

Press Release

New maps and report: Huge portion of the world's remaining tropical forests threatened by fossil fuel, mining, and extractive industry expansion

Indigenous and civil society organizations hold press conference calling on world leaders gathering at the Summit of the Three Basins this week to commit to protecting tropical forests in these critical basins and to scale up rights-based legal protections

- **We are at a critical juncture in the nature crisis: the science is unambiguous about the need to halt all new oil and gas developments in order to keep the planet below 1.5 °C of warming.**
- **Report launched in advance of the Summit of the Three Basins in Brazzaville this week paints a stark picture of the challenges facing the world's remaining tropical forest basins**
- **There is a window for solutions while these threats are not yet realities, if world leaders are bold and act quickly. Indigenous peoples and local communities must be at the heart of these.**

Brazzaville (October 24th, 2023) — At a press briefing earlier today ahead of the Summit of the Three Basins, research group Earth Insight and global partners released *a range of new findings* in a report entitled [Three Basins Threat Report: Fossil Fuel, Mining, and Industrial Expansion Threats to Forests and Communities](#).

The report dives into the immediate threat to tropical forests posed by fossil fuel expansion, which—regardless of location—threatens to warm the planet enough to push tropical forests to the brink, threatening Indigenous communities, biodiversity, and freshwater.

And, as the [new maps](#) show, even as the energy transition holds promise for getting the world—and these places—off of fossil fuels, other threats also loom large, including mining of energy transition metals and materials, logging, and agriculture.

[Read the report or executive summary now:](#)

www.earth-insight.org/three-basins-report-landing

Other publishing partners of the report include: Rainforest Foundation UK, DRC-based organization Dynamique des Groupes des Peuples Autochtones (DGPA), Cameroon-based

AJESH, Auriga Nusantara from Indonesia, and COICA and the Amazon Sacred Headwaters Alliance from the Amazon basin.

The briefing today closed with a [call-to-action from Indigenous, community, and civil society leaders](#) to put human rights at the center of the Three Basins Initiative. **Watch the recording of the event [here](#)** (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Bahasa Indonesia recordings available).

Key report findings

Across the three basins:

- Nearly 20% of intact tropical forests in the three basins are now in active and potential oil and gas concessions
- Nearly 25% of intact tropical forests in the Amazon and Congo basins are now in active or potential mining concessions
- In Indonesia, half of all nickel concessions (primarily for EV's) overlap with natural forests and a fivefold risk of deforestation/degradation is possible if nickel mining permits expand to cover the full deposit area
- Over 200 million people, including a significant proportion of Indigenous and local communities, or about 20% of the population in the three basin regions, live within oil and gas blocks.

These and other pressures are contributing factors to the staggering global tropical primary forest loss in 2022 which totaled 4.1 million hectares, or the equivalent of 11 football fields of forest disappearing every minute according to University of Maryland's Global Land Analysis.

In the Amazon Basin:

- An estimated 65 million hectares or nearly 13% of undisturbed tropical forests now overlap with existing or planned oil and gas blocks in the Amazon Basin.
- More than 170 million hectares or more than 33% of undisturbed Tropical Moist Forests overlap with active and inactive mining concessions in the Amazon Basin
- Over 500 distinct Indigenous nationalities call the Amazon Basin home and more than 31 million hectares of Indigenous Territories are now in oil and gas blocks designated for production or exploration and more than 70 million hectares of Indigenous Territories overlap with active and inactive mining concessions
- More than 13,000 villages, towns, etc. — or more than 23% of populated places in Amazonia — are now in oil and gas production or exploration blocks and more than 16,000 populated places (villages, communities, towns, etc.) are located in active and inactive mining concessions

In the Congo Basin:

- More than 72 million hectares or more than 39% of undisturbed Tropical Moist Forests in the Congo Basin now overlap with oil and gas blocks
- Nearly 48 million hectares or nearly 27% of undisturbed Tropical Moist Forests overlap with mining concessions in the Congo basin
- Over 150 distinct ethnic groups call the Congo Basin region home and more than 17,000 populated places (villages, communities, towns, etc.) are now in oil and gas blocks and more than 11,000 populated places both inclusive of Indigenous and forest-dependent people are located in mining concessions in the Congo basin region

In Southeast Asia:

- In Southeast Asia, more than 34.8 million hectares or nearly 20% of undisturbed Tropical Moist Forests are in oil and gas blocks designated for production or exploration
- In Indonesia, more than 99,000 populated places (villages, communities, towns, etc.) are located in oil and gas blocks and over 3,000 populated places are located in mining concessions — both overlap areas inclusive of a high degree of Indigenous and forest-based peoples
- In Indonesia, 53% of natural forests are vulnerable to being granted for varying extractive concessions (palm oil, mining, logging, forests for energy, etc.) by the government
- In Indonesia, nearly half of nickel mining concessions (primarily for the EV sector) overlap with natural forests and a fivefold risk of deforestation is possible if nickel mining permits expand to cover the full deposit area
- [basins](#)

Joint Statement to Heads of States

On the eve of the Three Basins Summit in Brazzaville, more than 50 Indigenous, environmental and human rights organizations came together in a joint statement from these regions and beyond calling on world leaders from the Three Basins to commit to a host of important goals coming out of the Three Basins Summit. The statement also provides several recommendations for governments of tropical forest countries and those in the global north, including scaling up recognition of community tenure rights, securing greater protections for environmental and human rights defenders and more direct funding and support for frontline communities and organizations, including through non-market-based approaches.

The full statement is available here and it remains open for signing until the end of Summit on October 28 through [this link](#) ([English](#), [French](#), [Bahasa Indonesia](#), [Spanish](#) and [Portuguese](#)).

Enclosures: Report and Maps

- [*Three Basins Threat Report: Fossil Fuel, Mining, and Industrial Expansion Threats to Forests and Communities*](#)

- [Folder with report maps, organized by region](#)
- [Statement from Indigenous Peoples, environmental and human rights organizations working in the three](#)

Quotes from Indigenous and regional leaders

"The Amazon is in the midst of a tipping point crisis and this is a time like no other when the future of the ecosystem's ability to sustain itself is in jeopardy. We, Indigenous peoples have cared for the Amazon for millennia so today we raise our cry for help and urgently call for 80% protection by 2025. This means stopping deforestation, forest degradation and pollution of the water that sustains all forms of life. It also means legal security of Indigenous territories as a condition for the safeguarding of territorial rights for Indigenous peoples in the Amazon and in the whole of the three basins and beyond."

- **Fany Kuiru Castro, General Coordinator, [Confederation of Indigenous Organisations of the Amazon Basin \(COICA\)](#), Amazon**

"The Amazon is threatened by the expansion of extractive activities because State policies continue to prioritize short-term economic interests over human rights and the rights of nature. Thus, in the name of development, highways, oil stations or mining camps are built that destroy the forest and put at risk the stability of the ecosystem and the well-being of Indigenous communities. We urgently need to promote a standing forest economy to stop the degradation and loss of the forest and strengthen Indigenous territorial governance for good Amazonian living. Initiatives led by Indigenous peoples, such as Cuencas Sagradas, must have all the necessary support because they are born out of and watch over the life of the forest and with it, the stability of the global climate."

- **Domingo Peas, Board President, [Amazon Sacred Headwaters Alliance](#), Achuar Leader and Amazonian Coordinator for the Sacred Headwater Alliance**

"Indigenous and forest-based people in the Congo basin have stewarded the forests of this region for millennia. Fossil fuel, mining, and other extractive industry expansion represents an existential threat to the rich cultures and future of Indigenous pygmy and other rare and threatened peoples. World leaders face a turning point and can leave a lasting legacy of forest protection for generations to come if they act before it's too late."

- **Patrick Saidi Hemedi, Coordinator of the [Dynamique des Groupes des Peuples Autochtones \(DGPA\)](#), DRC**

"The compounding effects of industrial activities in primary and priority forests can turn a rich ecosystem into a toxic wasteland. But by committing to protect these critical forests, our leaders can support landscapes of life where community leadership and stewardship can advance a new paradigm of restoration and preservation."

- **Harrison Nnoko, Director [AJESH](#), Cameroon**

"Indonesia is ground zero for nickel mining for the energy transition. Our forests and communities have been hit hard from waves of global demands from palm oil to pulp and paper

and it is time for our government and international companies, particularly electric automakers, to ensure that our remaining natural forests and the communities that call them home are protected.”

- **Timer Manurung, Executive Director, [Auriga Nusantara](#), Indonesia**

Quotes from Earth Insight and other partners

“World leaders gathering at the Summit of the Three Basins have a tremendous opportunity to heed the warnings that tipping point thresholds are revealing in the Amazon and beyond and to build an alliance that stops and reverses trajectories of forest fragmentation and deforestation now. Not seven years from now. Committing to an immediate moratorium on industrial activity in primary and intact forests is vital and will create space for new regional and international financial and other solutions to emerge that balance economic development needs with the planetary boundaries.”

- **Tyson Miller, Executive Director, [Earth Insight](#) (available for interviews)**

“The report lays bare the stark choice between continuing down the path of ever-expanding extractivism or finding a way to value and protect our planet. The message from Indigenous and environmental leaders of the three rainforest basins is clear: there can be no lasting solutions to tropical forest loss without recognising and empowering the communities who live in them.”

- **Joe Eisen, Executive Director, [Rainforest Foundation UK](#)**

“Amazonia is in the midst of a tipping point crisis, and unless we secure immediate protection of its key priority areas, we might witness its dieback in the next decade. The Initiative “Amazonia for Life: protect 80% by 2025” aligns with the vision of Indigenous peoples to advance action with all stakeholders to protect 80% of Amazonia by 2025. Since 2021, this initiative has shifted global priorities by raising awareness on the key role of the largest rainforest on Earth’s wellness and has brought together scientists, Indigenous peoples and advocates in an unusual coalition. Our commitment is to create a clear roadmap led by science to guide governments in this crusade to defend life on Earth by propelling the knowledge and governance systems that have allowed preservation of Amazonia for millennia. The moment to act was yesterday, today is an urgency.”

- **Alicia Guzman Leon, PhD. Co-Coordinator [Amazonia for Life Initiative](#) Co-Director Amazon Program [Stand.earth](#)**

“In the face of the climate crisis, thinking of ways to make a post-carbon world possible is not a utopia, it is a pressing need. The global South can lead an ambitious climate policy that opts to leave oil and gas in the ground. Latin America is beginning to change the course of history and to confront, with the necessary boldness and courage, the effects of climate change, the most serious crisis threatening humanity. The global North must respond accordingly and, in addition to phasing out fossil fuels, enable economic mechanisms that allow the global South to implement a large-scale fossil fuel phase-out policy”.

- **Carolina Marçal, project coordinator at [ClimalInfo](#), Brazil**

"From Colombia, we have been insisting on the need for an urgent progressive and fair elimination of fossil fuel production and use. For this reason, we support political agendas that promote alliances towards the phase out of fossil fuels, to advance in fair energy transitions. In the same sense, we demand territorial processes for community management of energy and life itself, warning that the continuity of economic dependence on fossil fuels and the expansion of new extractivisms constitutes the real danger for these alternatives that are built daily against the predatory energy model."

- **Luisa Fernanda Umaña Hernández, Researcher of the energy and climate justice team at [Censat Agua Viva](#), Colombia**

Interview Opportunities

Speakers from the press briefing are available for interviews.

Media Contact

Contact Lynsey Grosfield, Head of Communications at Earth Insight, with any questions or to arrange interviews: lynsey@earth-insight.org, +1 514 430 5203

Additional Resources

- [Briefing note on the oil and gas expansion threats to these critical ecosystems](#)
- [Crisis Point: Oil and Gas Expansion Threats to Amazon and Congo Basin Tropical Forests and Communities](#)
- [Congo in the Crosshairs: New Oil and Gas Expansion Threats to Climate, Forests, and Communities](#)

About Earth Insight

Earth Insight is a research and capacity building initiative that is a sponsored project of the Resources Legacy Fund, based in Sacramento, California. Staff and partners span the globe and represent a unique grouping of individuals and organizations with diverse backgrounds in mapping and spatial analysis, communications, and policy. Earth Insight is committed to advancing new tools, awareness, and momentum for protecting critical places and supporting civil society and indigenous and local communities in this effort.

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