However, the world's sacrifice zones remind us that, overnight, we could go from being beneficiaries to being directly impacted by the extractive model. Reducing our consumption, re-evaluating our needs and reassessing our ways of life are thus the first steps we can take to individually combat extractivism.

By failing to evaluate our ways of life and consumption, we accept as inevitable a system that we often recognise as being harmful as if we have no choice.

In addition to taking action on an individual level, which is vital to changing the model, the move to a post-extractive society also requires strong global measures. The introduction of an **international moratorium** is one of the main proposals that urgently need to be adopted. The scientists McGlade and Ekins, who revealed that 80% of fossil fuels need to remain in the ground in order to meet the global war-

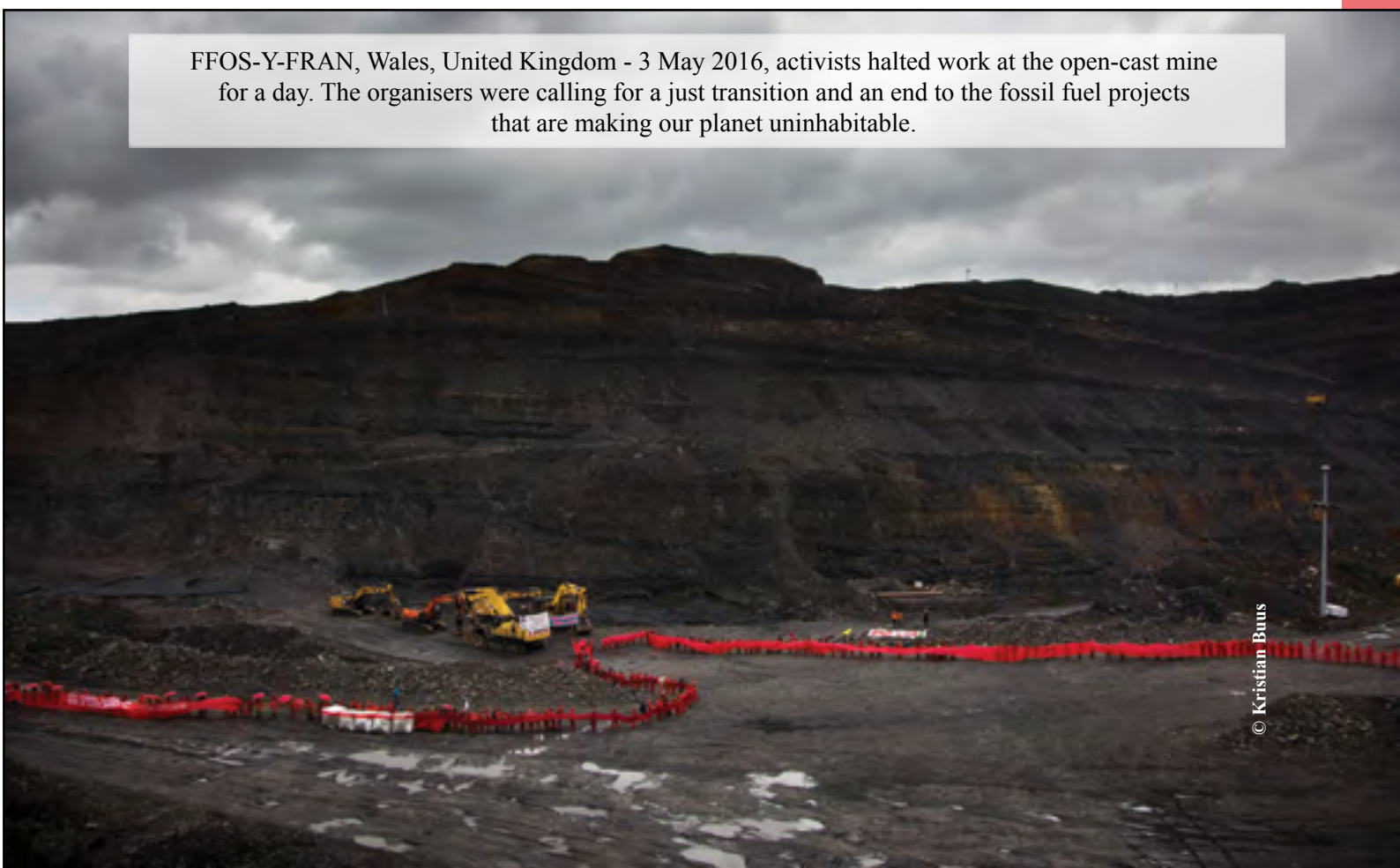
ming target of 2°C¹, propose that all unconventional hydrocarbons (deep sea oil and gas deposits, shale gas and oil, oil sands and hydrocarbons found in the Arctic, etc.) be designated “unburnable”, which equates to placing a moratorium on all new exploration and mining of this type of energy source. This would be a first step toward an energy transition away from fossil fuels and would help reduce extractivism.

In order to highlight the need to drastically reduce the use of fossil fuels, civil society across the world joined forces in 2016 to carry out a series of protests as part of the ‘Break Free from Fossil Fuels’ movement. The aim of these mass protests was to push for the introduction of this moratorium, as this is a tangible proposal that needs to be implemented on the ground. The international moratorium on fossil fuels is an obvious step that has clear and achievable objectives and which large numbers of people can get behind. It also has the advantage of turning the issue into an immediate concern, rather than setting objectives for ten or twenty years’ time².

¹ Christophe McGlade and Paul Ekins, “The geographical distribution of fossil fuels unused when limiting global warming to 2°C», *Nature*, n°517, 8 January 2015, p.187-190

² Maximes Combes, *Sortons de l'âge des fossiles*, p.27.

FFOS-Y-FRAN, Wales, United Kingdom - 3 May 2016, activists halted work at the open-cast mine for a day. The organisers were calling for a just transition and an end to the fossil fuel projects that are making our planet uninhabitable.



The Break Free 2016 Movement

We believe it is essential to confront the ongoing shifting of responsibility for climate action around the globe. We will demonstrate that there are no longer new geographies for the fossil fuel industry to exploit or export its pollution to, and we will send a resounding signal that people are unified against their vision for our collective future. Break Free 2016

Between 3 and 15 May 2016, the Break Free from Fossil Fuels movement saw more than 30,000 people on all six continents take part in coordinated protests calling for a significant shift away from fossil fuels. Protestors gathered at symbolic sites, such as coal-fired power stations in Turkey and the Philippines, mines in Germany and Australia, fracking sites in Brazil and oil wells in Nigeria. The aim of these protests was to demand that all fossil fuels be left in the ground and to stress that the time has come to take action. The movement has been set up to provide a peaceful response to the current global crisis and seeks to accelerate the transition toward renewable energy and thus stop governments from dragging their heels. **The Break Free from Fossil Fuels movement is not about any one particular person or organisation, but is a process of collectively standing up, on a global scale, to give voice to the worldwide opposition to fossil fuels.**

The protests ended with an act of civil disobedience in Germany, where over 3,500 people came together as part of the «Ende Gelände» (Here and No Further) campaign to block the Lusace lignite mine. This was the last in a series of wide-ranging and coordinated protests that were carried out across 12 countries. The actions started on 3 May in southern Wales where 300 people shut down work at the largest open-cast coal mine in the United Kingdom, Ffos-y-Fran. Most of the people taking part in this largest ever mass protest at a British coal mine had never been involved in climate action before. In the Philippines, some 10,000 people marched on the streets of Batangas to protest against the proposed construction of a 600MW coal-fired power plant and demand the cancellation of 27 similar projects in the country. In Colorado in the United States, hundreds of people disrupted an auction selling off public land for oil and gas drilling. Seven people held a sit-in, blocking access to the room where the auction was being held. More than 2,000 activists protested against the pollution being generated by the refineries in the North-West Pacific and shut down the rail line used to transport oil for three whole days, resulting in at least 52 arrests. In New Zealand, dozens of people blockaded the Christchurch, Wellington, Auckland and Dunedin branches of the ANZ bank over a period of several days to demand that the bank divest from fossil fuels. In Canada, over 800 people took action to surround the Kinder Morgan oil terminal on the Salish Coast. On land, activists locked messages onto the gates of the facility, staged a sit-in and painted a giant mural. On the water, a massive kayak flotilla was launched to swarm the oil terminal near the pipeline. In Ecuador, the Yasunidos group occupied nearly 500 hectares of land earmarked for the construction of the Refinería del Pacífico oil refinery, where Ecuador is planning on processing oil from the Yasuni National Park. Yasunidos planted trees in the area. In Turkey, local community leaders led a march of 2,000 people to a coal waste site in Aliağa where activists formed a human chain spelling out the word «Dur» ('stop' in Turkish).

Up to now, environmental NGOs have tended to just monitor the COPs each year, but there have been 21 COPs and greenhouse gas emissions have been steadily increasing. It is now time to take action and block the production sites as we have been doing. As long as governments do not act, we will act for them.
Nicolas Haeringer, 350.org

Break Free 2016, Ende Gelände «Keep it in the Ground» protest, Germany



© Ende Gelände/ 350.org

Break with Extractivism: Listen to Indigenous Peoples and Join Forces with Them in this Universal Cause

Indigenous peoples' traditional ways of life mean that their survival and welfare depend directly on their environment, which is why extractivism and its devastating impacts on their ecosystems have such a significant effect. In addition, the fact that the areas in which they live are often rich in natural resources, coupled with their marginal position in society, means that their rights are frequently disregarded. Thus, 50% of the world's gold comes from indigenous lands¹. Similarly, indigenous peoples are being particularly badly affected by the climate crisis, as are many people in rural areas who are also especially vulnerable. Violent weather events are on the rise, desertification is spreading, more and more arable land is being lost and it is becoming increasingly difficult to predict the weather and the seasons, which disrupts the stability of ecosystems and farming. People's livelihoods, environment-related cultural practices and the availability of traditional medicinal plants are severely under threat.

¹ Source: Red Amazónica de Información SocioAmbiental Georreferenciada (Raisg), Amazonia bajo presión, Sao Paulo, Instituto Socioambiental, 2012

However, indigenous peoples are not to be viewed as just helpless victims of a system in which they have little to no say. It is this refusal to be seen as victims that forms the basis of the action being carried out by the Pacific Climate Warriors, a group of indigenous activists from the Pacific Islands protesting against the use of fossil fuels as a way to stem the climate crisis, the devastating impacts of which they are experiencing at first hand. The **Pacific Climate Warriors** were formed following the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit in 2009, which extensively referred to "the small island states of the Pacific" as being the primary victims of climate change. The people of these islands were outraged at being refused the opportunity to speak out about their own situation. Their message was borne out of this frustration: "We are not drowning, we are fighting!"



Our fight against climate change is a fight for human rights: the right to feed ourselves, to have access to water, the right to live on our native land.

Pacific Climate Warriors

On 17 October 2014, 30 Pacific Climate Warriors from 12 Pacific Island countries blockaded the port of Newcastle in Australia – the largest coal port in the world – using their traditional canoes to stop coal ships from leaving and entering the port. The aim of the protest was to highlight the devastating impacts the fossil fuel industry is having on their islands and to show that the inhabitants of the Pacific Islands are not merely passive victims and refuse to let climate change destroy their homes. «We are also resilience, sheer courage and shared hope in the face of climate change! (...) We are a people who will fight to keep fossil fuels in the ground and to keep our island homes above water».

Rather than thinking of indigenous peoples only as victims, it would thus be more appropriate to harness their knowledge and extraordinary capacity for resilience. Governments, scientists, academics and civil society in general should all re-evaluate the role that indigenous communities can legitimately play in the search for solutions to climate change. For example, this could consist of ensuring they are fully involved in the international process to tackle climate change.

The current vulnerability of indigenous peoples gives us an insight into what our lives will be like in the future. Thus, we should neither put them on a pedestal nor ignore them for their radically different otherness; instead, we should join forces with them as they are the forerunners in the fight against extractivism. Indigenous protest movements

are tending to increasingly converge and gain the support of all those people whose lives depend on safeguarding the commons. The young activists of Idle No More in Canada refuse, as indigenous peoples, to be defined only by their ways of life and demand to be recognised as equal partners in discussions to ensure their voices are heard. Sacrifice zones are everywhere, as is opposition to these sacrifice zones. We also need to create a new relationship with nature and indigenous peoples can help us with this.

In most indigenous cosmologies, the world is experienced as the sum of a multitude of complementary and mutually indispensable parts. When taking the fruits of nature, it is important to give something back to maintain balance and harmony. The ties of reciprocity, complementarity and interdependence between humans and nature form the basis of these peoples' profound respect for nature and its balance. This is why so many indigenous peoples are opposed to extractivism, which is based on the western concept of nature as a reservoir of resources from which we can freely help ourselves. In this worldview, nature's value is based only on its usefulness to human beings. In contrast, in indigenous peoples' cosmology, nature has an intrinsic value that is not for us to define. The notion of balance is fundamental in this complex universe where everything is intertwined. Human life must not therefore upset this balance, for example through the feeling of omnipotence that accompanies destructive behaviours.



The community from Tavolo village in Papua New Guinea (13 December 2012)

© Greenpeace / John Novis

The diverse range and wealth of indigenous visions can thus all be used as tools to fight against extractivism. We will need to relinquish our understanding of progress and development, which divides nature up into resources to be exploited and sold and makes our quality of life contingent on financial markets and growth. «We need to abandon this anthropocentric arrogance in which humans believe it is up to them to decide what is of value¹».

What will our future be like if we let large multinationals steal it and treat nature like a commodity?

Julius Caesar Daguitan, «Indigenous Peoples' Vision for Tackling Climate Change» Conference,
2 December 2015, COP21

¹ Eduardo Gudynas, «La Pachamama des Andes : plus qu'une conception de la nature», RDL no. 4, March-April 2012*

Generally speaking, western institutions continue to dominate climate change policy. International negotiations predominantly focus on greenhouse gas production without ever examining the causes of this crisis, namely western society's development model that is now followed by all countries throughout the world. Addressing climate change must also include reviewing our resource management systems and, particularly, prioritising the management of the environmental commons and related human rights (right to water, right to a healthy environment, etc.). A global shift is required to tackle the causes of climate change, and not only its effects.

The Andean Concepts of Pachamama and Buen Vivir



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The Pachamama is a concept of nature that stems from Andean culture, particularly that of the Aymara, Quechua and Kichwa indigenous peoples. Pachamama is translated into English as Mother Earth; however, the two concepts are not exactly the same. In the Aymara language, Pacha means cosmos, the order of the universe. The Pachamama thus relates to the environment in which the community lives, with the community itself including not only humans, but also all non-human living things, such as animals and plants, as well as non-living things, such as hills and mountains, and the local spirits of the dead. These communities are thus bound up with their lands, which underpin their identity. The Pachamama therefore refers to a way of thinking in which we are an integral part of a social, ecological and territorial whole.

The concept of Buen Vivir, which is also rooted in pre-Colombian cultures, refers to a way of living in harmony with this complex environment that the concept of Pachamama defines. This is a way of living that respects the balance of nature and all the beings of which it is composed, both visible and invisible; that respects the principle of reciprocity and the balanced management of resources.



Indigenous peoples are among the first to warn against allowing the fight against climate change to be hijacked yet again by the market system directly responsible for the climate crisis. For these communities, climate change stems from the worldview that nature is a marketable commodity and thus they are highly critical of financial incentive-based responses, such as REDD+¹ and the creation of carbon markets².

¹ REDD (Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) is an international initiative coordinated by the UN that was launched in 2008. It aims to tackle climate change by protecting the forests, notably by rewarding countries that protect their forest regions. The mechanism thereby places a market value on the carbon stored in the standing forests. The forests are thus viewed as needing to be protected mainly because they prevent a certain quantity of greenhouse gas emissions from being released into the atmosphere.

² A carbon market is a market created from the trading of CO₂ emission allowances, similar to a stock market. It was created in 2005 by the Kyoto Protocol to encourage countries to reduce their CO₂ emissions and invest in cleaner energy technologies in order to tackle global warming. Emission

unit quotas are set for each country and those that have not used all their allowance can sell their excess emission units to countries that have exceeded their quotas. Each greenhouse gas emission unit equates to the emission of one tonne of carbon dioxide (CO₂). Thus, when a company buys a greenhouse gas emission unit, it is buying the right to pollute one tonne of CO₂. One of the main drawbacks of this system is that the sale price of emission units (which could more simply be described as «pollution licences») is too low, which encourages countries and companies to bulk buy so they can pollute entirely lawfully.

We need to recognise nature's inherent value as a common good that cannot be treated as a commodity, and as embodying rights that are complementary to human rights. These rights guarantee that a river can flow without being diverted and that a forest can grow freely and be self-regulating, etc. By demanding that their lands and sacred sites be respected as complete and living things, indigenous peoples open us up to other types of rights by requiring us to consider the natural balance as being the measure of all things. «Our children need a planet that is in good health, with clean air, water and food that comes from healthy soil. They cannot eat money, breathe or drink money. Without water, there is no life».

If indigenous peoples provide such strong inspiration for this, it is because they ask the essential questions that we have spent a long time avoiding: what life do we want? What is true wealth?

One possible way out of the impasse in which we currently find ourselves is to draw inspiration from indigenous peoples in order to move to a post-extractive society and develop a non-predatory method of managing resources, and also to join forces with them

in the universal fight against the destruction of our land and the commons. We need to progressively yet quickly swap our energy and consumption obsessed systems for structurally different societies that respect human rights and ecosystems. If indigenous peoples provide such strong inspiration for this, it is because they ask the essential questions that we have spent a long time avoiding: what life do we want? What is true wealth? What are our fundamental and non-negotiable values? Answering these questions will also set limits for the extractive model.

If you open fire on us, we are not going to stand idly by and watch you kill our families. So here, we will all kill each other. And I can tell you this: I am defending my family's life, the health of my people, our Mother Earth; but you, what are you going to die for?

An Achuar community leader's response to a police captain who had just told him he had received an order to open fire on the tribespeople blockading the oil facility operated by the Argentine oil company, Pluspetrol, in the region of Loreto – Rio Corrientes, Peru, 2006¹

¹ Cited in the publication written by Anna Bednik mentioned above, p.161*

Break Free 2016 in Anacortes, «Water is Sacred», Washington State



Conclusion

Failure to challenge the extractive model and its by-products (productivism, consumerism, the omnipotence of the multinationals and financial and economic collusion with the government, who no longer serves the public interest) helps only to expand the use of sacrifice zones and exacerbate the climate crisis. Indigenous peoples, who are calling on us to create a paradigm shift by halting activities that prey on natural resources, are pointing the way towards a post-extractive society and prompting us to ask the right questions about the world in which we wish to live, based on which values and with what forms of wealth. To ensure the world remains «habitable and lived in»¹, fossil fuels need to remain in the ground, the extraction of shale oils and gas and the mining of oil sands need to be banned.

The will of the people to lead this transition is essential. In order to raise mass opposition to these destructive projects, the public therefore needs to be provided with education, awareness-raising and information on the impacts of the current predatory natural resources model. However, there can also be no opposition if people are systematically excluded from energy and natural resource-related decision-making and discussions. The right to self-determination must be guaranteed by all governments, whose role is to

protect human rights and the public interest from economic players whose interests are at odds with these rights and principles. Thus, assessments of all projects should take human rights into account.

Should extractive companies be unable – or unwilling – to adopt this approach for fear it will harm their profits, governments must restrict their privileges and powers by introducing binding and effective legislation to protect people from impunity and human rights violations. Protecting your land and your family's future must no longer be considered a crime or be treated as such by the authorities. People's rights must take precedence over the rights of investors and multinationals; the rights of the people who live on the land must prevail over those who exploit it.

Here again, we can draw inspiration from indigenous peoples by traditionally protecting resources as a common good to be managed by a whole community, by demanding the right to self-determination, consultation and consent, and by refusing to allow nature and the environment to be turned into a commodity. Breaking free from extractivism will require us to change our way of thinking, which is something each of us can do by examining the role we play in this system and by taking back ownership of our way of life.

¹ Anna Bednik, p.171*



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Germany, Break Free, Ende Gelände demonstration, 14 May 2016



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Protecting the future of humanity and of our planet implies a paradigm shift, and a radical change in the way we manage our natural resources in order to pool them for the benefit of all, north and south countries alike.

Danielle Mitterrand

France Libertés, established in 1986 by Danielle Mitterrand, seeks to defend human rights and the global commons.

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No More Sacrifice Zones!

For Alternatives to Our Predatory Natural Resources Model

Our everyday reliance on new technologies and ‘indispensable’ items such as Smartphones hides a grim reality, that of the raw materials extraction industry whose activities have severe social, health and environmental repercussions. Behind the scenes of our consumer society, profit-motivated multinationals are violating the most basic of human rights with impunity and with the complicity of governments. Although natural resource extraction has always helped advance human civilisation, we have now reached a tipping point whereby, through global warming, the balance of the planet is under threat and democratic principles are at risk as the people that find themselves in the path of resource extraction projects are seen only as obstacles. This predatory system, which seems to know no ethical or physical bounds, is called extractivism.

Here, we explore the impacts and foundations of this system, which is based on excess and involves sacrificing ever greater and larger areas of land throughout the world without consulting the people who live there. Using new technology, it is becoming increasingly easier to detect previously inaccessible deposits of raw materials, meaning that no land anywhere is now safe. Tomorrow, it could be where you live. With this brochure, we want to ensure that the voices of indigenous peoples and communities are heard as, not only are they often the first victims of these activities but, through their determined opposition to attempts to turn nature and life into commodities, they can also encourage us to reassess our worldview.

The aim is to raise awareness and call on all people to come together to oppose extractivism by recognising the contribution of indigenous peoples, who are the forerunners in this universal fight to save our lands and the commons.

