



LAND AND RIGHTS WATCH

2024 REPORT





PANAP
Land & Rights Watch
2024 Report

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Introduction

LAND AND RIGHTS: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES UNDER SIEGE

By Arnold Padilla, PANAP Deputy Executive Director



Photo: Residents of Riew, Geku & Boleng villages in Arunachal Pradesh, India held a large demonstration with the slogan 'No Dam, No Survey' at Parong village – one of the three proposed sites for the 11,000-megawatt Upper Siang hydropower project along the Siang river.

In 2024, PAN Asia Pacific's (PANAP) Land & Rights Watch report monitored nine Indigenous Peoples who were killed in relation to land conflicts and struggles. Ninety-eight were also arrested, while 38 were harassed or threatened. Around 2,400 were displaced due to land and resource grabbing.

Since we started keeping track of human rights violations in the context of the people's assertion of their rights to land and resources in 2017, PANAP has already monitored 238 Indigenous Peoples killed, 416 arrested, 290 harassed or threatened, and more than 35,000 displaced. These numbers comprise 36% of the total number of victims of killings with identified sectors, 13% for arrests, 36% for threats and harassment, and 46% of displacements. We are certain that these estimates are conservative, given that numerous incidents of human rights atrocities, especially in the remote areas, go unreported and unmonitored.

Nonetheless, these figures offer a glimpse into the severe political repression experienced by indigenous communities worldwide. However, they will never fully capture the harrowing stories of assassinations, massacres, aerial bombings, arbitrary detention on false charges, forced evacuations, and other horrifying attacks—ranging from the Lumad communities in the Philippines to the Amazonian peoples in Brazil.

Indigenous Peoples are among the most vulnerable, oppressed, and exploited groups—bearing the weight of a global political and economic system facing multiple crises. Global monopoly capitalism remains entrenched in a long-running recession that has lasted nearly two decades. This deep-rooted systemic economic crisis fuels increased competition for markets, resources, territories, and spheres of influence among the world's leading imperialist powers and largest transnational corporations (TNCs). Such ruthless inter-imperialist rivalry is accelerating the collapse of global biodiversity and causing unsustainable planetary warming. Meanwhile, the contest for control and profits among the most powerful monopoly capitalist nations and their TNCs is fueling wars and militarism, both between states and between governments and their own populations, resulting in a highly repressive political climate.

Worse, global monopoly capitalism is using the crises that it brought about through reckless plunder of the planet's resources to perpetuate further its inherently unsustainable, destructive, and exploitative development model built on capital accumulation, superprofit extraction, and monopoly expansion. The climate crisis, for instance, is being used to justify the massive physical, economic, and cultural displacement of numerous indigenous communities worldwide. Driven by profit-oriented, market-based "climate solutions", there is a growing demand for mining, infrastructure, renewable energy, and conservation projects that are often implemented without respect for the Indigenous Peoples' rights to their ancestral lands and territories. These resulted to grave violations of Indigenous Peoples' right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and their right to self-determination.

Carbon markets are turning indigenous lands into commodities on a large scale, enabling big corporations to keep emitting harmful greenhouse gases (GHGs). In Kenya's Mau Forest, the government has implemented a carbon offset program that has displaced an undetermined number of the Ogiek people from their ancestral lands.¹ About 80% of countries worldwide rely on carbon markets to meet climate goals, placing heavy pressure on indigenous territories.² The "30x30" initiative, which supposedly aims to protect 30% of lands/oceans by 2030, is funded by TNCs, major philanthropic entities, and development cooperation institutions like the USAID, and implemented by large international NGOs with corporate ties. This initiative is carrying out conservation projects that have expelled an estimated 15,000 Maasai pastoralists from their ancestral lands in Tanzania³ and forcibly removed several Maya communities from Mexico's Biosphere Reserve.⁴

Meanwhile, the transition to renewable energy is fueling a new wave of land grabbing that encroaches on indigenous resources. The global push to replace fossil fuels with renewables has ignited a mining boom for critical minerals like lithium, nickel, cobalt, and copper. Demand for these resources is expected to skyrocket—nickel demand alone could increase sevenfold by 2040—placing significant pressure on Indigenous Peoples lands where many of these deposits are

¹ Krystyna Swiderska, "Indigenous Peoples are the real solutions to the nature and climate crises," *International Institute for Environment and Development*, October 10, 2024, <http://bit.ly/4me3k8E>.

² Maria Parazo Rose, "Indigenous people rush to stop 'false climate solutions' ahead of COP29," *High Country News*, April 22, 2024, <http://bit.ly/4m5Xu9b>.

³ Swiderska, "Indigenous Peoples are the real solutions."

⁴ Pedro Laterra, "Indigenous lands are key to conserving biodiversity and mitigating climate change," *Renewable Matter*, February 20, 2025, <http://bit.ly/4orqRVO>.

located.⁵ Indigenous communities in Latin America's so-called "lithium triangle" (Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile), where 58% of the world's known lithium reserves are located, face tremendous pressure from mining companies. In Chile, for example, at least 3,000 people from the indigenous Atacameño communities may be forced to relocate if water scarcity worsens due to lithium mining.⁶

In the Philippines, the Marcos Jr. administration has been actively promoting mining as a pillar of economic growth, including so-called transition minerals like nickel and copper. It is estimated that mining tenements cover 20% of Philippine lands, and 25% of these are transition mineral zones that overlap with indigenous territories and biodiversity hotspots. Even before the current surge in demand for transition minerals amid the worsening climate crisis, approximately 211,000 hectares of Philippine forests have already been lost to mining, disproportionately impacting Indigenous Peoples who manage 75% of the country's remaining forests.⁷

Additionally, many renewable energy projects are being developed on ancestral lands. These large-scale "green" energy infrastructures, such as mega dams, large hydropower projects, massive solar and wind farms, and bioenergy facilities, have a substantial land footprint that conflicts with customary land uses and leads to displacement. It was reported that over the past decade, more than 200 allegations of abuse have been made by renewable energy companies, including land and water grabs and rights violations against indigenous communities.⁸ Using the guise of climate mitigation, investors and funders exploit political support and incentives for green energy, such as simplified and expedited permitting processes, including the violation of the FPIC. As a result, traditional sources of food, livelihoods, and ancestral homes of numerous indigenous communities are being destroyed, as seen with mega dams and big hydropower projects in the Mekong region, such as Cambodia's Lower Sesan 2, which displaced

indigenous Bunong and other riverine communities⁹, and large solar parks in India that violated Adivasi communities' land rights.¹⁰

Mining (including for transition minerals) and energy projects (including large-scale renewable infrastructure) are leading sectors where numerous human rights violations linked to land conflicts and disputes occur. In 2024, PANAP monitored 11 cases of human rights abuses in mining and another 11 in energy projects. These two sectors make up nearly 43% of all recorded cases with identified industries. Militarization frequently occurs in rural and indigenous communities involved in mining and energy efforts, serving to protect infrastructure, facilitate construction, and suppress local opposition.

Military presence and operations create conditions for grave rights abuses against Indigenous Peoples to happen, often with impunity. Military offensives – in most cases under the hidden aim of paving the way for large private investments in resource-rich but restive rural areas, including indigenous lands – also end up deepening poverty and hunger by destroying or disrupting livelihoods. Operation Kaagar, a large-scale military offensive in central India, for instance, has not only killed hundreds of Adivasi people but also led to the construction of hundreds of security camps that have dispossessed them of their ancestral lands and deprived them of access to livelihood resources.¹¹ There are also reports that in conflict areas affecting farmers and Indigenous Peoples, military forces are preventing the delivery of humanitarian aid, in violation of human rights and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) principles. In the Philippines, for example, a humanitarian team investigating possible human rights violations linked to the military's aerial bombardment of a rural village reported being subjected to surveillance and intimidation by suspected military personnel.¹²

Despite mounting repression, dispossession, and

⁵ ESCR-Net, "Input to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Climate Change addressing human rights in the life cycle of renewable energy and critical minerals," *ESCR-Net.org*, April 29, 2025, <http://bit.ly/4lhMqR>.

⁶ Barinia Montoya, "As lithium mining bleeds Atacama salt flat dry, Indigenous communities hit back," *Mongabay*, December 20, 2024, <http://bit.ly/4mkuv1q>.

⁷ Raymund B. Villanueva, "Report: Marcos gov't mining rush fuels attacks on indigenous communities," *Kodao Productions*, December 15, 2024, <http://bit.ly/3H5n6UJ>.

⁸ Sarah LaBrecque, "Why solar and wind developers ignore indigenous land claims at their peril," *Reuters*, April 6, 2023, <http://bit.ly/4mtPzIO>.

⁹ Carlo Manalansan, Bulatlat, "Cambodia: Indigenous communities displaced by Lower Sesan 2 dam continue to struggle for livelihoods and remedies," *Business and Human Rights Resource Centre*, August 8, 2024, <http://bit.ly/4fwdzTk>.

¹⁰ "300 MW solar plant sealed in Khandwa by district administration," *The Times of India*, July 20, 2025, <http://bit.ly/4lw92li>.

¹¹ Vivek Bhoomi, "Telangana people's organizations demand end to Operation Kagaar in Chhattisgarh," *The Siasat Daily*, January 29, 2025, <http://bit.ly/3Us0Jf3>.

¹² International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP), "During International Humanitarian Law Month, AFP bombs civilian communities in Quezon province," *SCOOP*, August 7, 2025, <http://bit.ly/45fgDzF>.

environmental destruction, Indigenous Peoples remain at the forefront of the struggle for land, life, and the planet's future. From the Indigenous communities resisting criminalization and bombings in the Philippines to the Maasai resisting displacement in Tanzania, to the Atacameño safeguarding water in Chile's lithium triangle, their courage reflects a vision of justice grounded in the assertion of collective rights. Their resistance is not only a defiance of global monopoly capitalism but also a declaration of an

alternative path—one that honors the deep interconnection between people and nature, of the values of common good, communal welfare, and care for the future generation. Through unity and solidarity, Indigenous Peoples affirm that their right to self-determination is inalienable and fought for, not privileges to be granted. Their continuing struggle carries the hope that the future can be reclaimed—both for themselves and for all. ■



In Numbers

By Yanna Ibarra, PANAP Food Sovereignty Program Assistant

Figure 1
Number of cases and victims of human rights violations in relation to land conflict and struggles in 2024, by sector

Total number of cases:
103

Total number of victims:
6,399

- ▶ Indigenous Peoples 2,545
- ▶ Farmers 446
- ▶ Land Activists 132
- ▶ Unspecified 3,276

Killings

Cases
23

Indigenous Peoples
9

Farmers
12

Land Activists
10

Unspecified
11

TOTAL
42

Arrests

Cases
55

Indigenous Peoples
98

Farmers
264

Land Activists
116

Unspecified
1,076

TOTAL
1,554

Threats

Cases
20

Indigenous Peoples
38

Farmers
7

Land Activists
6

Unspecified
69

TOTAL
120

Displacement

Cases
5

Indigenous Peoples
2,400

Farmers
163

Land Activists
0

Unspecified
2,120

TOTAL
4,683

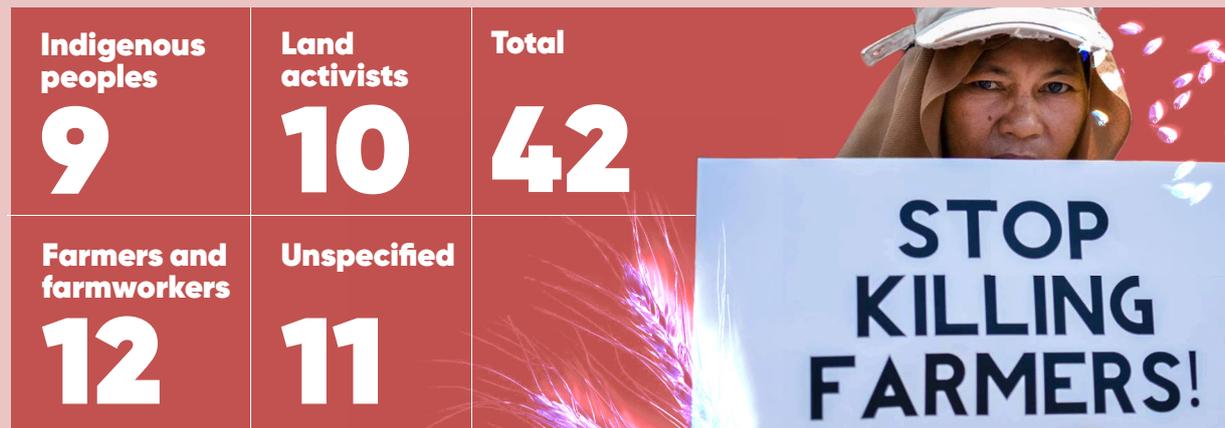


In 2024, the criminalization of land rights struggles through arrests, detention, and legal persecution accounted for the highest number of human rights violations related to land conflicts. **Figure 1** shows 55 cases and 1,554 victims, while killings take the second spot in the list of most common atrocities, with 23 cases and 42 victims. Meanwhile, 120 victims were involved in 20 cases of threats, harassment, and physical assault. Finally, a total of 4,683 victims were recorded in five incidents of displacement.

Many of the victims were Indigenous Peoples, totalling about 2,545. Farmers and farmworkers accounted for 446, and land activists for 132. Reports did not identify the remaining 3,276 victims.

See **Annex 1** for the regional and per-country breakdown of each monitored violation.

Figure 2. Number of victims of killings in relation to land conflicts and struggles, by sector



Farmers and farmworkers bore the brunt of land-related killings in 2024, with 12 victims out of the total 42, as shown in **Figure 2**. They were followed closely by land activists and Indigenous Peoples, with 9 and 10 killings respectively. Reports did not specify from which sector 11 of the victims came.

See **Annex 2** for the per-sector breakdown of each monitored killing.

Table 1. Number of victims of killings in relation to land conflicts and struggles, by country

ASIA	10	Palestine	1
		Philippines	9
LATIN AMERICA	29	Argentina	3
		Brazil	3
		Ecuador	2
		Honduras	1
		Mexico	18
		Peru	2
AFRICA	3	Guinea-Bissau	2
		Uganda	1

Latin America recorded the highest number of killings globally, as illustrated in **Table 1**. Mexico remained the most affected country since 2023, with 18 deaths reported. Killings in this country are mostly linked to resistance against corporate and illegal mining and logging, such as the case of the volunteer forest defenders Jose Angel Pelcastre, Ventura Ojeda, and Florentino Castro from San Andres Hueyacatitla ejido in Puebla, Mexico. They were killed, presumably by armed loggers, while digging a ditch to prevent the perpetrators' entry to the forests.¹³

Months later, their murders were followed by the assassination of their community leader, Marcos Sanchez Perea, whose death is believed to be likewise connected to the community's defense against illegal logging in the forests. The lack of government forest protection measures drives communities to protect the forests on their own initiative, leaving them defenseless against the risks.¹⁴

On the other side of the globe, the Philippines recorded the highest number of killings in Asia. While the murders are not explicitly linked to any industry based on our monitored reports, they took place on islands covered by a government directive to end 'lawless violence', a move aimed at putting an end to the country's decades-long armed resistance driven by unresolved land conflicts throughout the archipelago. The military campaign is seen to create a conducive environment for investors in mining, plantations, energy infrastructure, and other priority projects of the government. As PANAP's partner, peasant movement Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) said, the Marcos Jr. administration is accountable for the escalation of the climate of fear and impunity in the countryside, including the spate of farmer killings in the provinces of Masbate and Negros last year.¹⁵

We monitored three victims of reported land-related killings in the African region. Two of the unnamed individuals were killed when a demonstration against a Chinese mining firm was met by violence from local security forces in Konkoi, Guinea-Bissau. One male in his mid-20s was fatally shot in the chest, while a two-year-old child died after inhaling tear gas used by the authorities. The protesters opposed the operation of the mining firm due to the displacement and environmental degradation it would cause to the affected communities.¹⁶ Chinese mining companies have expanded their operations in Guinea, drawn by the country's rich deposits of bauxite, iron ore, and gold. Despite these abundant natural resources, Guinea remains one of the world's least developed countries.¹⁷

Figure 3. Number of victims of human rights violations in relation to land conflicts and struggles, by alleged perpetrator



¹³ CEMDA. "Report on the Situation of Environmental Human Rights Defenders, Persons and Communities, in Mexico." 2024, https://cemda.org.mx/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CEMDA_INFORME2024_INGLES_DIGITAL_compressed.pdf

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Lumiguen, Axell Swen and Trisha Anne Nabor. "Nagpapakain sa bayan, dinadahas, pinapatay." *Pinoy Weekly*, Oct. 2024, <https://pinoyweekly.org/2024/10/nagpapakain-sa-bayan-dinadahas-pinapatay/>

¹⁶ Jimoh, Abdullahi. "Two Killed in Guinea Protests Against Chinese Mining Firm." *News Central Africa*, <https://newscentral.africa/two-killed-in-guinea-protests-against-chinese-mining-firm/>

¹⁷ "Guinea-Bissau's Mineral Resources." *EBSCO Research Starters*, <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/mining-and-mineral-resources/guinea-bissaus-mineral-resources>

Figure 3 shows that state-sponsored violence remains the primary driver of recorded human rights violations related to land conflicts and struggles. Police, military, and paramilitary personnel were reportedly involved in 80 cases of human rights violations, accounting for more than 6,000 victims.

Meanwhile, private security personnel of companies and individuals involved in land conflicts with rural communities were implicated in 12 cases with 357 victims. Monitored reports did not identify the perpetrators in 11 cases that involved 22 victims.

Figure 4
Number of cases and victims of human rights violations in relation to land conflicts and struggles, by industry

Plantation

Cases Victims
16 1,989

Mining

Cases Victims
11 89

Energy

Cases Victims
11 1,115

Infrastructure development

Cases Victims
7 359

Tourism

Cases Victims
2 9

Logging

Cases Victims
4 6

Unspecified

Cases Victims
52 2,832

TOTAL

Cases Victims
103 6,399



Figure 4 shows that the plantation sector is accountable for most of the incidents, with 16 cases impacting 1,989 victims. From the thousands displaced in Preah Vihear, Cambodia, to those harassed and legally persecuted in Indonesia, these cases compose the stories of violence perpetrated by plantation giants.^{18,19} Additionally, mining is responsible for 11 cases involving 89 victims. Latin American and African soils bear witness to the blood from the victims of both illegal and corporate mining interests.^{20,21}

The series of mass arrests and detention in Uganda due to opposition to large-scale oil projects, including the plan to build the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP), the world's longest heated crude oil pipeline, by France's Total and China National Offshore Oil Corporation Ltd. (CNOOC,) exemplifies the grave violations caused by the energy sector's pursuit for profit.²² In August 2024 alone, 47 individuals were arrested in the country while they were engaged in a peaceful rally against the EACOP project.²³ In total, this industry accounts for 11 cases with 1,115 victims worldwide.

Meanwhile, infrastructure development was reported as behind 7 cases of human rights violations, impacting 359 victims. One of those cases displaced a community in Zimbabwe when 80 families were evicted from their land to give way to a Chinese-owned cement plant.²⁴

Other sectors that showed concerning patterns in human rights violations related to land dispossession and struggle are logging operations, which recorded four cases affecting six individuals, while tourism ventures were implicated in two instances of arrests of those opposing the projects.

Due to reporting constraints, 52 out of the 103 recorded land-related human rights cases could not be attributed to specific actors, indicating potential underreporting of violations.

Figure 5. Number of identified women victims of human rights violations in relation to land conflicts and struggles, by violation



Women land defenders continued to face attacks on their human rights in 2024. **Figure 5** illustrates that the most common violations that women face are arrest, detention, and legal persecution. Among the high-profile cases is that of Filipino activists Jonila Castro and Jhed Tamano. In 2023, they were abducted by state forces. Philippine security officials held a press conference wherein the two were ordered to publicly admit membership in the revolutionary group New People's Army (NPA)—a tactic commonly deployed by local security forces to criminalize grassroots resistance. Instead of complying, the two women courageously exposed the state forces' coercion to sign an affidavit falsely claiming that they were part of the group. Though eventually freed, the reprisals continued: in 2024, a local court issued arrest warrants against them for grave oral defamation.²⁵

Eight women faced threats, harassment, and physical assault in connection with land disputes, while nine were killed. Among the fatalities was Hanan Abdel Rahman Abu Salama from Palestine, who was

¹⁸ "Fact Sheet: Forced Evictions in Cambodia." Oct. 2024, <https://sithi.org/medias/files/projects/sithi/publication/fact-sheet-on-forced-evictions-eng-final-20241007-083125.pdf>

¹⁹ Baïtti, Jaka Hendra. "Konflik Lahan Masyarakat Kapa dan Perusahaan Sawit Wilmar Memanas." *Mongabay Indonesia*, 8 Oct. 2024, <https://mongabay.co.id/2024/10/08/konflik-lahan-masyarakat-kapa-dan-perusahaan-sawit-wilmar-memanas/>

²⁰ CEMDA. "Report on the Situation of Environmental Human Rights Defenders, Persons and Communities, in Mexico." 2024, https://cemda.org.mx/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/CEMDA_INFORME2024_INGLES_DIGITAL_compressed.pdf

²¹ Cultural Survival. "In Memoriam: Remembering 41 indigenous defenders who were murdered in 2024 in Latin America." *Cultural Survival*, March 4, 2025, <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/memoriam-remembering-41-indigenous-defenders-who-were-murdered-2024-latin-america>

²² "Oil in Uganda: Serious human rights abuses and escalating threats as project development enters new phase." *FIDH*, December 12, 2024, <https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/business-human-rights-environment/business-and-human-rights/oil-uganda-human-rights-eacop-kingfisher-tilenga-report-2024>

²³ "Uganda: Crackdown on activists protesting against large-scale oil projects." *FIDH*, 3 Sept. 2024, <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/Africa/uganda/uganda-crackdown-on-activists-protesting-against-large-scale-oil>

²⁴ Machamire, Farayi. "Villagers protest cement project ahead of Hurungwe Council meeting." *Zimbabwe News Now*, December 10, 2024, <https://www.zimlive.com/villagers-protest-cement-project-ahead-of-hurungwe-council-meeting/>

²⁵ Parungao, Adrian. "Bulacan court orders arrest of 2 environmental activists." *Inquirer.net*, February 20, 2024. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1907444/castro-and-tamano-arrest-warrants>

shot and killed by Israeli forces while tending to her family's olive grove in Faqoua village, near Jenin in the occupied West Bank.²⁶ The remaining murder victims were five from Mexico, two from the Philippines, and one from Brazil.

These records came from reports where gender-disaggregated data is available. The number of women victims may increase, as high-casualty cases did not specify the victims' identities.

See **Annex 3** for the per-country breakdown of monitored violations against women.

(Editor's note: Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestine is the world's largest land grab, marked by mass killings and displacement. But for the purposes of this report, we are only including reported cases of targeted attacks against farmers and not all Israeli atrocities in the context of the genocide.) ■

Unrelenting attacks on Indigenous Peoples: Violence, injustice, and forced evictions in 2024

The year 2024 saw no improvement in the situation of Indigenous Peoples worldwide. Indigenous communities faced systematic persecution, with 98 individuals subjected to arrests and legal persecution, 38 faced threats, harassment, and physical assault, and nine murdered in defense of their ancestral lands. Additionally, one mass displacement case affected 600 indigenous families in Kenya. The stories below represent some of the most severe cases from the past year.

Killings

Pataxó Hãhãhãi community's Maria de Fátima Muniz (known as Nega Pataxó) was killed, while her brother Chief Nailton Muniz sustained severe injuries after being shot by a militia called Zero Invasão in Bahia state in Brazil. The armed group, founded by prominent ranch owner Luiz Uaquim, attacked the Pataxó people while calling for the 'repossession' of their land.^{27, 28}

Pataxó Hãhãhãi's history is one of resistance and struggle for land dating back to the 19th century. Their long struggle yielded legal victory in 2012 when the Supreme Court granted them their rightful possession of their territories. However, their situation has not improved, and brutal attacks have escalated. The introduction of the legal thesis Marco Temporal that seeks to block legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples' ancestral claims to their lands, and the prevalence of militia groups



²⁶ "Israeli forces shot dead Palestinian woman harvesting olives." *Al Mayadeen English*, October 17, 2024. <https://english.almayadeen.net/news/politics/israeli-forces-shot-dead-palestinian-woman-harvesting-olives>

²⁷ Krenak, Edson. "The killing of Pataxó spiritual leader and Activist Exposes Violence of the Law Against Indigenous Peoples in Bahia, Brazil." *Cultural Survival*. January 26, 2024. <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/killing-pataxo-spiritual-leader-and-activist-exposes-violence-law-against-indigenous-peoples>

²⁸ Milanez, Felipe, et al. "Attack on Pataxó Hãhãhãi Indigenous leaders must be investigated (commentary)." *Mongabay*, 9 Feb. 2024. <https://news.mongabay.com/2024/02/attack-on-pataxo-hahahai-indigenous-leaders-must-be-investigated-commentary/>



operating under the direction of landlords, represent the significant challenges they and other Indigenous Peoples in Brazil must overcome.

Arrests and legal persecution

In February 2024, David Hernández Salazar of San Blas Atempa in Mexico was sentenced to 46 and a half years in prison—his crime: opposing the government's megaproject Interoceanic Corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (CIIT).²⁹ The CIIT is a massive trade and logistics zone being built on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec as an alternative route to the Panama Canal. The Mexican government promotes the isthmus as an investment hotspot featuring 10 tax-free industrial parks plus the port facilities, wide highways, new gas pipelines, and expansion of rail links. The area was placed under the supervision of the Secretary of the Marines, an elite military branch. Moreover, the CIIT has been declared a matter of “national security and public interest”.³⁰

The national government purchased 331 hectares of communal land for the industrial park in San Blas Atempa. The local community rejected the expropriation and complained of the lack of free, prior, and informed consent. A local court sided with them and granted the community a writ of protection. Despite the court ruling in favor of the Indigenous Peoples, the state crackdown escalated. Salazar was slapped with criminal charges along with 17 others as reprisal for defending their ancestral lands.³¹ Earlier, in January 2024, nine Indigenous Peoples from the Santa María Mixtequilla territory were arbitrarily detained in the context of demonstrations against the construction of a development zone that forms part of the CIIT.³²

Harassment

In July 2024, around 30 armed men, wielding sharp weapons and guns, attacked a house owned by Sihaporas Indigenous Peoples in Dumun Buntu Pangaturan, Sihaporas Village, Simalungun Regency, North Sumatra in Indonesia. They harassed and intimidated 12 members of the indigenous community,

²⁹ "Mexico: Sentence against human rights defender David Hernández Salazar, member of the Assembly of Indigenous Peoples of the Isthmus in Defence of Land and Territory (APIIDTT)." *Front Line Defenders*, February 13, 2024. <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/statement-report/mexico-sentence-against-human-rights-defender-david-hernandez-salazar>

³⁰ Paley, Dawn. "Inside Mexico's Controversial 'Trans-Isthmus Corridor' Megaproject." *Truthdig*, 3 June 2024. <https://www.truthdig.com/articles/move-over-panama-canal-inside-mexicos-controversial-trans-isthmus-corridor/>

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² "Mexico: Stop the attacks against indigenous land and territory defenders in the context of the Interoceanic Corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec megaproject." *Frontline Defenders*, January 30, 2024, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/statement-report/mexico-stop-attacks-against-indigenous-land-and-territory-defenders-context>

including two children, abducted six people, and burned down the house before leaving.³³

Authorities took five of the six kidnapped individuals to the police station. The individuals are accused of occupying land that the government granted to pulp company PT Toba Pulp Lestari (TPL), which is expanding its eucalyptus plantation in the area. Earlier, in March, Sorbatua Siallagan, leader of the Ompu Umbak Siallagan indigenous community at Dolok Parmonangan, Simalungun regency, was arrested for allegedly occupying forests unlawfully.³⁴ He was released in October after sustained campaigns by grassroots organizations with the support of other indigenous groups and students.³⁵

Displacement

Around 600 families of the indigenous Sengwer were violently evicted from their communities in Elgeyo, Marakwet County, inside the Embobut Forest, Kenya.³⁶ The eviction is part of the "Operation Imarisha Misiko" ("Strengthen the Forest") pushed by local authorities to supposedly rid the forest of illegal activities, including encroachment by so-called "illegal settlers," which for the government includes Indigenous Peoples.³⁷

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) has assigned 170 officers for a month-long operation aimed at forcibly removing members of the Sengwer community and other settlers from forest land. Many families, now living in temporary camps across parts of Marakwet East Sub-County, describe the repeated evictions as a humanitarian crisis, leaving them without adequate shelter or food and in poor sanitary conditions that could trigger outbreaks of infectious diseases. ■



³³ "Konflik Berlarut dengan PT TPL Berujung Penangkapan Masyarakat Adat Sihaporas." *Mongabay Indonesia*, 23 July 2024. <https://mongabay.co.id/2024/07/23/konflik-berlarut-dengan-pt-tpl-berujung-penangkapan-masyarakat-adat-sihaporas/>

³⁴ Pellegrini, Giuditta. "Criminalized for defending land: Indigenous struggles in North Sumatra." *FairPlanet*, 6 Sept. 2024. <https://www.fairplanet.org/story/criminalized-for-defending-land-indigenous-struggles-in-north-sumatra/>

³⁵ Simanjuntak, Maruli. "Sorbatua Siallagan Pasca Bebas: Ini Putusan yang Adil Bagi Saya." *AMAN*, 21 Oct. 2024. <https://www.aman.or.id/news/read/1936>

³⁶ Bii, Barnabas. "Government defends decision to evict Sengwer community from Embobut forest." *Nation Africa*, May 9, 2024. <https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/elgeyo-marakwet/government-defends-decision-to-evict-sengwer-community--4617338>

³⁷ IPMSDL. "Condemn the Ongoing Evictions in Embobut Forest." *IPMSDL*, May 18, 2024. <https://www.ipmsdl.org/statement/condemn-the-ongoing-evictions-in-embobut-forest/>

Ogiek People's Fight for Mau Forest

By International Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL)

The Ogiek Peoples have returned to the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights this June 4, seeking the implementation of the Court's rulings from 2017 and 2022. The decisions recognized the Ogiek's rights to their ancestral forest lands in Kenya's Mau Forest, but justice remains elusive. The International Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL) have expressed full solidarity with the community in their ongoing struggle.

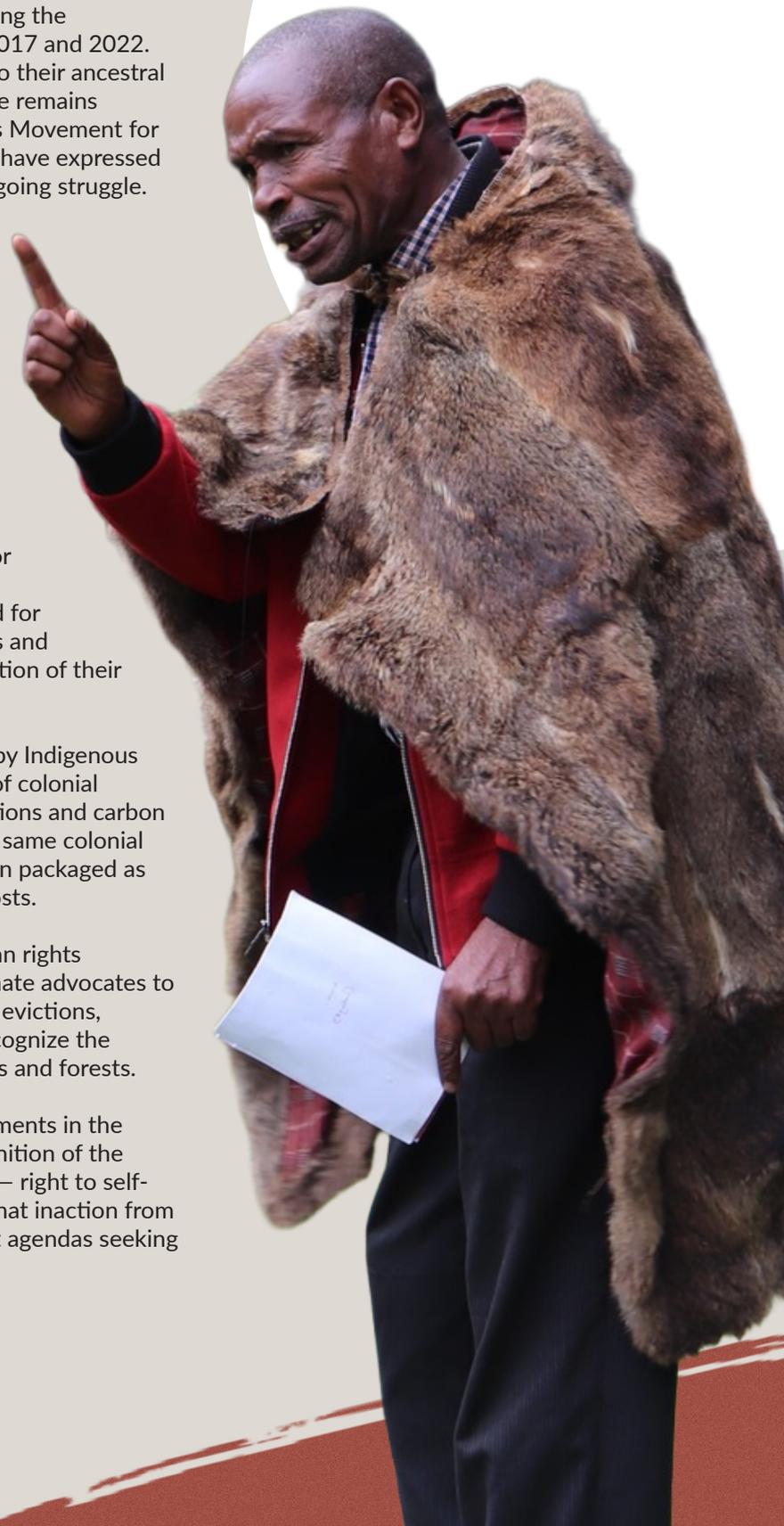
Despite the legal victories, the Ogiek continue to face forced evictions, house burnings, and systemic displacement. In November 2023, over 700 individuals were forcibly removed from Sasimwani village, Narok County, as Kenyan authorities — including the Kenya Forest Service and Kenya Wildlife Service — demolished homes and set them on fire.

The Kenyan government has also pursued initiatives to utilize Ogiek ancestral forests for carbon offset programs promoted as climate solutions. These projects have been criticized for commodifying Indigenous Peoples' territories and worsening the dispossession and marginalization of their rightful stewards.

The Ogiek struggle is part of a broader fight by Indigenous Peoples resisting land grabbing in the name of colonial conservation and profit. The continuing evictions and carbon market schemes are seen as two sides of the same colonial coin, comparable to how mega dams are often packaged as green energy solutions despite their social costs.

IPMSDL is calling on African and global human rights institutions, Indigenous movements, and climate advocates to demand that the Kenyan government halt all evictions, respect the African Court's decisions, and recognize the Ogiek's stewardship over their ancestral lands and forests.

The group says it will be monitoring developments in the hearings and continues to demand full recognition of the Ogiek Peoples — and all Indigenous Peoples — right to self-determination and ancestral lands. It warns that inaction from states benefits only corporate and imperialist agendas seeking profit from false climate solutions. ■



LAND, WATER, LIFE: Resist the Flood of Injustice, Stop the Jalaur Mega Dam

By International Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL)

The Jalaur River Multi-Purpose Project (JRMP) Phase II, commonly known as the Jalaur Mega Dam, is a large-scale infrastructure project funded by the Korean Export-Import Bank (KEXIM) and constructed by Daewoo Engineering & Construction Co. Ltd.

The dam is being built on the ancestral lands of the Tumandok people in Calinog, Iloilo of Panay Island, as part of the Philippine government's push for infrastructure development under the Build, Build, Build program. Despite the project's promises to boost agriculture through improved irrigation, flood control, and hydroelectric power generation, it poses significant threats to the environment, indigenous communities, and downstream populations.

The Tumandok, who have lived on the land for generations, have fiercely opposed the project, citing displacement, destruction of their ancestral lands, violation of their rights to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), desecration of their burial grounds and sacred sites, and the environmental risks associated with dam construction. The Philippine government has responded with militarization, harassment, and extrajudicial killings, culminating in the Tumandok Massacre in December 2020, where nine Tumandok leaders were killed for their opposition to the dam.

In addition to the threat to the Tumandok, the dam also presents a significant risk to downstream communities. The dam, which will hold 250 million cubic meters of water, could exacerbate flooding in the downstream areas, especially along the Jalaur River. Local experiences with the Moroboro Dam in Dingle, Iloilo, have already demonstrated the devastating effects that mismanagement of water levels can have on these communities, further highlighting the dangers posed by the Jalaur Mega Dam.

This campaign stands in defense of the Tumandok people and downstream communities threatened by the Jalaur Mega Dam. Funded by foreign interests and built on ancestral lands, the dam not only displaces indigenous families but also poses a serious risk of catastrophic flooding along the Jalaur



dam is planned for the Ulian River, along with two catch dams in the Tagbacan and Jayubo Rivers in the municipality of Lambunao, Iloilo. An 81-km high-line canal will connect the Jalaur and Ulian dams to the five existing irrigation systems.

The project did not push through in Lambunao because of the opposition of the

communities. In Calinog however, it pushes through and will directly submerge three barangays—Agcalaga, Masaroy, and Garangan. Indirectly, it will affect nine more barangays in the upstream areas, all of which are Indigenous Peoples' communities.



JRMP Phase 2

Phase 2 of the project was officially launched in 2012 under the administration of President Benigno Aquino III, though the Tumandok community had already begun opposing it as early as 2011. With a total budget of Php 11.2 billion, Php 8.96 billion (approximately \$207.88 million) will be funded through the Official Development Assistance (ODA) of the Korean government, with a loan agreement signed with the Korean Export-Import Bank on August 9, 2012.

The Philippine government will contribute Php 2.26 billion as its counterpart, marking this as the largest assistance provided by the Korean government to the Philippines through its Economic Development Cooperation Fund

(EDCF). The construction contract was awarded to a Korean contractor, Daewoo Engineering & Construction Co. Ltd, with oversight from the National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

The project aims to sustain the region's self-sufficiency and contribute to an annual increase in the country's rice production target of 7.6%. Specifically, it is designed to provide year-round irrigation for 22,340 hectares within the existing irrigation systems and an additional 12,000 hectares of currently rain-fed areas, establish a 6.6-megawatt hydroelectric power plant to supplement the provincial power supply, and augment the supply of potable water for domestic and industrial consumption in nearby municipalities, including Iloilo City. Other anticipated benefits include flood mitigation and promoting eco-tourism in selected dam reservoir areas.



River. The campaign seeks justice for the Tumandok leaders killed for resisting the project and demands accountability for the destruction of land and livelihoods. Beyond raising awareness, it prepares downstream communities for the potential ‘great flood,’ equipping them

with the knowledge and tools needed for disaster preparedness and empowering them to mobilize in response. Together, we resist the flood of environmental and social injustice, fighting for land, water, and life.



History and Scope of the Project

The Jalaur River Multi-Purpose Project (JRMP) is a significant infrastructure initiative by the Philippine government aimed at enhancing water supply, irrigation, flood control, and hydropower generation. Its development has occurred in phases, with Phase 1 completed and Phase 2 currently underway.

On June 18, 1960, the Philippine government enacted Republic Act No. 2651, which authorized the construction of the Jalaur Multi-Purpose Project in the Province of Iloilo and established guidelines for its operation post-completion. The project was seen as a crucial step toward improving agricultural productivity and managing water resources in the region.

From 1977 to 1983, Phase 1 of the JRMP was funded by the World Bank and focused on the rehabilitation of four existing national irrigation systems in Iloilo Province—specifically the Jalaur, Suage, Aganan, and Sta. Barbara systems. This rehabilitation covered approximately 22,000 hectares of rice farms, aiming to boost agricultural output and ensure more reliable irrigation for local farmers. The investment was intended to enhance the livelihoods of thousands of families reliant on rice farming, making the region more resilient to food security challenges.

However, despite these initial efforts, the subsequent phases of the project did not materialize as planned. The government’s studies indicated that the economic internal rate of return (EIRR) for continuing the project was “very low and unacceptable,” which hindered further investment and expansion.



In 2009, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) Region 6 conducted a feasibility study for the Jalaur River Multi-Purpose Project Stage 2. This phase proposes the construction of a mega-dam, with a main reservoir standing 102 meters high and capable of holding 197 million cubic meters of water, to be located in Barangay Agcalaga, Calinog, Iloilo. Following this main reservoir, a 40-meter afterbay dam and a 24-meter catch dam will be constructed, all situated along the Jalaur River. Additionally, a 46-meter

Funding, Contractors, and the Role of International Actors

The Korean Export-Import Bank (KEXIM) is the primary financial backer of the Jalaur Mega Dam, providing the bulk of the funds through a concessional loan. The loan agreement was part of the South Korean government's broader policy of financing infrastructure development in Southeast Asia. This has drawn criticism from civil society groups who argue that these

financial institutions have turned a blind eye to the human rights violations and environmental degradation linked to their projects.

Daewoo Engineering & Construction Co. Ltd, one of South Korea's largest construction firms, was awarded the construction contract. The involvement of an international contractor underscores the global dimensions of the project, where foreign capital and expertise play a central role in pushing the project forward despite local resistance.



Role of the State Forces: From Militarization to the Tumandok Massacre

As opposition to the project grew, the Philippine government responded with increasing militarization in the Tumandok areas. The military and police were deployed under the guise of maintaining peace and order, but their presence led to the red-tagging of Tumandok leaders and activists. Red-tagging refers to the practice of labeling individuals or groups as communists or insurgents, a dangerous accusation that has often been used to justify extrajudicial killings, harassment, and arrests in the Philippines.

In May 2024, the Supreme Court, in the landmark case of *Deduro v. Vinoya*, ruled that redtagging, vilification, labeling, and guilt by association pose significant threats to an individual's right to life, liberty, and security. The Court emphasized that these actions can create an environment of fear and danger, often leading to harassment or violence. As a result, the Court affirmed that such

threats may warrant the issuance of a writ of amparo—a legal remedy designed to protect individuals from state-sponsored or sanctioned abuses of power, particularly those that endanger their fundamental rights.

For the Tumandok, resisting the dam project became synonymous with being branded as enemies of the state. Many leaders and elders were accused of being associated with the New People's Army (NPA), a communist rebel group active in rural areas.

The attack of state forces against the Tumandok culminated in the Tumandok Massacre on December 30, 2020, when a joint operation by the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) raided twelve (12) Tumandok villages in Iloilo and Capiz provinces. During these operations, nine Tumandok leaders and elders were killed, and 16 others were arrested on fabricated charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives.



Opposition from the Tumandok People

The Jalaur Mega Dam is situated within the ancestral domain of the Tumandok people. The affected communities, initially estimated at around 17,000 individuals, have lived in the mountainous areas of Panay for centuries, depending on the land and river for subsistence farming, fishing, and cultural practices. For the Tumandok, the land and water are not merely resources but essential elements of their identity and survival.

From the outset, the Tumandok opposed the dam project.

Ancestral Land Encroachment: The dam's construction would lead to the submergence of large portions of their ancestral lands, including homes, agricultural fields, and sacred sites. The Tumandok fear that the loss of their land will result in the disintegration of their culture and traditional way of life. The loss of their land signifies ethnocide for them.

Lack of Genuine Consultation: Despite laws such as the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act

(IPRA) and international protocols, which mandate that indigenous communities must give their Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for any project on their lands, the Tumandok assert that the government 'manufactured' consultations and manipulated processes to gain approval. The project moved forward without adequately addressing the community's concerns.

Environmental Risks: The dam's construction could lead to deforestation, soil erosion, and flooding downstream. Additionally, it is located just 10 kilometers from the active West Panay Fault Line, raising concerns about the potential for earthquakes. Studies have shown that dams can trigger seismic activity, which further endangers the region's biodiversity and the livelihoods of those who rely on the river's ecosystems.

Displacement and Livelihood Destruction: The Tumandok stand to lose their homes and farmland, which are the foundation of their self-sustaining economy. They believe that the promised benefits, such as irrigation and power generation, will not compensate for the profound disruption to their lives.

These charges were later dismissed when the local trial court quashed the search warrants, declaring them invalid because they did not “satisfy the constitutional requirement of definiteness or particularity.” The court further ordered that “all evidence obtained during the illegal search be suppressed and, for all intents and purposes, in any and all legal proceedings, the said obtained evidence be deemed inadmissible against the accused.”

This massacre is viewed as a violent attempt by the state to crush local opposition to the dam and silence the Tumandok’s struggle for their ancestral land. Human rights groups, both local and international, have condemned the killings and called for an independent investigation. Despite these demands, justice remains elusive, and the militarization of Tumandok communities continues.

The Jalaur Mega Dam represents more than just a physical structure; it is a symbol of the broader struggles faced by the Tumandok and other Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines.

Their fight against the dam is rooted in their desire to protect their land, culture, and way of life from the encroachment of development projects that serve foreign and corporate interests.

The violent suppression of their resistance through red-tagging, harassment, and extrajudicial killings further highlights the need for accountability, both from the Philippine government and the international actors involved in funding and constructing the dam.

This campaign seeks to honor the sacrifice of the Tumandok leaders who lost their lives and continue the fight for land, water, and life.



Continuing our campaign and fight

Now, the demand is to continue the fight for Indigenous land and waters, and to amplify the resistance against the Jalaur Mega Dam by focusing on the Tumandok struggle, the human rights violations, and the environmental and disaster risks posed to downstream communities.

1. We need to raise public awareness about the dam’s impacts, particularly the Tumandok Massacre and the ‘great flood’ risk posed to downstream communities; and to expose the state’s use of violence to suppress dissent and facilitate corporate-driven development projects.

2. We need to demand accountability and justice for the Tumandok leaders who were killed and for the communities displaced by the dam. We need to call for reparations for the families of slain leaders and communities displaced by the dam. Demand that those responsible for the deaths of Tumandok leaders be brought to justice through independent investigations.

3. We need to demand accountability and ensure disaster preparedness in the face of the risk of flooding.

4. In the time where the world seek genuine sustainable sources of energy, we need to highlight that the anticipated benefits of mega-dam projects are far outweighed by its high costs. We need to point out that the actual power generation from the dam is minimal, questioning the project’s viability as a reliable energy source.

Justice for the Tumandok Massacre Victims!

Halt the Jalaur Mega Dam Construction!

Respect for Indigenous Peoples Rights and Ancestral Lands!

Provide a Comprehensive Disaster Response and Preparedness for Downstream Communities!

Push for People-Centered Development Projects! ■

Annexes

Annex 1. Human rights violations related to land conflicts and struggles, by country, region, and violation

ASIA PACIFIC

	Killings		Arrests, Detention, Legal Persecution		Threats, Harassment, & Physical Assault		Displacement	
	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims
Bangladesh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cambodia	0	0	7	53	2	64	1	1,800
China	0	0	1	1,000	0	0	0	0
India	0	0	2	162	0	0	0	0
Indonesia	0	0	10	56	3	29	1	15
Palestine	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Philippines	6	9	10	41	9	11	0	0
Total	7	10	30	1,312	14	104	2	1,815

LATIN AMERICA

	Killings		Arrests, Detention, Legal Persecution		Threats, Harassment, & Physical Assault		Displacement	
	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims
Argentina	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brazil	3	3	0	0	2	5	0	0
Bolivia	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Chile	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Ecuador	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guatemala	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0
Honduras	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mexico	5	18	6	43	1	5	0	0
Peru	2	2	1	11	0	0	0	0
Total	14	29	9	65	4	11	0	0

AFRICA

	Killings		Arrests, Detention, Legal Persecution		Threats, Harassment, & Physical Assault		Displacement	
	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims
Congo	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Chad	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guinea-Bissau	1	2	1	40	1	4	0	0
Ivory Coast	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Kenya	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2,400
Nigeria	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Tanzania	0	0	1	8	0	0	0	0
Uganda	1	1	8	118	0	0	1	148
Zimbabwe	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	320
Total	2	3	13	170	2	5	3	2,868

NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE

	Killings		Arrests, Detention, Legal Persecution		Threats, Harassment, & Physical Assault		Displacement	
	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims
Canada	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0
Serbia	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	3	7	0	0	0	0

GLOBAL

Killings		Arrests, Detention, Legal Persecution		Threats, Harassment, & Physical Assault		Displacement	
Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims	Cases	Victims
23	42	55	1,554	20	120	5	4,683
Cases Total: 103		Victims Total: 6,399					

Annex 2. Number of cases and victims of killings related to land conflicts and struggles, by sector

Asia Pacific

	Cases	Indigenous Peoples	Farmers/Farm workers	Land activists	Unspecified	Total
Palestine	1	0	1	0	0	1
Philippines	6	0	7	2	0	9
Total	7	0	1	0	0	10

Latin America

	Cases	Indigenous Peoples	Farmers/Farm workers	Land activists	Unspecified	Total
Argentina	2	2	1	0	0	3
Brazil	3	3	0	0	0	3
Ecuador	1	2	0	0	0	2
Honduras	1	0	0	1	0	1
Mexico	5	0	2	7	9	18
Peru	2	2	0	0	0	2
Total	14	9	3	8	9	29

Africa

	Cases	Indigenous Peoples	Farmers/Farm workers	Land activists	Unspecified	Total
Guinea-Bissau	1	0	0	0	2	2
Uganda	1	0	1	0	0	1
Total	2	0	1	0	2	3

Annex 3. Number of identified women victims of human rights violations, by type of violation*

	Killings	Arrests/ Detention/ Legal Persecution	Threats/ Harassment/ Physical Assault
Brazil	2	0	1
Cambodia	0	4	0
Canada	0	2	0
Chile	0	1	0
Indonesia	0	1	1
Mexico	5	1	0
Palestine	1	0	0
Philippines	1	4	6
Uganda	0	11	0
Total	9	24	8

*excluding displacement



PAN Asia Pacific (PANAP) is one of the five regional centres of Pesticide Action Network (PAN). PANAP works for the elimination of harm caused by pesticides on human health and the environment. PANAP also promotes agroecology, helps strengthen people's movements in their assertion of rights to land and livelihood, and advances food sovereignty and gender justice.

As a network, PANAP is currently comprised of more than 100 partner organisations from the Asia Pacific region and has links with about 400 other regional and global civil society and grassroots organisations.



The International Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL) is a global network of Indigenous Peoples rights activists, advocates, and organizations committed to advancing the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self determination, land and life.

IPMSDL stands for the right of Indigenous Peoples to govern themselves free from imperialism, state oppression, and human rights violations. IPMSDL also works for the empowerment of Indigenous Peoples, and for the victory of the people's will over the powers-that-be while recognizing the legitimacy of the different forms of struggle and self-determination that Indigenous Peoples opt to employ.