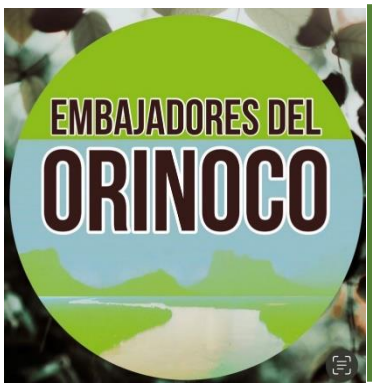


EMBAJADORES DEL ORINOCO

NEWSLETTER # 1

(April 2024)

Welcome to our **first newsletter!** Our initiative to bring you closer to what is happening in the Venezuelan Amazon Rainforest.

Organizations in Venezuela and abroad are working to raise awareness about the environmental and human devastation caused by illegal mining in our country. Local reports contain valuable information in Spanish and there is also an increasing number of sources in English.

We select the most relevant news and reports in both languages and include our own content in English to help you stay updated. **Next issues coming up in August and December!**

IN THIS ISSUE:

- **News and Noteworthy**
  - Venezuelan conservation projects in the 7th issue of Biodiversity Mag!
  - Venezuela ranked 6 in the world with the higest numbers of killed environmental defenders
  - 30 rivers in Venezuela are contaminated by illegal mining
  - State officials involved in Illicit trade of wild species
  - The plight of Venezuelan Yanomami: Hunger, malaria and other diseases
  - Tragedy in Bulla Loca mining site (Amazonas state) leaves several miners dead and wounded

- **Artivism *"Orinoco Croc- A Long Journey to Denmark" (page 6)***

- **Did you miss it?**
  - Watch our 2022 **Orinoco Oslo Summit** Orinoco Oslo Summit – Saving the Amazon Rainforest in Venezuela – Embajadores del Orinoco (emborinoco.org)
  - Check our article in the Norwegian press **"La destruccion de la Amazonia venezolana tambien debe importarnos"** Sonia Zapata | Utrop
  - Check this article in French media featuring one of our past events in Paris «Cri d'alarme : l'Amazonie du Venezuela menacée - Nouveaux Espaces Latinos (espaces-latinos.org)

- **News and Noteworthy - Venezuela in the 7th issue of Biodiversity Mag!**

As Co-Founders of the **International Conservation and Biodiversity Team** (ICBT Vision and Expert Members - Biodiversity MAG (biodiversity-mag.com), we have been keen to include information about Venezuela, in the platform's online magazine **BIODIVERSITY MAG.**

We are happy to report that our dream came true when, in Issue # 7 (see below link), we were able to shine a light on Venezuela's incredible biodiversity (ranked in the top 10 most biodiverse countries in the world), on some of our many important conservation projects, and on the URGENT need to protect our Amazon Rainforest and our indigenous people from state-sponsored illegal mining.

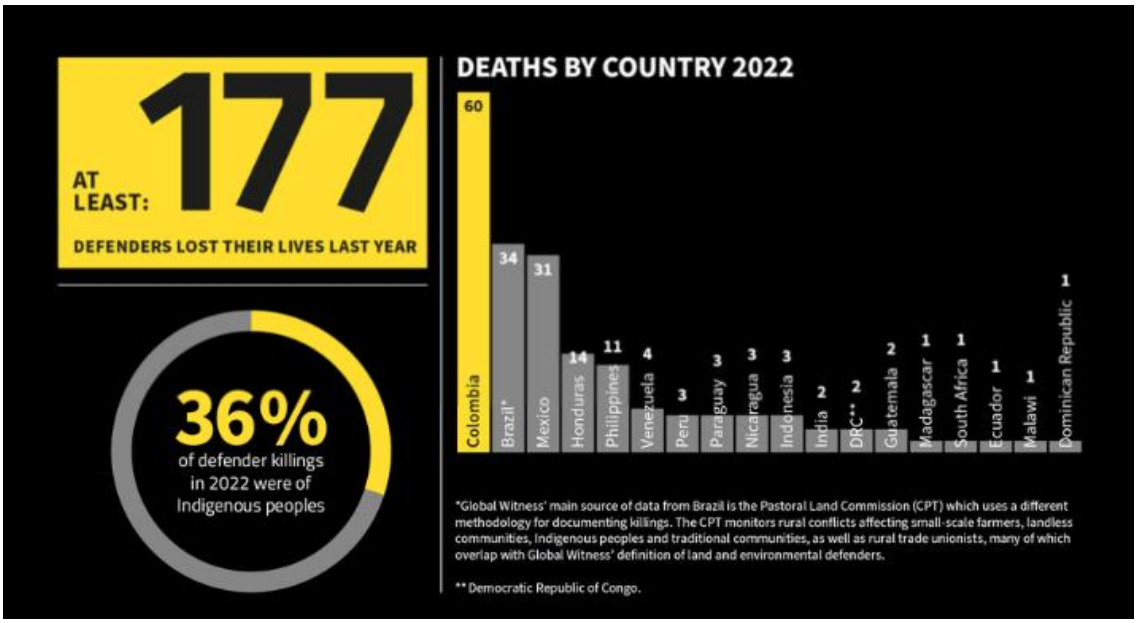
Check our piece about the **impact of illegal mining on our Indigenous people**, including interviews with several human rights and Indigenous rights defenders, in **page 24 onwards**.

Learn more about Conservation of the **Harpy Eagle**, **Mono Arana**, **Orinoco Crocodile**, **spectacled bear** and more. Check out also an article by Armando info on the **illicit trade of animals in Venezuela** and the **Somos Caura project**.

Biodiversity MAG 7 - Flip PDF | FlipBuilder

- **Venezuela ranked 6 in the countries with the higest numbers of environmental defenders killed**

Each year, the organization **Global Witness** issues a Report with information about environmental defenders killed. Their last Report – published on 13 September 2023 – contains the list of countries with the highest number of defenders killed and Venezuela is in the 6th place.



Read Global Witness 2022 Report here: [Standing firm: The Land and Environmental Defenders on the frontlines of the climate crisis | Global Witness]

> Venezuela ocupa la sexta posición en el informe de Global Witness y Zapata manifestó que en ese país generalmente es el propio Estado, directa o indirectamente, a través de sus fuerzas de seguridad, grupos paramilitares y otros, a quien se le atribuye responsabilidad por una gran parte de los ataques y hostigamiento.

Read our interview in Spanish in Huella Zero, tiempo latino here: [El precio que pagan los activistas ambientales por defender el planeta (eltiempolatino.com)]

- **30 rivers in Venezuela are contaminated by illegal mining**

Clima 21 reports that more than 30 rivers in Venezuela are contaminated by illegal mining. Sixteen rivers have TOXIC mining ponds for gold extraction. There has been a Gold Mining increase of 106% in 6 years. Informe-Rios-entre-la-destruccion-y-el-olvido-V31-01-24.pdf (clima21.net)

- **State officials involved in Illicit trade of wild species**

Venezuelan authorities continue to profit from illicit export of wild species, including reptiles. This article by **Armando info** explains how shady companies are exporting thousands of turtles (Red-footed tortoise) with the connivance of State officials. https://storage.googleapis.com/qurium/armando.info/la-peculiar-operacion-morrocoy-de-orinoco-reptiles.html

- **The plight of Venezuelan Yanomami: Hunger, malaria and other diseases**

Local and international organizations have been denouncing the dire situation of Yanomami communities both on the Brazilian and the Venezuelan side. The below is a statement from Fiona Watson, Research and Advocacy Director in **Survival International**.

> "The situation for the thousands of Yanomami people who live on the Venezuelan side of the border is dire, and receiving almost no media attention. Miners are working in new areas in Venezuela with the support of the Venezuelan military. There's currently a malaria epidemic, and many Yanomami have died.
>
> "The plight of the uncontacted Yanomami is especially concerning - we know that miners are still operating just a few miles from their communities.

Read Survival's report here: https://www.survivalinternational.org/news/13864

In this article by **Dr Maria E. Grillet**, you can read more about the Yanomami communities affected by Malaria. https://www.interciencia.net/volumen-49-2024/volumen-49-numero-02/

Kape Kape has also reported that, according to the Indigenous group **Horonami** (which unites Yanomami communities in the High Orinoco - Venezuelan Amazonas State), **260**

people from their community have died since January 2023 due to lack of treatment for malaria and other diseases. Honorami is asking authorities for support with health care and combatting hunger and malnutrition. https://kape-kape.one/2024/03/16/yanomamis-del-alto-orinoco-denuncian-260-muertes-por-enfermedades-y-desnutricion/

(Picture from Kape Kape's Report)

The situation faced by the Yanomami in Venezuela confirms how little the Venezuelan state cares for Indigenous people. The authorities not only kill them for standing in the way of their gold and mineral greed (nearly 2 years after the **Parima B massacre**, those responsible have not been charged). They also leave them to die of starvation and preventable diseases.

- **Tragedy in a large mining site leaves several miners dead and wounded**

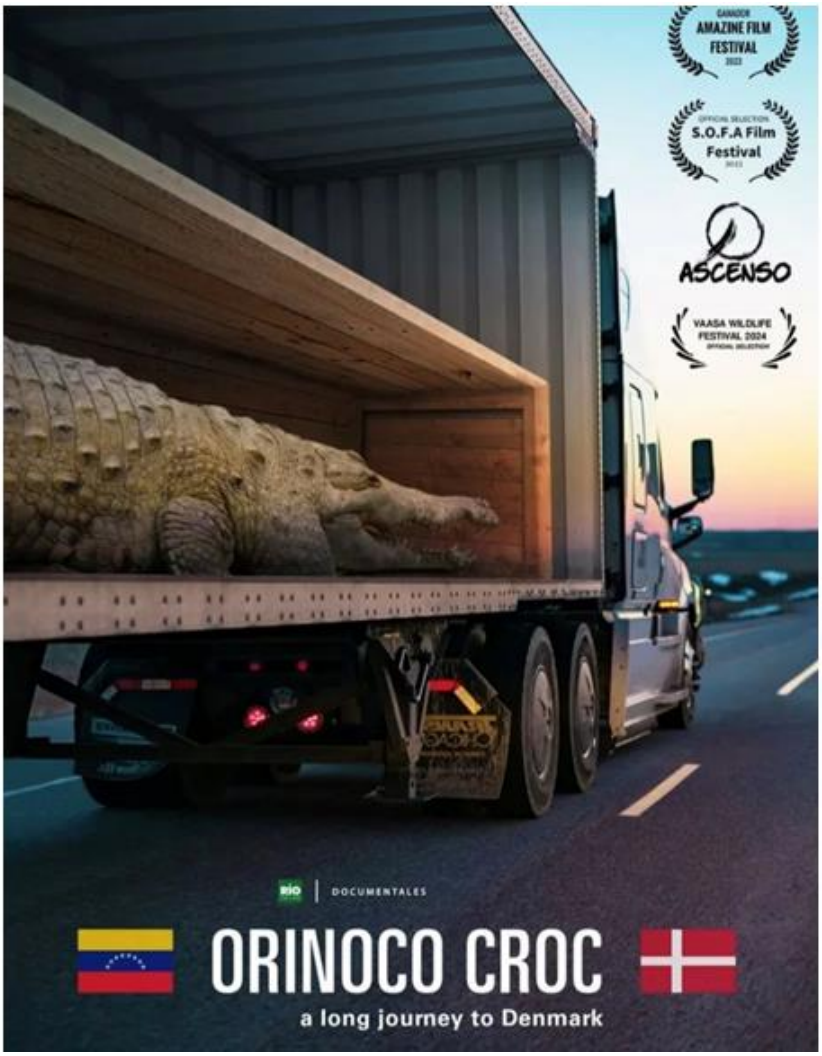
A tragedy took place in February when a huge illegal open-pit gold mine (Bulla loca in Bolivar state) collapsed while many miners were working there, leaving many buried and trapped. At least 16 were killed and many more wounded. https://apnews.com/article/venezuela-mining-accident-paragua-bulla-loca-2ec01818851b0920e09857bb5bf82599

Sadly, mining accidents like this are not uncommon. According to a Report by **SOS Orinoco,** there were 39 mining accidents in Bolivar and Amazonas states between 2012 and 2022. You can read the full report here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DxqXVSsBEwiONjXIX7wdOSuxJ7pcjxZz/view?pli=1

❖ Artivism

A documentary by **Rio Verde** about the Orinoco Crocodile has been selected to the Vaasa Wildlife festival in Finland. The Orinoco crocodile is one of the largest in the world but it is, sadly, a critically endangered species.

"Orinoco Croc- A Long Journey to Denmark" is a 20-minutes documentary that follows the journey of 7 Orinoco crocodiles traveling through 8 countries from Venezuela to a zoo in Denmark. What for? Watch the documentary (Spanish) here to find out: https://youtu.be/HpkPXpitXHg?feature=shared



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Embajadores del Orinoco – Embajadores del Orinoco (emborinoco.org)

We would love to hear from you! Reach out at: Emborinoco@gmail.com