

**PEASANT AND
INDIGENOUS
PRESS
FORUM**



INDIGENOUS AUTONOMY

Protecting the Amazon begins with Indigenous self-governance.

“We want to tackle a situation, that may end up in the extinction of our people.

Majed Velasquez Veliz / Consejo Shipibo Konibo Xetebo (COSHIKOX) / Perú
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Majed is a representative of the COSHIKOX Council, working to advance self-governance for 121 Indigenous (Shipibo-Konibo-Xetebo) communities in Amazonian territories. While Indigenous peoples were largely [ignored at COP26](#), they already hold many solutions for climate change. Progress starts with recognizing the millennia of ecosystemic knowledge preserved and practiced by Indigenous communities around the world. Through democratic processes, the communities of COSHIKOX are preserving this knowledge and growing their cooperative to produce foods and medicines such as: plantain, camu camu, sustainable ayahuasca, copaiba oil, and dragon's blood.

“Our cooperative promotes agroforestry products, not aiming to make ourselves rich, but to have food sovereignty,” says Majed Velasquez Veliz. [COSHIKOX](#) is on a mission to let the world know that Indigenous-led solutions can ensure a better quality of life for all peoples.

[Recording here.](#)

True Indigenous liberation requires sovereignty over land and education.

“We are keeping and safeguarding our knowledge to be able to transmit this to future generations..”

Ofelia Nelva Salazar Shiguango
Asociacion de Mujeres Pateras Kichwas del Alto Napo (AMUPAKIN) / Ecuador
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For the Indigenous Kichwa of Ecuador, forced dependencies on industrial agriculture and top-down imposition of monoculture have created a health crisis and threatened Indigenous land access. Kichwa foodways and medicinal practices are interdependent, and both are under attack from outside forces. In response Kichwa women lead [AMUPAKIN](#), a centre for health services and midwifery that centers the preservation of ancestral, Indigenous knowledge of the Amazonia. Their contributions to health and to Amazonian ecosystems have gone unrecognized. But AMUPAKIN continues to mobilize for positive change, working to launch a political school for Indigenous women, which would ensure that they occupy decision-making spaces in local institutions.

[Recording here.](#)

INDIGENOUS AUTONOMY

Indigenous-led farm democratizes food and knowledge for dignified foodways.

“Food justice is really healing the sickness that has been brought about by the government purposefully. Not just on my people. But on all peoples.”

Amyrose Foll / Virginia Free Farm / Virginia, USA

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Food insecurity is on the rise — an estimated 50 million people are food insecure in the U.S. alone. [Virginia Free Farm](#) is providing healthy, nutrient-dense food directly to those who need it most. Amyrose Foll, an army veteran and an enrolled tribal member of the Abenaki, has created a radical model rooted in collective liberation. She supports those in need with free plants, seeds, chickens and ducks, and teaches Indigenous and ethnobotanical knowledge through her programs in local schools, preserving indigenous heirloom seeds and provides food access for all. Through her work, Amyrose builds local resiliency, democratizes education, and advocates for everyone’s right to dignified foodways.

Of all philanthropic dollars only .23% go to native-led non profits. Virginia Free Farm is just one of the many Indigenous-led organizations denied funding (reach out to Amyrose for more on this issue).

[Recording here.](#)

WHEN FARMING IS DEEMED AN ACT OF TERRORISM

Palestinian farmers protecting their foodways are being branded as terrorists.

“Can you imagine... your right to produce your own food suddenly becomes illegal?”

Dr. Moayyad Bsharat / Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) / Palestine
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UAWC is the largest agricultural union in Palestine, established for over 35 years now. They work to establish food sovereignty by ensuring community access to food, strengthening farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing, advocating for land access, and preserving Indigenous Palestinian agricultural heritage. Faced with forced displacement, the uprooting of crops, trade embargoes, limited water access and the aerial spraying of pesticides, UAWC and Palestinian farmers are resilient and committed to the food sovereignty movement. To further suppress UAWC’s funding from US and EU foundations, the state of Israel has recently labelled UAWC a terrorist organization.

[Recording here.](#)

Collective, mutual aid farmer networks are classified as terrorists.

“In the Philippines when you are red-tagged, you are on the list of people who can get killed...”

Lea Jordan / Alyansa ng Magbubukid ng Bulacan (AMB) / Philippines
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In the Philippines, nine out ten Filipino farmers do not own the land they till. Landless peasant farmers have had to organize in innovative ways, such as through Bungkalan, a model of collective land cultivation set up by members of the Peasant Movement of the Philippines (KMP). Though not recognized by the state as farmers, local KMP chapter Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Bulacan have delivered more than 20,000 kilos of fresh vegetables to communities in their first year alone. This collective is faced with threats of displacement and landgrabs from developers like the family of Senator Cynthia Villar and the Aranetas, which makes them targets of state forces. To date, a total of 342 farmers have been killed under the Duterte regime, falsely labelled terrorist-communists (red-tagged) to justify state-sanctioned violence.

[Recording here.](#)

“DEVELOPMENT” AGAINST FARMERS

Farmer groups continue to oppose the false savior of Golden Rice.

“We advocate for food that is accessible and healthy for everyone. Food that has no poison.”

Virginia Nazareno / Stop Golden Rice Network (SGRN) / Asia-U.S.-Global
To reach Virginia and SGRN, contact Alfie: ampulumbarit@gmail.com

Golden Rice is a genetically modified, beta-carotene-fortified rice*, marketed as a miracle cure to the widespread problem of Vitamin A deficiency (VAD). Although funders of Golden Rice development like the Gates Foundation have marketed Golden Rice as the solution to VAD, their claims hold little evidence. Golden Rice is not only expensive, but also has poor beta carotene content, and suffers from low yields — [as documented by the U.S. FDA](#). The Stop Golden Rice Network (SGRN) has worked to expose the corporate motives to consolidate the seed market while providing ample data on the massive shortcomings of this “miracle crop.” Even though farmer networks around the world oppose Golden Rice, it has recently become the first GM staple crop approved for commercial use in Asia. See the research and resources on Golden Rice [here](#).

[Recording here.](#)

Western promoted “green technologies” displace Kenya’s smallest tribe.

“Many of the companies and wind farms are now coming for the land.”

Magella Lenatiyama / Gurapau Tribe / Kenya
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In Kenya the push for green technologies have led to a massive windmill project at Lake Turkana, home to the Gurapau, the smallest of 42 tribes in Kenya. The erection of these windmills cut off access to vital freshwater sources for the Gurapau. These communities no longer have access to their once communally-governed resource, nor do they receive any of the power now generated by the windmills. The conditions have forced the Gurapau peoples to migrate during COVID and relocate in unsafe conditions. With a population of less than 1,000, the Gurapau tribe has been suffering from bone deformities and diarrhea from drinking from the only water available — a salt water lake. This vulnerability is heightened with the threat of COVID. [For more context, read here.](#)

[Recording here.](#)

BIG INDUSTRY

Expanding palm oil plantations are destroying sacred burial and cultural sites.

“Our being feels amputated without these traditional spiritual practices.”

Emmanuel Elong / SYNAPARCAM / Cameroon

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For many in the West the rapid expanse of Palm Oil Plantations is purely an issue of deforestation. For SYNAPARCAM, it is fundamentally about the eradication of their culture and foodways. The government of Cameroon continues to sell land to corporations (SOCAPALM, SAFACAM, etc.) without local consultation, reflecting the rising threat of land grabbing globally. In southern Cameroon land grabs have destroyed sacred burial sites. These sites, preserved for centuries, are the home for Indigenous traditions, spirituality and cultural practices. Due to government control of the media, there is a lack of local media coverage. See [recent Mongabay report](#) here for more details.

[Recording here.](#)

Indigenous-led biodiversity hotspots, under threat by palm oil monopolization.

“Come visit our tribes, and you will be fed by our forests.”

Bhogtoram Mawroh / North East Slow Food and Agrobiodiversity Society / India

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Indigenous communities in the state of Meghalaya continue to be marginalized. They are denied representation in government positions, access to resources, and have been devastated by the forced dependencies imposed by the Green Revolution. Despite these threats, Indigenous food systems remain mostly intact, preserving one of the most biodiverse areas in the world. Even with the growing scientific and institutional recognition of this Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot, and the successes of Indigenous land stewardship, palm oil plantations now threaten this region's biodiversity. The North East Slow Food and Agrobiodiversity Society works to promote sustainable agricultural practices and Indigenous foodways. Communities in Meghalaya and other states in Northeast India have joined in the nationwide Farmers' Protest calling for food sovereignty.

[Recording here.](#)

BIG INDUSTRY

Indigenous coastal communities are under threat by Big Oil.

“People and the land are one, so allowing the land to be raped will be detrimental to the people and their self-determination.”

Sinegugu Zukulu / Sustaining the Wild Coast (SWC) / South Africa

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Due to climate change, South Africa is heating at twice the global average. Mining, oil and gas extraction continue to threaten Indigenous coastal communities and ecosystems. These pursuits exacerbate climate change, and completely disregard communities’ cultures and sacred foodways. Policymakers offer permits to transnationals (ENI, Sasol, and Shell) without local consultation of indigenous communities. While permits are granted for offshore exploration, the consequent water pollution disproportionately impacts Zululand, Mpondoland, Xhosaland, Khoisanland, and Namaqualand communities — who have historically managed these coastal areas. Recently, [Shell announced](#) that seismic surveys for oil and gas exploration could begin this December on South Africa’s east coast. SWC and allied organizations are raising the alarm, that this exploration will have immediate harm on marine wildlife and coastal communities. SWC actively researches, writes policy papers and advocates for the meaningful inclusion of local communities in the decision-making process as the original custodians of their shores.

[Recording here.](#)