



Research Report

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Committee: General Assembly 3

Student Officer: Jill Jager

Issue of: Ensuring the security of indigenous tribes in South America



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Forum: General assembly 3

Name: Jill Jager

Position: Deputy chair

Introduction



The safety of indigenous tribes in South America is something that has been jeopardized for quite some time now. Their living space has become smaller and smaller and it will keep getting smaller if measures will not be taken. This fact is not the only problem they face, uncontacted tribes are the most vulnerable people on earth and quite a few forceful influences are ranged against them. As mentioned before, their homes keep decreasing in size as a result of cattle ranchers, loggers and roads being built. They are also threatened by diseases missionaries, colonists and the western people, who are closing in, bring with them. Tribes also get disturbed when missionaries come to their homes, then they bring another culture with them.

Solving the issue of ensuring the safety of the tribes bothered by the problems mentioned above should be this committee's main focus.

Especially as the United Nations affirmed that indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, it is each and every country's responsibility to let them be and to keep their living spaces from being destroyed. Every country where this issue is an active problem should actively discuss in order to find a long-term solution. The UN also outed their concern that indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of their colonisation and dispossession of their lands and resources, thus preventing them from exercising their right to development.

Delegates should carefully read through all the relevant documents and already established treaties regarding the issue as this topic has already been discussed and tried to solve in different ways. Therefore, the resolutions should not just consist of repetitions but furthermore present solutions to implement and protect the already set regulations and guidelines.



Definition of Key Terms

Cattle ranchers

People who work at a farm consisting of a large tract of land along with facilities needed to raise livestock (especially cattle).

Loggers

People who cut down trees for wood.

Missionaries

People who have been sent to a foreign country to teach their religion to the people who live there.

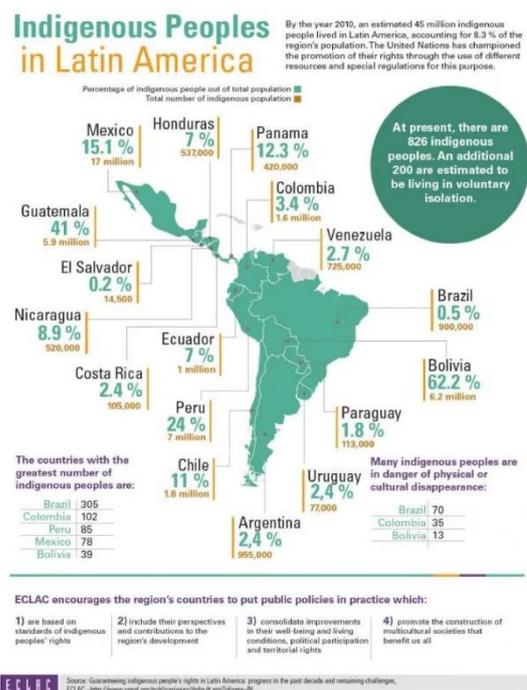
Self-determination

the possession of the political authority and legitimacy, as well as the enforcement power necessary to take effective, practical actions to fully materialize their rights to their lands, resources, cultural heritage and religious practises and to secure and protect their autochthonous institutions.

General Overview

The indigenous tribes of South America are the pre-Colombian peoples of South America and their descendants. It is believed that the first human populations of South America either arrived from Asia into North America or alternatively from Polynesia across the Pacific. The earliest acknowledged archaeological evidence for human habitation in South America dates to 14000 years ago. The offspring of these communities would become the indigenous tribes of South America.

Years before Christopher Columbus discovered the, now known as, Americas. The broad land was inhabited by these Native Americans. During the 16th and 17th centuries, as more explorers set out to





colonize their territory, the Native Americans responded in various stages, from cooperation to rebellion.

They proceeded to side with the French in multiple battles during the French and Indian war. They were later forced to leave their home under Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act, the Native American peoples were diminished in size and territory near the end of the 19th century.

In 2005 the UN's Sub-Commission on the promotion and protection of human rights sponsored a study on indigenous peoples and conflict resolution. Miguel Alfonso Martinez broke down the root causes of disharmony engaging indigenous tribes and two features that differentiates them from other conflicts.

Firstly, he discovered that indigenous peoples have a peculiar relationship with their lands, which cannot easily be converted to the Western concept of possession or legal title. For indigenous peoples land is not an acquisition. Their land exists for cooperative material and spiritual benefit and it must be upheld for future generations.

Secondly, indigenous tribes yearn to fully exercise their right to self-determination. Martinez describes self-determination as "the possession of the political authority and legitimacy, as well as the enforcement power necessary to take effective, practical actions to fully materialize their rights to their lands, resources, cultural heritage and religious practises and to secure and protect their autochthonous institutions."

Indigenous rights to land and to this self-determination are what non-indigenous people feel most threatened by, modern states still tend to think of indigenous lands to be for the taking, especially for national security purposes, to house prospering non-indigenous populations or to be exploited for wealth or development.

Indigenous tribes face a lot more than the issues mentioned above:

Cattle ranchers

Cattle ranching has destroyed, for example, nearly all the Akuntsu's (a tribe in Brazil) land. A lot of ancient peoples wiped out for standing in the way of 'progress'. Because no-one speaks their language, it is not fully known what happened, but when the tribe was contacted by Brazil's Indian affairs department FUNAI, they found out that the cattle ranchers had taken over all of their lands and that they massacred almost the whole tribe and that they bulldozed their houses to try and cover up the whole thing. Only five of the Akuntsu tribe survived. One of the men still has lead buried in his back from when the gunmen pursued him on horseback. He and the other survivors now live in a small chunk of forest.





Disease

Introduced diseases are the biggest killer of isolated indigenous tribes, who have not developed immunity to viruses and/or diseases other communities have been exposed to for hundreds of years.



More than 50% of the formerly uncontacted Murunahua tribe in Peru was wiped out resulting in oil exploration on their territory in the early 1980s. The same misfortune flooded the Murunahua in the 1990s, after illegal mahogany loggers forcibly contacted them.

One of the survivors lost an eye amid the first contact with the loggers, told a researcher: 'The disease came when the loggers made contact with us, although we didn't know what a cold was then. The disease killed half of us.'

Missionaries

The main goal of a missionary is to convert people to Christianity. They try to do this with as many people as possible, therefore also indigenous tribes. By doing this, the missionaries bring another culture to the culture of the tribes and by doing this, indigenous tribes start losing their own culture and getting more involved in ours. This is also affecting their safety. Especially because missionaries try to convert them at whatever cost to the tribal peoples' own health and wishes.

Evangelical Protestant missionaries built a village in one of the most remote parts of the Amazon in Peru, with the main goal of composing a connection with an uncontacted tribe living in that region. The missionaries succeeded in making contact with four people from the tribe: three women and one man. The man, Hipa, explained to us his first contact: 'I was eating peanuts when I heard the missionaries coming in a motorboat. When I heard the motorboat's engine running, I said to myself, 'What's happening? A motorboat! People are coming!' When we saw them, we went and hid deeper in the undergrowth. The missionaries called, 'Come out! Come out!'

Colonists

In Brazil, there are only a few indigenous tribes remaining, the Awá are one of them. They call the forests of the Eastern Amazon their home. The Awá are bordered by enormous agro-industrial projects, cattle ranchers and colonist arrangements. One of the men of the Awá, To'o, explains how colonisation is destroying their land and way of life:

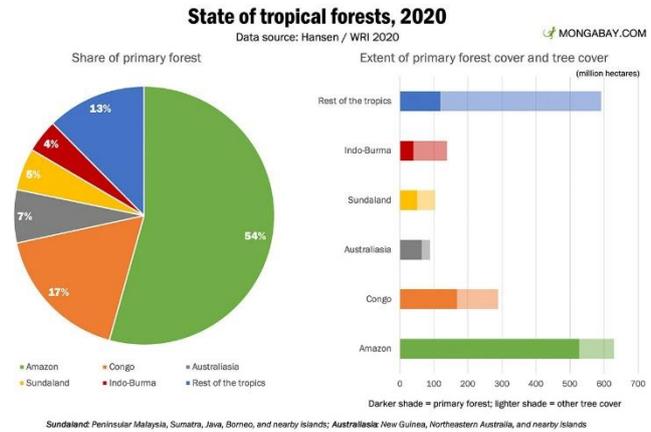
'If the Awá Indians have to leave their land, it will be very difficult. We can't live anywhere else because we don't know how to live like white people who can survive in deforested areas. For years, we have been fleeing up these rivers, with the whites chasing us, cutting all our forest.'



Loggers

Deforestation has been an issue for quite some time now and indigenous tribes are the ones who suffer the most. Many areas inhabited by these tribes, who haven't made contact with the rest of the world, are being illegally invaded by loggers. The presence of the loggers often brings them in contact with the tribal people; many of whom have perished because of the diseases introduced by the loggers. Some have even been killed.

The situation is specifically pressing in Peru. Areas populated by uncontacted Indians are also home to some of the last commercially viable mahogany stands in the world and illegal loggers have been plundering these areas at will, taking lack of any effective state regulation.



Roads

The Panará community of Brazil numbered between 350 and 400 people in 1970 and they lived in five villages with complex geometrical designs, surrounded by enormous gardens. In the early 1970s, a major highway was bulldozed through their land. It soon proved to be devastating. Road builders seduced Indians with alcohol from the forest and prostituted some of the women. Soon, plague waves swept through the tribe, killing Panaras. The survivors were airlifted to Xingu Park during an emergency procedure, where even more died. Soon, there were only 69 Panaras left.

Major Parties Involved

The United Nations

The United Nations adopted a declaration on the right of indigenous peoples, supporting indigenous peoples in the protection of their rights, of responsibility for legal titling etc. They are very keen on upholding this declaration and making sure countries are respecting the rights of all their inhabitants. 'Indigenous peoples are the moral compass of humanity', a special UN General Assembly meeting said.

Brazil

In Brazil, indigenous peoples are still struggling to find freedom, they continue to face discrimination, marginalization and major challenges in enjoying their basic rights. Indigenous Brazilians are suffering inequalities most.

Timeline of Key Events



- 1970 A major highway was bulldozed through the land of the Panará people.
- 1980 More than 50% of the previously uncontacted Nahua tribe were wiped out by disease, following oil exploration on their land.
- 1982 Missionaries started dropping gifts in the Zo'é's villages.
- 1987 Those missionaries contacted the tribe, followed by the death of 45 people, because of epidemics of flu, malaria and respiratory diseases transmitted by the missionaries. As the Zo'é's health suffered, they began to lose their self-sufficiency and became dependant on the missionaries for everything.
- 1990 Almost the whole Maranhua tribe suffered the same fate as the Nahua tribe after forcibly being contacted by illegal mahogany loggers.
- 1994 The surviving Panará started to get part of their land back, after it was taken away from them to build a highway.
- 1995 Brazil's Indian affairs department FUNAI contacts the Akuntu tribe to find out what happened that cattle ranchers massacred almost all the tribe.
- 1997 The Panará tribe sued the Brazilian government for the appalling conditions it had conflicted on them . A judge found the Brazilian state guilty of causing 'death and cultural harm'. The state had to pay the tribe \$540000 in compensation.

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

- United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples: Indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples; they contribute to the diversity and



richness of civilizations and cultures and they should be free from discrimination of any kind. The UN also recognized the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources.

Possible Solutions

- To tackle the issue of indigenous peoples being unsafe, we need to make sure their lands remain untouched by loggers and cattle ranchers and such.
- Delegates should make sure that, with a shift in the country's leadership, the rights of their indigenous peoples do not change.
- It should be made sure that people do not try to seek contact with these tribes to sustain their own cultures and traditions.

Appendix/Appendices

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