

# 2022 A Year in Review ▶▶▶

## LEGAL SUPPORT IN A PRECEDENT-SETTING MURDER TRIAL ▶▶▶

Since 2014, Rainforest Foundation US has advocated to ensure that the murder of four indigenous activists in Saweto, Peru be tried as an organized crime, ensuring that those who ordered the murders are also held accountable, and not just the triggermen.

These efforts have included urging the federal courts to dismiss the lead prosecutor, who had undisclosed conflicts of interest in the case and was maneuvering to throw the charges out; pressing to have a prosecutor from outside the jurisdiction try the case, so as to avoid other potential conflicts of interest; and providing a safe

house to the family members of the murder victims while they awaited the trial.

After many delays, the Superior Court of Justice in Ucayali, Peru has finally begun the criminal trial in the murder of these four victims, who had been engaged in a years-long struggle to stop a multinational logging company from illegally deforesting their territory. Following years of escalating threats, the men went missing in September 2014, their bodies later discovered on a river bank just beyond their community.

**Indigenous environmental activists are extremely vulnerable**

▶ **211 activists killed last year**

▶ **1 murder per 41 hours**

**We hope that this trial will set a precedent for other similar cases.**

## RAINFOREST ALERT MOVES TOWARDS PAYMENT FOR RESULTS ▶▶▶

Last year, a peer-reviewed study showed **Rainforest Foundation US's flagship forest patrol** (or "community monitoring") **program reduced deforestation by more than 50% in its first year of implementation.** This year, we are expanding the program throughout the Peruvian Amazon into 36 new communities.

We've also added a new innovation to the platform: payments for results. By paying the participating communities biannually for their successful forest defense, these villages can better address community-wide infrastructural deficiencies—such as lack of potable water, electricity, or flush toilets—ensuring that the indigenous villages tasked with some of the most valuable environmental defense work in the world are better able to stand up to exploitative extractive industries and also to take important steps towards sustainable livelihoods.



## DIRECT FINANCING AND REALIZING THE PLEDGE ▶▶



A collection of governments and private funders pledged \$1.7 billion to indigenous peoples and local communities for the fight against the climate crisis during the **2021 United Nations' Conference of Parties (COP26)**—an implicit recognition of the integral role indigenous peoples will have in the years to come. However, as reported by our partner organization, Rainforest Foundation Norway, over the last decade **only 0.17% of climate finance went to indigenous communities**, despite these communities stewarding more than a third of the world's remaining forests.



This year, **we partnered with** several regional indigenous peoples' rights organizations—including the **Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC)**—to strengthen their capacities to gather and distribute these funds, so as to better ensure that the pledge is realized.

Supporting the strengthening of allies like the GATC—**the largest indigenous peoples' coalition, responsible for defending rainforests in dozens of countries across the tropical belt**—is a hallmark of our work.

We worked closely with the GATC as they launched the Shandia Platform during Climate Week this year, a direct financing mechanism that will deliver funding to the more than 35 million people living in forest communities.

## STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS IN MESOAMERICA ▶▶

Last year, **Rainforest Foundation US** and the **Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB)**, a regional representative indigenous organization, were awarded a multi-year grant from the US Government to advance AMPB's vision for the region, including:

- Establishing the Mesoamerican Territorial Fund, a direct financing mechanism
- Expanding AMPB's Mesoamerican Leadership School, which provides trainings to the next generation of indigenous leaders
- Strengthening the Coordination of Territorial Women Leaders of Mesoamerica, which aims to increase participation of women in all political spaces; impact public policy on forest, justice, and equity issues; preserve cultural identity; and implement programming for advancing women's sustainable business initiatives

This year, the Leadership School expanded its presence in Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama, and established new programming in Mexico; and the Women's Coordination developed a climate and gender strategy that addresses the intersection of gender, climate change impacts, forest protection, and sustainable livelihoods in the region. Meanwhile, the Fund established its governance structure and procedures to ensure that it can provide its first grants in 2023.



According to a United Nations report, there are more than

**170,000 sq mi of forests** 

**in indigenous peoples' territory throughout Mesoamerica**

**A collective area**

**10% larger than California**