

COLLECTIVE RIGHTS VIOLATED DURING THE PANDEMIC



PLATFORM REVEALS INDIGENOUS AND COMMUNITY RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS IN LATIN AMERICA



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Mexico: Indigenous Peoples and local communities face countrywide violations by the infrastructure sector



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This is a summary of findings from a platform tracking community rights violations across 6 countries in Latin America, from industrial projects operating during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fifty-nine percent of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in Mexico were negatively affected by infrastructure industry projects in their territories during the pandemic, according to a platform tracking [Collective Rights Violations](#) across Latin America.

[The platform](#) reveals that Mexico's communities faced the highest number of rights violations in the region linked to infrastructure and energy projects in their territories. These violations made up 35% of total community rights violations during the pandemic. About 26% were caused the energy industry. Other sectors affecting the communities included mining (19%), agribusiness (14%) and the forestry industry (6%).

The [Collective Rights Violated During the Pandemic](#) platform is a digital tool developed by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) with the support of the Amazon Conservation Team (ACT).

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Four types of rights stood out for having been violated most frequently: the communities' right to collective domain (15 cases); to free, prior and informed consent (14); to determine their own development priorities (13), and to a healthy environment (11).

Other rights violated during the pandemic included the right to defend ancestral land (10 cases), to water (10) and physical and moral integrity (7), among others.

Social Impact

The platform mapped 30 extractive and infrastructure projects that affected 129 Mexican communities. Of these, 10 belonged to the energy sector, including solar, thermal, wind and hydro energy.

Several projects stand out due to the severity of their impact on the communities: the Mayan Train construction, the Program for the Comprehensive Development of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec – Interoceanic Corridor and the El Zapotillo dam

The Mayan Train project will extend over 1,460 kilometers, focusing on connecting tourist areas and transporting food and fuel. Recently, the federal government has changed the layout of the railway's Cancun-Tulum route.

However, experts say that the administration has studied the environmental impact of the route, which are particularly important considering the characteristics of the soil and the presence of caves, rivers and natural water springs in the area.

"This train is not for the Maya. It is a real estate megaproject that does not respect nature and that will cause dispossession and deteriorating impacts on the territories of Indigenous Peoples," said Romel González, coordinator of Democracia y Buen Vivir del Consejo Regional Indígena y Popular de Xpujil S.C. (Democracy and Good Living of the Regional Indigenous and Popular Council of Xpujil S.C.), of Mexico.

González added that the project's benefits will be directed to large corporations at the detriment of "the economic, environmental and social security of Indigenous communities in the area."



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Attacks on community defenders and the environment

Twenty-one people from the 129 affected communities have been attacked so far for protesting against 30 projects funded by foreign investors.

These community defenders suffered various forms of attack including invasion of their collective territory, threats to their safety, physical abuse and intimidation. Two activists were murdered.

Among the projects' environmental impacts, three were most frequent: 33% of the projects affected the communities' water and water sources while 23% affected soil quality. Over 20% of the projects harmed the territories' biodiversity.

It should be noted that the infrastructure sector had the most harmful impacts on the environment, followed by agribusiness, mining, and energy projects.

For more information, visit the [Collective Rights Violated During the Pandemic](#) platform. The platform presents information on projects linked to conflicts with local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and Afro-descendant Peoples in six countries: Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru. It offers a comprehensive regional overview using interactive graphics and statistics tracking the mining, hydrocarbon, forestry, agribusiness and infrastructure sectors in these countries.

