



COMMUNICATION CAN HELP PROTECT THE AMAZON

*What's happening with mining in
the world's largest rainforest –
and how can communication be
part of the solution?*

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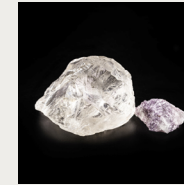
1. The Paradox of the Global North's Energy Transition



The climate crisis, mostly caused by the fossil fuel industry, highlights the urgent need to move beyond coal and oil, transforming how we produce, consume, and manage energy.

Today, the development of technology and infrastructure necessary to generate, commercialize, and implement alternative energy projects to meet the Global North's demand requires large amounts of minerals and metals such as:

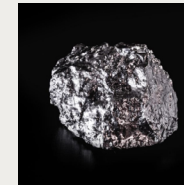
LITHIUM



RARE EARTHS



PLATINUM



TIN



COLTAN



VANADIUM



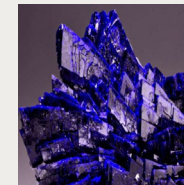
GRAPHITE



MOLYBDENUM



COBALT




NICKEL



ZINC



The mining industry refers to these as **critical minerals**.

An aerial photograph of a river delta, likely the Amazon, showing a complex network of water channels and sandy banks. A piece of torn, light-colored paper is placed over the center of the image, containing text.

Many of these mineral reserves are located in Latin America, **in fragile and ecologically significant ecosystems like the Amazon and Andean wetlands**—crucial for sustaining life by purifying air and water and providing food.

..... In fact, over half of these reserves are on or near **Indigenous and/or peasant territories.**

51%
of the world's lithium deposits

22%
of the world's graphite reserves

17%
of the world's zinc and rare earth reserves

38%
of the world's copper reserves



Source:

Critical Minerals for the Energy Transition. Concept Note – Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. ECLAC, 2023.

Latin America has become a highly desirable area for **mining companies seeking to extract transition minerals**.

Demand projections show a sharp increase – lithium demand is expected to rise by 80% and copper by 56% in the coming years – intensifying pressure on the region's lands and communities.

So... what's the problem?

A corporate mining model that:

A Violates the lives and rights of Indigenous peoples and other communities

How?

- ! By disregarding their ways of life, territorial governance, and knowledge systems
- ! By imposing a vision that prioritizes resource extraction over life itself



B Ignores community will

How?

- ! By failing to ensure free, prior, and informed consultation processes

C Harms biodiversity and ecosystem health

How?

- ! By polluting water sources, causing deforestation, and disrupting the ecosystem relationships that enable life, including human life

The Global North's energy transition is paradoxical: it aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and global warming but **promotes new forms of exploitation and violations of human and environmental rights**.

Let's take a closer look at one of the most troubling current cases.

Source: Critical Minerals in Latin America. Baker Institute for Public Policy, 2024.

2. Canada and the Colombian Amazon Case

THE COLOMBIAN AMAZON:

Home to 50+ Indigenous peoples

A cradle of unique knowledge systems and cultural heritage

More than 50 languages spoken



One of the most biodiverse places on Earth



Key ecosystem for climate crisis mitigation



6,400+ plant and animal species

Despite its immense ecological and cultural importance, **this region is under pressure from copper, coltan, molybdenum, and rare earth mining.**

There are no clear figures on these mineral reserves.





Today, **CANADÁ**

aims to become the world's top supplier of these minerals. As a result, many of its extractive operations are based in Latin America.

Sources: No More Violence – Unmasking Canada in the UN Universal Periodic Review, 2023, and Canadian Mining Assets – Government of Canada, 2023

37

Canadian mining operations across Latin America have been challenged by civil society organizations

249

Canadian companies operate in the region

TODAY

28

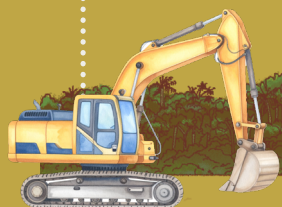
Canadian mining companies operate in Colombia

Canadian mining operations have been documented in

9 Latin

American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and the Dominican Republic).

Cosigo Resources LTD: A Case of Canadian Mining Irregularities



2005

- Canadian company Cosigo Resources LTD arrived in the eastern Colombian Amazon to explore gold deposits, impacting Indigenous communities in the Yaigojé Apaporis territory.



2005 – 2008

- The community mobilized in opposition, demanding the Colombian government protect their territory from extractive activities.



2009

- Cosigo disregarded the community's decision, promoted internal division, and lobbied authorities for project approval.
- The company hid the fact that the mine would affect Yuisei (La Libertad), a sacred site.
- Thanks to the communities' intercultural organizing with National Parks, the Yaigojé Apaporis National Natural Park was created to protect the territory.
- Cosigo continued exploration without all permits, and two days after the park's creation, it was granted a mining license.



2011

- Due to strategic legal action by the Indigenous peoples of Yaigojé Apaporis, Cosigo was forced to halt operations.
- Cosigo appealed, claiming the park's creation was illegal.



2014

- The Colombian courts upheld the legality of the protected area through landmark ruling T-384A, siding with Indigenous communities and banning extractive activities in their territory.

Today, two major mining projects exist in and near the Amazon region:

A. LIBERO COBRE - COPPER GIANT RESOURCES CORP (CANADÁ) Putumayo Department.

Exploratory copper and molybdenum project dubbed “the next copper giant,” located in the Indigenous territory of the Inga people, Condagua Reserve.

- ⚠ Mining titles and exploratory surveys suggest extraction may occur on a district-wide scale.
- ⚠ Free, prior, and informed consent was not guaranteed.
- ⚠ The community reports that Libero Copper invaded ancestral corridors, deforested key subsistence areas, and contaminated water and soil.

B. MYNASTIC - AUXICO RESOURCES (CANADÁ) Vichada Department

Rare earth and coltan project with expansion plans into Vichada and Guainía.

- ⚠ Irregularities in license granting and expansion beyond approved limits.
- ⚠ Risk to high-biodiversity zones and critical water sources.
- ⚠ Community division and risks of illegal mining exploitation.

These are not isolated cases. Between 2007 and 2016, at least four UN treaty-monitoring bodies warned Canada about irregularities in its mining operations.

Despite Canada's political guidelines for **responsible business conduct (RBC) and **oversight mechanisms (CORE)**, civil society reports show these tools are ineffective and insufficient to prevent human rights violations.**

Three central problems:

1. Basic human rights protections are not met, and communities are not clearly informed or meaningfully included in decision-making.
2. Fragmented mining titles blur accountability of leading multinational firms.
3. Responsibility mechanisms are often voluntary or based on dispute resolution, resulting in financial settlements without acknowledgment of harm, reparation, or justice.

Strict legal frameworks are urgently needed to guarantee the rights of Indigenous and affected communities.

But this is not just a legal or participatory issue.

3. The Role of Communication in the Energy Transition



Communication has been used by the Global North to advance its extractive interests and expand mining operations in Latin America.



How?



By labeling the minerals needed for its energy transition as “critical minerals,” centering this concept in global discourse.



By framing its energy transition as the only viable path to addressing the climate crisis.



By reducing the understanding of these targeted territories to little more than repositories of raw materials.



By remaining silent about the environmental and social impacts of mining on ecosystems and local communities.

The result?

A dominant narrative that frames mineral extraction for the energy transition as not just necessary, but critical, urgent, and globally prioritized



Our Challenge:

Create and Promote a
New Narrative that
Puts Life at the Center

Emphasize that this transition
is **neither critical or more
urgent** for the communities
directly affected.



- Amplify the legal strategies communities have developed to defend their territories.

- Share alternative energy transition models proposed by local communities.

- Highlight the complexity, significance, and beauty of at-risk territories.

- Reveal the socio-environmental impacts of the Global North's mining model – and showcase strategies to mitigate them.



How Can We Do It?

a. By reframing key concepts.

For example:

Replace **critical minerals** with **transition minerals** to remove urgency and crisis connotations.

Speak of a ****just energy transition**** to emphasize that change must be socially and environmentally fair.

Use historical or local names for territories rather than mining industry labels.
(e.g., Say **Resguardo Condagua**, instead of **"the next copper giant."**)



b. Spreading Existing Solutions

Indigenous Territorial Entities (ETIs) are constitutional mechanisms in Colombia that officially recognize Indigenous governance over their lands.

This enables communities to manage resources and territories based on their traditional knowledge, ensuring dignity and well-being for both people and nature.



Promoting the formalization of ETIs and highlighting their importance—recognizing the ancestral guardians of critical regions like the Amazon—is essential to addressing the climate crisis.

C. Seeing the Territory from a New Perspective



Use powerful visuals to show the ecological importance of these regions and the vital role of Indigenous communities in preserving them.

[Click here to access a photo gallery of the Amazon and its Indigenous peoples.](#)



d.

Amplifying the Voices of the Forest

Recognize and amplify the wisdom of Indigenous peoples who have safeguarded vital ecosystems for centuries.

Click here to discover stories from the territory, insights from Indigenous leaders, and essential information about their knowledge systems and territorial governance.



e.

Exploring New Sources of Coverage

For reliable, ongoing information grounded in social and environmental justice:



Gaia Amazonas **Presentes.**



Story of Yaigojé
Apaporis



Quote carousel



Quote carousel 2

**Today, the voices of the
Amazon speak directly to the
Global North,
reminding us that no energy
transition should come at the
cost of life.**

Now is the time to listen

**For a dignified
future for all
people,
species, and
ecosystems.**





**The Voices of
the Amazon
Are the Voices
of Life**