

The power of collective struggles

**Our future is not
a pit left behind.
It is children
breathing clean air,
women earning
state incomes,
farmers with water.
Roads that connect
rather than collapse.
And energy that lights
our own nights first.**

Mary Nyadome
Simukai Rural Residents Trust
Goromonzi district
Zimbabwe



THE FUTURE WE WANT: AFRICAN MINING-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES BRING THEIR STORIES AT THE ALTERNATIVE MINING INDABA

Across Africa, mining-affected communities are leading powerful struggles, advocating for their rights, and imagining alternative development pathways. They are facing displacement, pollution and human rights violations, but they refuse to be just passive victims.

In February, we joined the [Alternative Mining Indaba](#) in Cape Town with several members and partners, and we hosted a multimedia exhibition (with poems, songs, videos and photos) bringing the voices of mining-affected communities in Guinea, Madagascar, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Their stories illuminate how resistance and hope can coexist in the same landscapes of extraction; and how genuine justice in the energy transition depends on listening to, learning from, and standing with those on the frontlines.



[Check out the multimedia exhibiton and read the poems](#)



[Read the blog "Reflections on the 2026 Alternative Mining Indaba"](#)

Updates from members and partners

LATIN AMERICA

IDB Annual Meetings 2026

Over 20 members of the Working Group on IDB (IDB WG) from across Latin America participated in the 2026 Annual Meetings of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Group, held in Paraguay from March 11–14. The IDB WG engaged with Bank officials (including the Bank’s president), government representatives and other stakeholders to raise concerns about the direction of development finance in the region and to advocate for stronger human rights protections, adherence to social and environmental safeguards, and meaningful participation for affected communities.

Ahead of the official meetings, the group also joined other CSOs in a day-long workshop to exchange perspectives on the IDB’s upcoming strategy for engagement with civil society.

At the IDB–Civil Society Forum, Coalition member Suhayla Bazbaz (CCIS, Mexico) spoke on behalf of the IDB WG on the importance of civil society participation in co-creation, early involvement in project design, and monitoring implementation. Suhayla also conveyed concerns raised by CSOs about gaps in IDB Invest’s due diligence and implementation of its Environmental and Social Framework.

The group also joined several roundtables with IDB officials. During the dialogue on civic space and reprisals, we presented our brief “Restricted Participation” (read more on page 8), highlighting growing restrictions on civic participation and environmental regulations across the region.



In discussions on the South Connection program, the IDB WG, along with Indigenous people affected by the Bioceanic Corridor, urged the Bank to learn from past infrastructure projects and ensure stronger safeguards, meaningful consultation and robust monitoring. The roundtable on Amazonia Forever emphasised the need to support community-led solutions in the Amazon and ensure amazonian people’s participation & transparency.

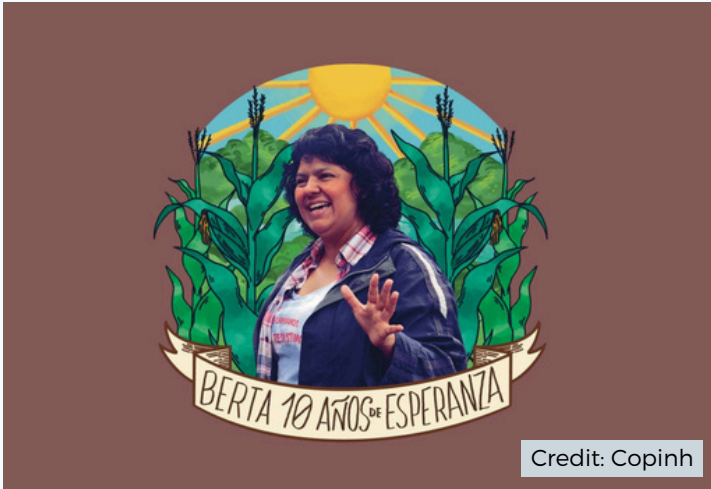
Outside the official program, IDB WG members also met with Paraguayan civil society and Indigenous groups to share experiences with IDB advocacy and discuss how communities can use the Bank’s accountability mechanisms for projects that are harming their land.



Read more about the 2026 IDB Annual Meetings



[Berta Cáceres: 10 Years of Hope](#)



March 1, 2026, marked ten years since the sowing of Berta Cáceres. From the Coalition for Human Rights in Development, we join in full solidarity with the commemoration led by the [Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras \(COPINH\)](#), honoring Berta's life and recognizing the continuation of the struggle that COPINH carries forward in her memory. In a global context marked by the growing power of corporations, repression, and criminalization of those who defend their territories, the organization and resistance that Berta helped strengthen continue to light the way forward.

[Accountability milestone in Ecuador](#)

A compliance investigation by the IDB's Independent Consultation and Investigation Mechanism found that IDB Invest failed to adequately oversee its financing of Procesadora Nacional de Alimentos C.A. (Pronaca) in Ecuador. The complaint, filed in 2023 by Indigenous Tsáchila communities (with support from the Bank Information Center (BIC), CEDENMA, and Friends of the Earth US) raised concerns about pollution, lack of access to information, and the absence of meaningful consultation. The investigation confirmed gaps in environmental oversight, transparency, and engagement with Indigenous communities, and issued recommendations to address harms.



[Learn more about the case](#)

Berta's memory lives on in collective organization, in the defense of territory, and in the persistence of COPINH. From the Coalition, we reaffirm our solidarity and our commitment to their struggle for justice.



- [Read more in our article commemorating Berta](#)
- [COPINH's communique](#)



In January 2026, the [Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts \(GIEI\)](#) published its final report on the assassination of Berta Cáceres, the related crimes, and measures for comprehensive reparations. The report also found that funds from international development bank such as CABI and the Dutch bank FMO were allocated to the Agua Zarca hydroelectric project tied to the violent management of the territorial conflict, including illegal surveillance, armed incursions, logistical support, and ultimately the assassination of Berta Cáceres.

[>>> Read the report](#)



[Argentina's Ley de Glaciares](#)

In Argentina, civil society is leading a [powerful mobilization](#) against the proposed reform to the Glacier Law, which would weaken protection for glaciers, threatening freshwater reserves that feed dozens of river basins and supply water to millions of people. Over 100,000 people registered to participate in public hearings on this controversial law.



[Read more on FARN's website](#)

Sierra Leone: UNDP-funded project leads to land-grabbing, violence and reprisals

In Freetown, Sierra Leone, a project funded by the United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**) — supposedly aimed at empowering persons with disabilities — has led to a series of appalling human rights violations, including the death of a two-day old baby, illegal land-grabbing, physical attacks, and criminalization of local activists.

In September 2025, the Minister for Social Welfare began taking over a piece of land — despite it is duly registered as freehold land by civil society organization Lifeline Nehemiah Projects (LNP) — to build houses for persons with disabilities, as part of a \$990,000 project. Behind the inclusive language and the commitments on paper, however, lies a twisted story of abuse of power and violence.

In October 2025, the police carried out an unprovoked attack on the community. Officers fired tear gas, stole some items from LNP’s IT room, threatened community members and arrested several people. As a result of the tear gas, a two-day old baby choked to death.

Since then, the community has been living in fear, amidst ongoing intimidation, destruction of some buildings in the compound, and other arrests and criminalization of LNP staff.

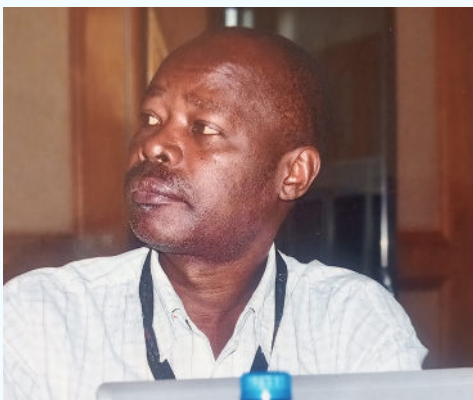
“This case is a stark warning of what happens when repeated alarm bells are ignored. UNDP was informed months ago that one of its projects was being implemented on disputed land – legally owned and occupied by LNP – and that police were violently attacking and arresting those resisting land-grabbing. It is unacceptable that the project is still ongoing and that the community, facing renewed attacks, is living in fear.”

Mark Fodor
(Defenders in Development campaign)

Learn more

- [Press release](#): UNDP-funded project in Sierra Leone leads to land-grabbing, violence and criminalization of local activists
- [“UNDP-backed disability project becomes flash point in Sierra Leone”](#) (Devex)

Our Coalition’s Member Jamaa Resource Initiatives joins the EBRD CSO Steering Committee



In January 2026, Maurice Ouma Odhiambo — Executive Director of our Coalition’s member organization Jamaa Resource Initiatives (Kenya) — was appointed as a member of the Civil Society Steering Committee of the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)** for 2026–2027. By joining this committee, he seeks to ensure that the voices of civil society – particularly those from regions navigating complex development challenges – are integrated into the Bank’s strategic decision-making and project planning.

A key concern relates to the fact that the EBRD is currently expanding into Sub-Saharan Africa. Civil society groups have raised pointed concerns on whether the EBRD’s existing safeguards are sufficient for the unique social and political landscape of the African continent, in particular in relation to risks of displacement. According to Maurice Odhiambo, to ensure this expansion does not exacerbate existing social and environmental issues, the EBRD must adopt a human rights-based approach.



[Read the blog](#)

[Strengthening accountability through community engagement in the Gambia](#)



Credit: Open Society Platform The Gambia (OSPG)

The successful story shared by our partner Open Society Platform The Gambia (OSPG) shows that when communities actively participate in project development and monitoring, have access to information, and have safe spaces to raise their concerns, then and only then development projects can have positive impacts.

Through the collaboration with the Community Resource Exchange, over 200 community members — especially women, youth, and persons with disabilities — participated in monitoring the World Bank-funded GIRAV agricultural project.

Through site visits, consultations, and knowledge-sharing, communities were able to better understand the project, learn what safeguards were in place on paper, and actively demand their implementation. As a result, they began reporting safeguard issues, prompting corrective actions by project authorities and contractors.



[Read the blog](#)



[Watch the documentary](#)

[A success story from Uganda](#)

In January 2026, Uganda's President Museveni ordered the immediate cancellation of all land titles issued in the Kitubulu Central Forest Reserve, citing the forest's critical role in protecting Lake Victoria's biodiversity and filtering pollutants. Our CRE collaborator Youth for Green Communities – with support from Environmental Defenders Collaborative, through a CRE referral – had accompanied affected communities in their advocacy and campaigns.

Together, they led a powerful struggle to resist the government's decision to allocate Kitubulu Central Forest Reserve to a Chinese investor, for the construction within the forest of a "mini-city" with government offices and other modern facilities



[Read more in the **Business & Human Rights Resource Centre** website](#)

ADB's New Approach to Mining Risks Fueling Conflict

As we witness a renewed wave of militarization and war, we are also seeing its consequences reverberate far beyond the immediate theaters of conflict. Across Asia, a new rush for “critical minerals” is intensifying repression and militarization in resource-rich territories.

Framed as essential for the energy transition, these minerals are also indispensable to the global arms industry, creating a vicious cycle where extractivism fuels conflict and conflict drives further extractivism.

For more than four decades, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has avoided direct investment in the mining sector. Last November, however, the Bank approved a new Energy Policy, which gives the green light to the extraction of critical minerals.

While the ADB speaks about “responsible and sustainable practices,” Indigenous Peoples, affected communities, and civil society organizations across the region are sounding the alarm: this new rush toward critical minerals will exacerbate human rights violations and environmental destruction, forcing mining-affected communities to sacrifice their land and resources for the “greater good” amid heightened risks of conflicts and violations.



Read more in this op-ed — authored by Rhoda Viajar (Alyansa Tigil Mina), Sukgherel Dugersuren (OT Watch), and Robie Halip (Right Energy Partnership with Indigenous Peoples), originally published by the [Asia Sentinel](#).

Unmasking the Hypocrisy Behind Kazakhstan NGO Foreign Funding Law

On March 15, Kazakhstan held a national referendum to adopt a new constitution. The controversial reform, aimed at further tightening state control over critical voices, includes burdensome and discriminatory requirements on NGOs receiving foreign funding. Yet, in a stark display of hypocrisy, Kazakhstan is increasingly courting foreign investments from development banks and multinational corporations.

Foreign capital is celebrated as a driver of progress by the state, while foreign-funded civil society is painted as a threat.

In our new op-ed published by The Diplomat, we explore this contradiction and focus in particular on the role of development banks operating in Kazakhstan. On paper, these institutions commit to ensuring and promoting public participation.



In reality, however, they continue their business as usual and they keep investing in countries where critical voices are silenced, failing to use their leverage to protect human rights and civic freedoms. Burying their head in the sand, they think that economic growth will be a magic wand capable of solving all problems. But economic growth – without a solid democracy, respect for human rights, and an open civic space where everyone can safely raise their voices – will not lead to any progress.



Read the op-ed (The Diplomat)

The sea is home: the struggle of the Bajo community in Indonesia



“For this community, the sea has a meaning far beyond economics. Children learn to swim and explore the sea from an early age; women build networks and solidarity through coastal activities. This relationship shapes the identity of the Bajo community in Kurisa. The sea is home.”

For the Indigenous Bajo people in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, the sea is not just a natural landscape. It is where they fish, cultivate seaweed, share their knowledge, raise their children, and sustain their collective memory as a seafaring community.

Over the past decade, however, the Bajo community has been increasingly threatened by the activities of the Indonesia Morowali Industrial Park (IMIP), one of the largest nickel industrial parks in the world, comprising dozens of smelters, 20 coal-fired power plants, and a port. Many of the companies operating in the park are associated with China’s Tsingshan Group. Since IMIP began operating, ocean conditions have changed drastically. The sea, once a vital living space for residents, has become a traffic route for industrial vessels and a site for the discharge of waste heat. Fish catches have declined sharply.

As the hamlet of Kurisa and other coastal villages are located very close to industrial activity, without adequate buffer zones, there are growing health, environmental, social, and economic concerns. Local residents' access to employment in the IMIP industrial area is extremely limited. Residents report severe loss of livelihoods and increasing insecurity, especially for women.

In this [blog](#), our partner JAGA DECA shared about the findings from the workshop and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) they held with residents of Kurisa Hamlet last November, supported through the Community Resource Exchange. This workshop was one of the first steps in the struggle to resist the IMIP industrial complex and advocate for their rights. JAGA DECA will now work to strengthen indigenous and coastal community organizations, coordinate advocacy efforts, facilitate community-based documentation, engage media campaigns, and expand cross-regional solidarity.



[Read the blog](#)

New reports and publications

BRIEF ON CIVIC SPACE RESTRICTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA



Our new brief, ***Restricted Participation: Recent Trends in Latin America that Undermine the Right to Participation in the Context of Development Projects***, prepared in collaboration with several members and partners from Latin America, documents and highlights two regulatory trends in Latin America that seriously restrict civic space in the context of development projects:

- Laws that improperly regulate civil society organizations in ways that limit their autonomy and independence and threaten their existence.
- The weakening of environmental safeguards, which reduces opportunities for participation and access to information.

The brief also explains why these restrictions on civic space undermine the right to participation and compromise the possibility of designing and implementing projects in ways that respect human rights. It concludes with a set of recommendations for development banks operating in the region.



[Download it here](#)



Development finance institutions should not treat restrictions on civic space as political issues outside their mandate. On the contrary, they must recognize that they pose serious risks to people affected by their projects, to their development objectives, and to their operations, while also undermining the implementation of their participation policies.



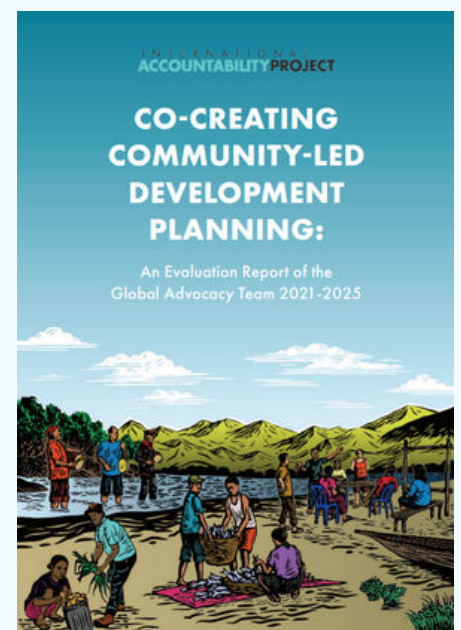
REPORTS FROM MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

[Collective Learning, Co-Creating Change: The Global Advocacy Team's Journey Toward Community-Led Development](#)

By: [International Accountability Project](#)

The Global Advocacy Team (GAT) is an initiative co-created and co-led by community leaders and the International Accountability Project (IAP), designed to shift development away from top-down models and toward community-led, rights-based planning.

In this evaluation report, the GAT shares key insights, experiences, and reflections of those directly involved in the initiative. Ultimately, this report contributes to a broader effort to deepen understanding of what it takes to support community-led development planning and rights-based advocacy at a global scale, ensuring that future initiatives continue to be rooted in the experiences and priorities of the communities they are designed to serve



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“Farmers have no freedom: abuse and exploitation of cotton and wheat farmers in Uzbekistan”

By: [Uzbek Forum for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch](#)

A new report documents the rights violations of cotton and wheat farmers in Uzbekistan, who report widespread abuse, illegal land seizure and violence. Nonetheless, development banks continue to pour millions into Uzbekistan's agriculture sector.

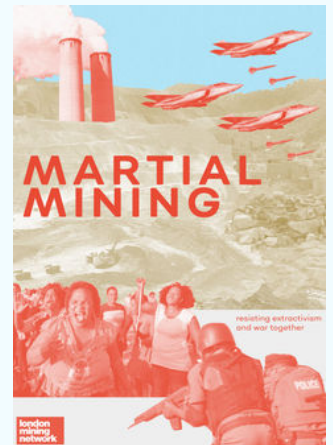
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Without the promised implementation of reforms by the Uzbek government, and in the absence of robust human rights due diligence by development banks, these investments are exacerbating and perpetuating a deeply abusive system, as seen in the disastrous Indorama Agro cotton project

“Martial mining” (by London Mining Network)

Militarism is more than a deadly diversion of funds from the health of people and the planet towards warfare. It is an essential ingredient fuelling the climate and ecological crises. As shown in this report, extractivism is a militarised process: it violently ruptures ecosystems and habitats. In doing so, it displaces then polices human communities with ongoing connections to the land. Relatedly, militarism is an extractive process: it depends on vast quantities of natural resources to innovate and assemble more deadly technologies of control and destruction



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Towards a Bandung de los Pueblos (by Transnational Institute)

Amid rising fascism and a shifting capitalist order, progressive forces face a historic choice: fragmentation or solidarity. Drawing on liberation struggles, this paper calls for shared strategy and collective action to build a transformative Global South front for justice worldwide. It is the product of several rounds of informal consultations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America with social movements, trade unions, activist-scholars, and other civil society organizations engaged with multilateralism. It lays out the analysis and the reasoning behind the building of a Global South Front (Part I), its challenges and opportunities (Part II), underlining some elements for the development of a mobilizing common global strategy (Part III).

[Download](#)



Fundeps Annual Report *(Spanish only)*

In 2025, amid particularly challenging circumstances for civil society, our member Fundeps reassessed its priorities while continuing to support communities, generate evidence, and strengthen advocacy efforts in defense of human rights.

[Check out Fundeps Annual Report](#)



“Lobé-Kribi iron mining project in southern Cameroon

(by Youth for Promotion of Development)

In this report, YPD sheds light on the realities experienced by communities living around the Lobé industrial iron mining project, while presenting factual findings from the field.

[Check out YPD's new report](#)



Reading tips, podcasts, and videos

Op-eds and articles

- [How development banks deny justice for Asia's indigenous peoples](#) (by Prabin Shakya and Simone Galimberti, The Jakarta Post)
- [How mining threatens the world's biodiversity](#) (The Guardian)
- ["2026: A critical year for upholding rights in public finance"](#) (Recourse)



Podcast

Building the tallest dam in the world and displacing 60,000 people in one of the world's most repressive countries is a recipe for disaster. In a new episode of the [podcast Spotlight on Central Asia](#), Eugene Simonov (Rivers Without Boundaries Coalition) and Mark Fodor (coordinator of the Defenders In Development campaign) discuss about the Rogun dam in Tajikistan, and explain why development banks should have never got involved in such a disastrous mega-project.



Videos

["Displaced Giants"](#), a new documentary produced by our CRE collaborator [Youth for Green Communities](#), exposes the human and environmental costs of the Tilenga oil fields in Western Uganda, developed by Total Energies.



Newsletters

Apart from this quarterly newsletter, the Coalition also publishes:

- the **AfDB CSOs Working Group newsletter** (you can read the latest issue [here](#) and subscribe [here](#))
- the quarterly **Community Resource Exchange bulletin**, focused on updates from CRE collaborators ([read more here](#))



Advocacy

[A global campaign to call on the IFC to stop human rights violations](#)

Civil society organizations from all over the world are urging the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to strengthen its Sustainability Framework during its 2025-26 review. This framework, including the influential IFC Performance Standards, shapes how environmental and social risks are managed in IFC's \$40 billion annual portfolio and influences over \$4.5 trillion in investments globally, including those by private banks, development finance institutions, and export credit agencies.

Read more in the website ["IFC Exposed"](#).

[Recommendations about KfW Development Bank's Complaint Mechanism](#)

In February 2026, the Defenders in Development campaign submitted its recommendations to the draft rules of procedure for KfW Development Bank's Complaint Mechanism, based on the concerns that emerged in our report ["KfW: Irresponsible Banking"](#) (September 2025).

The submission highlights serious concerns about the lack of independence, effectiveness, and accessibility of KfW Development Bank's proposed Complaint Mechanism. [Read more.](#)

What's new

In the past few months, we welcomed five new members:



Established in 2013, **WATED** is a Tanzanian NGO in Tanzania whose main goal is to empower women and girls. WATED also seeks to strengthen their access to information, while documenting the challenges they face and providing recommendations to influence policy makers in Tanzania.



The **Natural Resource Women Platform (NRWP)** is a Liberian not-for-profit umbrella that supports women's rights to access and control land, water and food, through capacity-building, movement-building, seed funding, knowledge building and awareness initiatives.



Inisiasi Masyarakat Adat (IMA) is a local group in Riau, Indonesia that is monitoring the impacts of massive plantations, development projects, extractive industries and forest concessions on local communities and Indigenous Peoples. It was established to resist the exploitation of natural resources and protect Indigenous People's rights.



FORUM-ASIA is a membership-based regional network of human rights organisations in Asia. They promote and protect human rights, civic space, and democracy in the region, by empowering civil society and marginalized communities, to help build democratic, just, equitable, and sustainable societies in Asia.



Rivers & Rights is an organization based in Thailand collaborates with river dependent communities and their allies across Southeast Asia and beyond, to assert rights to dignified livelihoods and healthy river ecosystems, create the pressure needed for accountability for violations of community and environmental rights and collectively mobilize.

What's next

APRIL

- April 13-18: [World Bank Spring Meetings](#)
- April 21-24: [COP4 to the Escazú Agreement](#)
- April 22: World Earth Day
- April 24-29: [Conference on the Just Transition Away from Fossil Fuels \(Colombia\)](#)

MAY

- May 3-6: [ADB Annual Meeting \(Uzbekistan\)](#)
- May 3: World Press Freedom Day
- May 25-26: [AfDB Annual Meeting \(Congo\)](#)

JUNE

- June 5: World Environment Day (UNEP)
- June 5-7: EBRD Annual Meeting (Latvia)
- June 8-11: Asia Clean Energy Forum (Philippines)
- June 15: World Food Day



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Useful resources

Check out the [Coalition's website](#) to access:



a curated list of [toolkits and guides](#), that you can filter by topic and language



a [glossary](#), explaining key words about development finance



updated infographics explaining [what we do](#) and our [organigram](#)



our regular [newsletters](#), with updates from Coalition members and partners



a [calendar](#) with key events