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Genocide in Peru: The impacts of illegal logging on the uncontacted peoples in the Amazon

Introduction

Illegal logging throughout Peru negatively affects the livelihoods of local people. Some indigenous people living in the Amazon are involved and participate in the forestry system, while others wish to remain isolated. This paper is a study of the uncontacted tribes in Peru and how illegal logging within their territories affects their livelihoods and ability to survive in isolation. While Peruvian law prohibits logging within any uncontacted reserve, there is abundant evidence proving illegal logging is frequent within these areas of Peru. Initial contact with the tribes can be disastrous, as seen in numerous cases throughout history and presented in this paper. Uncontacted tribes lack immunity to western diseases, and initial contact can devastate an entire tribe. Death through violence is also common during clashes between loggers and uncontacted tribes on their lands. For those members of the tribe who survive initial contact, a sustained relationship with the outside world guarantees the cultural genocide of a tribe. Illegal loggers are forcing tribes off of their lands and disrupting the uncontacted people's desire to remain isolated from the rest of the world. The current forestry system in Peru, lack of enforcement from the government, and high demand for timber species located within the uncontacted reserves all lead to the decimation of some of the last remaining tribes in the world. This paper evaluates the current status of uncontacted tribes in Peru and their affects from illegal logging, and provides recommendations for improving the forestry system and truly protecting the rights of the indigenous people living in voluntary isolation.

Methods

The study analyzes research of individual authors, geographers, and anthropologists who are experts on logging and/or indigenous peoples in the Amazon. Many reports evaluated different threats that uncontacted people face from invasions on their lands. Recommendations from this paper are based on researching the previous knowledge of the subject and applying it towards the context of the Peruvian forestry system.

Literature Review

In 2008, Peru's former president Alan Garcia dismissed the existence of some uncontacted tribes in the Peruvian Amazon. "Isolated Indians were a creation in the imagination of environmentalists and anthropologists" (Boekhout van Solinge 2010), and pushed for opening up the Amazon for further resource exploitation, mainly logging and oil. His words, echoed across the globe, were met with mixed reviews. The corporations and peoples benefitting from resource extraction in the Amazon supported Garcia's claims. They did not see any reason to exclude vast regions of the forest, rich in timber and oil, from exploitation (Ellison 2008). Opponent's argued the opposite: the forest was full of uncontacted Indian tribes whose livelihoods were threatened on a daily basis from intruders. Their assertions that uncontacted tribes exist throughout Peru and the Amazon were not just hopeful wishes, but rather based on evidence from locals, NGO's, and individual field research dedicated in the protection of the Amazon's isolated Indians. Several reports and investigations proved the existence of such tribes scattered across the timber rich regions of the Amazon (Fagan and Shoobridge 2007, Castillo 2004, Wallace 2011, Schulte-Herbruggen 2003)

Months after Garcia's statement, pictures of a small Amazonian tribe along the Peru/Brazil border were released. Their location matched the area where Garcia previously said no uncontacted Indians exist. The pictures revealed about a dozen members, naked and painted red, living deep in the Amazon jungle in thatched huts. The pictures were taken by FUNAI, Brazil's governmental Indian Affair Agency and posted online by Survival International (2008), a U.K based human rights organization. The pictures created increased pressure on the Peruvian Government to act against illegal logging in the area.

Several people study and promote the protection of uncontacted people in Peru. Castillo (2004) presents solid evidence of the existence of several uncontacted tribes throughout Peru, each desperately holding on to their unique culture and diversity. Her book presents the history of these uncontacted tribes and their threats from outsiders entering their lands. Today, logging remains a serious threat to their livelihoods, and their survival depends on an improved forestry system favoring the rights of uncontacted peoples.

The solution, as this paper explains, is not as simple as signing a document which prohibits logging in areas where uncontacted tribes live. A deeper understanding of Peru's uncontacted Indians is essential before theorizing possible solutions to protect the livelihoods of

Peru's indigenous tribes in voluntary isolation. To complicate matters, the tribes still remaining in voluntary isolation have never been contacted in great detail by outsiders (Survival International 2011b). There is minimal documentation of their status and health until they are contacted, but the goals of preserving the lives of these Indians stems from keeping them separated from the rest of society. As history has shown, once contact is established, the results can be devastating for indigenous tribes (Castillo 2004).

After Brazil, Peru has the second largest number of uncontacted tribes in the world. Currently, there are fifteen recognized tribes living in voluntary isolation throughout Peru. These tribes include the Taramenane, Tagaeri, Cabellos Largos, Cashibo-Cacatiaibo, Isconahua, Murunahua, Mascho-Piro, Kugapakori, Nahua, Matsigenka, Mastanahua, Nanti, Yora, and uncontacted Matses tribe (Pantone 2011). Due to a fear of the devastating consequences suffered in previous contacts with outsiders, indigenous groups choose to remain isolated. The rubber boom and resource exploitation in the Amazon caused serious problems for indigenous peoples including violence and the introduction of diseases. This forced many subgroups to live in "isolation" from the rest of society. Between 1990 and 2002, five Territorial Reserves were created in Peru for Indians living in voluntary isolation. However, a constant threat of illegal loggers invading all reserves remains (Cabello 2010). Several flyovers and investigations within voluntary isolation tribes prove the invasion of loggers on the lands of uncontacted Indians (Fagan 2007, Herbruggen 2003). As director of the Upper Amazon Conservancy, Fagan has spent numerous time in the Alto Purus Region of Peru, mapping out illegal logging camps within uncontacted reserves. The efforts from the Upper Amazon Conservancy provide detailed knowledge of this region in Peru and give evidence to the large amount of illegal logging happening in the area.

Logging near uncontacted tribes poses many threats for the Indians, yet their contact with invaders is inevitable because of the current logging system practiced in Peru. Loggers are attracted to these areas deep in the Amazonian rainforest with hopes of finding the highly-prized mahogany tree. Intrator (2006) describes how loggers enter uncontacted tribal reserves in search of Peru's last commercially viable mahogany. Minimal enforcement fused with a monetary incentive causes loggers to move outside of their concessions and harvest wood within territories set up for tribes living in voluntary isolation. The results for uncontacted Indians, seen over and over again through history, can be catastrophic. This paper focuses on four main concerns from

invasions and initial contact with tribes living in voluntary isolation: health and risks of disease, violence and deaths during clashes, consequences of tribes fleeing their areas in fear of contact, and the loss of culture in tribes.

Survival International (2011) states it is common for at least 50% of a tribe to die from disease after first contact with the outside world. Uncontacted tribes lack the immunity to common diseases, and there are several cases throughout history supporting this claim. Napolitano (2007) studied the effects of contact describes the health vulnerability of Indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation in the Kugapakori Nahua Reserve, Peru after their initial contact in 1984 with the outside world. In her article, Napolitano uses the example of initial contact with the Nahua to explain the health effects that resource extraction activities can have on uncontacted tribes.

Uncontacted tribes are also threatened from increased violence of loggers within their territory. Those interested in the resources on isolated Indians land may chase away or simply kill a tribe living in the area, thereby creating an uninhabited forest ready for exploitation (Boekhout van Solinge 2007). Deaths have occurred on both sides, as uncontacted Indians of the Amazon fight with their bows and arrows or make-shift clubs in attempts to retain their land. Raffaele (2005) recounts the constant violent clashes between outsiders and the Korobu tribe in Brazil, arguing Korobu violence is a self-defense mechanism from experiencing so many cruel invasions from resource exploiters in the past.

In fear of disease and violence, many uncontacted tribes flee from their original locations in Peru. Many tribes cross the border into Brazil in attempts to escape the invasion of loggers (Survival International 2011a). According to the website World Rainforest Movement (2008), this can be dangerous for uncontacted tribes because they may come into violent contact with other tribes already living in Brazil's Acre Region. Yet with constant invasion and loss of territory, these uncontacted tribes face no choice but to move off their lands in search of a new place to resettle.

Amazonian tribes living in voluntary isolation hold onto their unique cultures, practiced for thousands of years. Initial contact can destroy cultural practices, and eliminate a sustainable and exciting way of life. Sydney Possuelo, a Brazilian anthropologist, has spent decades fighting for the rights of uncontacted tribes in the Amazon. Journalist Scott Wallace ventures deep into the Amazon with Possuelo in search of the Flecheiro people, an uncontacted tribe located in Acre

Brazil, arguing initial contact should be decided by the tribes themselves rather than being forced upon them. If there is a future in the existence of the last uncontacted tribes in Peru, it is dependent on a new understanding of the Peruvian Amazon and its benefits to the world.

While previous reports and documents focus either on illegal logging in individual regions within Peru or a wider range of threats uncontacted peoples have from invaders, this paper directly looks at how the logging system creates serious threats to the existence and livelihoods of all uncontacted peoples in Peru.

Analysis:

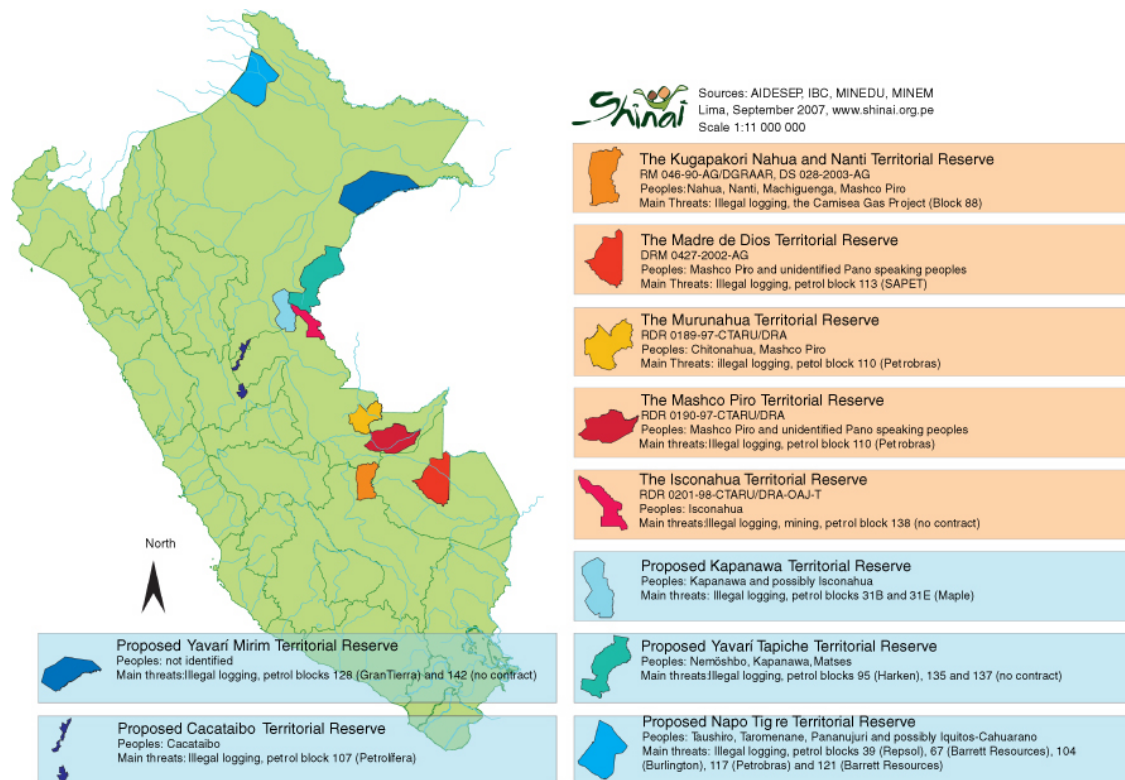
Who are the indigenous peoples in isolation in the Amazon, and why should they live apart from the rest of society? The question, although straightforward, requires further knowledge of the complex subject. Missionary groups and natural resource exploiters promote integration to end the hunter-gatherer livelihoods of uncontacted peoples (Castillo 2004). The economic value of the forest surrounding them creates an interesting scale of opinions on indigenous people living in voluntary isolation. On one side of the scale, loggers and economically involved corporations denounce uncontacted peoples existence because the Indians cause problems in regulating exploitation of timber, oil, and other valuable products resources found on their land (Ellison 2008). Others, mainly missionaries and religious groups, hope to convert these “savages” into a civilized population. Anthropologists wish to discover the deepest secrets of their cultures and present them to the world (Momsen 1964, Whiton et al. 1964). Environmentalists see uncontacted Indians as an inspiration towards conservation (Witzig and Ascencios 1999). Beatriz Castillo (2004) explains “the indigenous peoples in isolation are, as their name suggests, peoples- or sub-groups thereof- who, according to available historical references, have chosen to distance themselves from national society because of previous traumatic experiences of contact”. Therefore, isolation should not be seen as meaning these people have never experienced contact with the outside world. Rather, isolation was a decision by these Indians to refuse permanent relations with the outside world, in efforts to safeguard their physical and cultural survival. Many of the uncontacted tribes today are descended from larger groups who had previous contact with outsiders (Napolitano 2007, Wallace 2011, Castillo 2004).

The uncontacted peoples of Peru decision to remain isolated should be respected by outsiders, yet history proves this is not the case. The constant presence of illegal loggers and

other extractors on their lands pose threats to tribes living in voluntary isolation. Their survival depends on their isolation. Jose Carlos Mareilles, a veteran FUNAI official who has spent decades protecting uncontacted tribes, speaks of the importance of protecting these tribes, stating “They should be free to choose whether to make contact or not. We have to protect the land to keep out invaders. That’s the only way they will survive. There’s no other way” (Survival International 2011a). With the Amazon containing nearly half of all uncontacted peoples throughout the world, a successful movement at protecting the rights of indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation should be at the forefront of issues (Ellison 2008). Peruvian laws and regulations have proven ineffective at protecting the uncontacted peoples (Cabello 2010) A solution derives from a better understanding of the history of uncontacted peoples, and the outside players and drivers involved.

Over the past 500 years, outside groups entering the Amazon created conflict with Indians already living there. Generally, these encounters were unpleasant for the indigenous peoples, and they were regularly “taken as slaves, robbed, killed or infected by diseases to which they had no resistance” (Boekhout Van Solinge 2010). The effect of the rubber boom from 1880 to 1920 created strong negative relationships between the indigenous peoples and the invaders of their forest. The battles, massacres, persecution, slavery and epidemics caused by the rubber boom “severely impacted on these peoples, creating a great mistrust that has been passed down through the generations and can be seen in their current attitude to outsiders and external society” (Castillo 2004). Those sub-groups which successfully escaped the invasion may be the same uncontacted Indians that live in remote regions of the Amazon today. The threats today for these Indians focus on a similar invasion for the resources surrounding them, mainly timber, gold, and oil. Their contact with outsiders, explained in more detail later in this paper, remained intense and disastrous throughout the last century.

In 1990, The Peruvian government set up the Kugapakori Nahua Reserve, the first of five uncontacted reserves for Indians living in voluntary isolation in Peru. The map below displays these five areas, as well as other proposed reserves for uncontacted Indians. Despite these areas, which prohibit any logging on the land, all five are currently invaded by illegal loggers (Cabello 2010) Initial contact, seen over and over again throughout Peruvian history, appears to be devastating for the uncontacted tribes.



Map 1. Current and proposed reserves for the uncontacted tribes of Peru (Shinai 2007)

One of the biggest threats to uncontacted tribes is their vulnerability to diseases. Uncontacted Indians lack immunity to Western diseases and it is common for more than 50% of a tribe to die as a result of first contact. Survival International (2011a) reports a case in 1996 where illegal loggers forced contact with Murunahua Indians living in voluntary isolation. Within a year, over half of them died, mainly from colds, flu and other respiratory infections. Jorge, a Murunahua man, lived in voluntary isolation during the invasion from illegal loggers. He now lives in contact with the outside world, after his tribe was so devastated from initial contact that they could not survive on their own. In a video interview with Survival International, Jorge tells his story with one eye closed. He was shot by loggers during the initial contact and lost an eye from the invasion.

“When the loggers made contact with us we came out of the jungle, that was when the disease came. We didn’t know what a cold was then. Half of us died. My aunt died. My nephew died. Half of my people died” (Survival International, 2011b).

The case of the Murunahua and the disease that struck their tribe after contact with loggers is a common occurrence throughout the Amazon. Reports like these have been repeated throughout

the history of uncontacted tribes in Peru (Castillo 2004). The Peruvian government created the Murunahua Territorial reserve in 1997 after this invasion, yet minimal enforcement makes it easy for loggers to still invade their territory. Pantone (2011) says an estimated 60% of the Murnahua Reserve is invaded by loggers, threatening the livelihoods of the Murunahua every day.

The Nahua, living in the Kugapakori Nahua Reserve dealt with similar impacts of diseases caused by outsiders. Throughout history, the Nahua tribe dealt with constant invasions of their area in Alto Manu from loggers, oil companies, and missionaries. In April of 1984, four uncontacted tribal members of the Nahua came in contact with loggers in the area. In attempts to peacefully take the indigenous peoples land, the loggers offered manufactured gifts and took them to their campsite on the Misagua River. This peaceful contact greatly benefitted the loggers, who now were able to log in areas closer to the Nahua population without risking violence. Although the initial contact remained peaceful, the diseases which struck the Nahua population following contact were devastating. By the end of July 1984, over 100 Nahua “were suffering from pneumonia, complicated by parasites and malaria” (Napolitano 2007). Two mission organizations brought medicines and help to the area, yet it took nearly seven months to control the epidemics. The Nahua described the tragedy, saying “they could not bury all of the dead, many of whom were left to the vultures”. The Nahua today call each other *wero Yoshi*, meaning “visible ghost”, because they are forgotten survivors of a human tragedy in Peru (Castillo 2004). Of the seven extended family leaders that lived before 1984, only one survived. The Kugapakori Nahua Reserve was established in 1990 as the first reserve for tribes in voluntary isolation within Peru. However, like the current fate of all of Peru’s reserves, illegal logging continues to threaten the livelihoods of the remaining uncontacted Nahua tribe.

Loggers entering the Amazon in search of valuable resources carry not only disease, but also guns. Violence between loggers and uncontacted peoples occurs regularly when loggers enter indigenous reserves (Survival International 2011b). Several reasons account for these clashes, and deaths on both sides are common (Castillo 2004). Uncontacted Indians become angered at the invasion of their land, and feel threatened by the presence of loggers. After witnessing invasions for centuries, the uncontacted indigenous peoples realize that fighting to protect their land is the only option if they want to survive (Wallace 2011a). As a result, violence and attacks from indigenous groups in the Amazon has increased over the years, as more loggers enter their lands (Fagan and Shoobridge 2007). Nearly “all the land reserves created and

proposed to favour those peoples living in isolation are encroached by hundreds of loggers, many of whom have harassed or murdered isolated indigenous people who have come across them” (World Rainforest Movement 2008). While the documentation of many attacks and massacres go unreported to the outside world, several studies carry evidence of frequent encounters and attacks within uncontacted indigenous reserves.

A study in the Alto Purus region in 2001 and 2002 reported 176 illegal logging camps along the Las Piedras River, and 17.3% of all loggers interviewed had encountered the Mascho-Piro uncontacted group (Schulte-Herbruggen and Rossiter 2003). In the same region, Fagan and Shoobridge (2005) interviewed local peoples about the increased violence from the Mascho-Piro. The study found “local people blame the supposed change in the Mascho’s behavior on the arrival of the loggers working in the park and surrounding lands. Several men who have encountered the Mascho in the past believe that the Mascho have become more aggressive in order to protect their shrinking territory and avenge murders by loggers” (Fagan and Shoobridge 2005).

Several other violent encounters are documented throughout Peru and the Amazon. In the Javari Valley, a reserve located on the westernmost part of Brazil and bordering the lands of Peru, over 40 whites and hundreds of uncontacted Indians were killed over the last century from invasions (Raffaele 2005). The uncontacted Indians understand their land will always be seen as a ripe area for harvest without fighting back. Sydney Possuelo explains the violent reactions from the uncontacted indigenous groups in the Javari Valley, Brazil, saying he’s “had companions killed and others wounded. It’s not that the Indians are bad people; they’re doing what they have to do to defend their land” (Wallace 2011). In one example in 2003, the Korobu of the Javari Valley came across three white men cutting down trees along the border of their lands, and “the warriors smashed the whites’ heads to pulp and gutted them” (Raffaele 2005). The Korobu, knick-named the “head-bashers” for their brutal murders of invaders, resort to violence in attempts to keep invaders out. Yet Possuelo favors the violence and brutality shown by the Korobu and other uncontacted tribes “because it frightens off intruders” (Raffaele 2005).

Although attacks from uncontacted tribes instill a certain amount of fear in loggers, their bow and arrows and wooden clubs are no match against the shotguns and other manufactured weapons from invaders (Fagan and Shoobridge 2005). Most of the violence between uncontacted Indians of the Amazon and illegal loggers goes unnoticed because the public tends to only hear

about the deaths of the loggers, rather than the uncontacted tribes (Castillo 2004). From the illegal loggers' perspective, uncontacted groups become a nuisance and pose a threat to their potential earnings from harvesting timber in their land. With their advanced weapons, loggers can destroy the people, camps, and territories of indigenous groups in voluntary isolation, and instantly their land becomes more easily harvested for valuable wood species (Castillo 2004).

Although disease and violence can greatly impact the population of once uncontacted tribes, evidence shows many instances of indigenous peoples surviving initial contact (Survival International 2011b). Yet despite their physical existence, the actual culture of the uncontacted tribe cannot survive. Illegal logging, therefore, encourages the cultural genocide of the last remaining uncontacted tribes in the Amazon (Castillo 2004). Possuelo explains "once the white man enters, Indians forget how to do things their way, the old way" (Wallace 2011a). Once contact is sustained with a tribe, their unique culture, existing for thousands of years, vanishes rapidly.

One such example occurred in 1959, when missionaries from the South American Indian Mission came across 25 uncontacted Isconahuas living along the headwaters of a tributary of the Rio Ucayali (Momsen 1964). The missionaries lived with the Indians for a year and conducted studies on the culture of the people. The reports studied the livelihoods of the Isconahua people and discussed their daily practices, traditions, migration patterns, religion, marriage customs, taboos, diet, and living conditions (Momsen 1946 & Whiton et al. 1964). By 1964, the contacted Isconahua group attended a mission school, wore clothing, and eliminated many of the unique practices which they lived with for centuries. As Whiton et al. explains (1964), "their culture was that of incipient tropical forest slash-and-burn and close to that of Neolithic man. Undoubtedly they will rapidly become acculturated because of the now friendly Shipibo and their mission contacts". But who was to say that this new way of life was better than the previous lifestyle and culture practiced by the Isconahua people for so many years? Once contact is initiated, there is no possibility of returning to a previous life, as tribes become dependent on outsiders (Castillo 2004).

While loggers are not missionaries with goals of converting the livelihoods of uncontacted groups, their actions threaten the environment which uncontacted groups depend on for cultural practices. Loggers not only harvest timber in the uncontacted reserves, but also hunt food and destroy habitat which uncontacted groups need to survive. Loggers living in the area

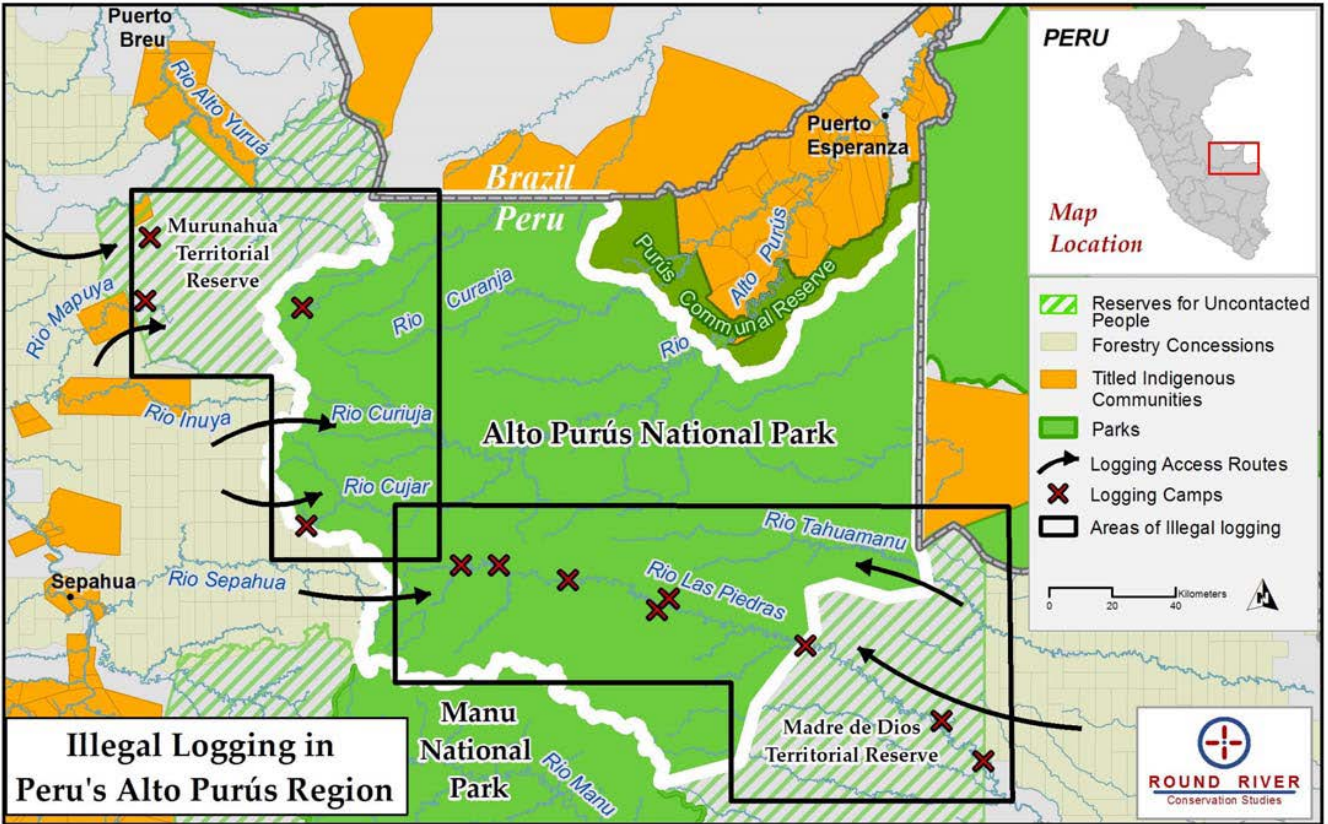
deplete local game populations, which are the primary source of protein for uncontacted people (Schulte-Herbruggen 2003). Once contact is initiated and a large percentage of the group becomes ill from disease, uncontacted Indians become more and more dependent on outsiders for help. When over 50% of the Murunahua tribe became ill from disease after conflict in 1996, their inability to cure themselves from disease and weakness to hunt forced many members to live within society (Survival International 2011b). A report from the Upper Amazon Conservancy (2010a) also notes that many members of the Murunahua tribe have emerged from the forest to live within society on the Yurua River, and “it is likely that this decision was influenced by the invasion of loggers into their homelands and lack of uninhabited forests in which to live peacefully”. The Nahua, described earlier in this paper, also felt the negative cultural effects after initial contact. The deaths and infections completely altered their original way of life, as they were unable to hunt, fish, or harvest their crops. As a result, they became dependent on loggers and missionary groups for sustenance and medical attention, and only a much smaller subgroup who fled still remain completely isolated from society (Napolitano 2007).

While an uncontacted group may not want to form a connection with the outside world, the impact from initial contact creates an unavoidable choice to either give up their irreplaceable culture or physically perish (Castillo 2004). As Possuelo explains, “once you make contact, you begin the process of destroying their universe”. Possuelo does not want to initiate contact with uncontacted tribes, but rather make sure their culture is not threatened. On a trip into the Javari Valley in search of the Flecheiro uncontacted group, Possuelo quickly ordered his expedition group to turn around once learning the current location of the Flecheiros was unthreatened by outsiders. Without making contact, Possuelo protected the Flecheiros. Accompanying Possuelo on the expedition, Wallace (2011a) explains his action, saying “what he offered was at once nothing and everything, something so huge and intangible they’d never know he’d even given it to them- the change to endure, to survive another day, to replicate their way of life, a way of life that had all but vanished from the rest of the planet.” By leaving the Flecherios uncontacted from the outside world, Possuelo provided this indigenous group the opportunity to carry on with their daily lives and embrace a culture practiced for centuries.

With the constant threat from illegal loggers entering their territories, many uncontacted groups hoping to remain in isolation flee their areas in search for untouched land where they can continue to live peacefully. However, the uncontacted groups will inevitably come in contact

with either society or other uncontacted groups, thus creating more violence and contact (Castillo 2004). The UAC (2010a) report in the Alto Purus region of Peru explains how the invasions from illegal loggers in the territory create a “crowded atmosphere” where contact is inevitable. For instance, “a tribe rarely seen in the past is now collecting turtle eggs on the same stretch of river used by two other uncontacted groups as well as hunting and fishing parties from settled communities downriver” (UAC 2010a). If an uncontacted group flees to an area with peoples living in contact with society, the group will unsurprisingly face the threats of disease, violence, and loss of culture as discussed earlier in this paper. The uncontacted group may also flee towards an area where other uncontacted groups are living, which creates dangers for both sides (Castillo 2004).

Four uncontacted groups living in the Acre region of Brazil near the border of Peru are currently at risk of invasions from uncontacted tribes on the Peruvian side. The illegal logging in Peru is forcing uncontacted Indians to flee across the border in search of new land (World Rainforest Movement 2008). [A video](#) released by Survival International (2011a) filmed one such uncontacted group in Brazil, displaying indigenous peoples painted red with annatto standing beside their huts. With high-tech zoom lenses, the tribe was filmed by a plane a few kilometers away. Bountiful gardens full of manioc, bananas, and papayas surround their village, and the tribe appears to be living a very healthy life. Jose Meirelles, narrating the film, explains how “mahogany exploration in the headwaters of Jurua, Purus and Envira (rivers in Peru) have caused the forced migration of indigenous groups in Peru into Brazil (World Rainforest Movement 2008). Many of these rivers, as seen in geographer [David Salisbury's map](#), are located within the Murunahua Reserve and Alto Purus National Park, where illegal logging is very active. Fagan and Shoobridge’s (2007) map displays several illegal logging camps located within the Murunahua Territorial Reserve, Madre de Dios Territorial Reserve, and Alto Purus National Park.



Map 2: Evidence of Illegal logging in uncontacted indigenous reserves, forcing uncontacted tribes across the border into Acre, Brazil (Fagan and Shoobridge 2007). Illegal loggers push uncontacted tribes further north towards the Brazilian border in search of undisturbed land. However, Survival International’s footage proves the existence of more uncontacted tribes, and a collision can be devastating for both sides. As Meirelles explains, “all of a sudden, uncontacted Indians who aren’t from the area have started to appear here. Where can they go? They come here. There’s nowhere else” (Survival International 2011b). Stephen Corry, director of Survival International, also commented on the fleeing of Peruvian uncontacted tribes into Brazil. In a statement (Survival International 2008) to the public, Corry explained the uncontacted people’s “land and homes are being destroyed-what choice do they have but flee into Brazil? The Peruvian government is abjectly failing in its duty to protect them.” Fagan and Shoobridge’s (2007) investigation also provides evidence of how the reservations for tribes in voluntary isolation within Peru are simply not working. While uncontacted reserves and National Parks within Peru are considered protected by invasions in Peruvian Law, the reality is the opposite.

Creating more indigenous reserves for uncontacted tribes will not eliminate the constant invasions into the reserves which already exist. Peruvian government and international laws protect the land of the indigenous peoples, but the current forestry system and lack of enforcement causes this protection of land to be “little more than a symbolic gesture” (Fagan and Shoobridge 2007). The international law for tribal people, ILO 169, is designed to protect tribal peoples’ rights, and the Peruvian government ratified this law in 1993.

The current set up of the forestry system, high demand for valuable wood species within the reserve, and lack of enforcement from Peruvian officials create an inevitable path for loggers to enter the uncontacted reserves. In 2001, a new system of forest exploitation divided areas “into minimum 5,000-hectar plots and provided contracts for up to 40 years, along with a public process for forest access and an absolute requirement for management plans, among other things” (Castillo 2004). Although no concessions overlap any uncontacted indigenous reserves, their close proximity result in constant illegal logging. In one example, Schulte-Herbruggen (2003) noted 69 illegal encampments within uncontacted indigenous reserves with the Alto Purus Reserved Zone. The illegal wood is then transported down the Mapuya, Inuya, and Ucayali Rivers to the city of Pucallpa, and passes through a forestry control post, designed specifically to prevent the transport of illegal wood (UAC 2011a). However, the wood is “laundered with forestry permits intended for legal logging operations in registered timber concessions or indigenous community lands” (UAC 2011a). These permits provide proof that the wood was harvested in legal concessions in compliance with approved management plans, even though a majority was taken outside of concessions on uncontacted tribal lands or natural reserves (Castillo 2004). By the time the wood is trucked to Lima and exported to other countries, it “contains export documentation required by the United States and other international markets” (UAC 2011a).

Loggers in Peru are attracted to the uncontacted reserves because they contain some of the last large mahogany populations within the country (Castillo 2004). Big-leaf mahogany is one of the most valuable types of wood in the international market, and loggers can make the most money by finding and cutting large mahogany trees. In 2004, mahogany’s range in Peru had already shrunk by 50%, and an estimated 28% would be logged out over the next decade. (Kommeter et al 2004). With a lack of governmental enforcement and economic incentive to harvest mahogany, loggers venture outside of their concessions and into the indigenous lands

where some of the last commercially viable stands of mahogany exist (Fagan and Shoobridge 2007). Although CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Flora and Fauna) prohibits the trade of illegally logged mahogany, the ability for loggers to forge permits to present their timber as sustainably logged eradicates the success of the program. The blame, however, cannot be solely placed on the lack of enforcement from Peruvian officials. The complexity and vast size of the Amazon make it nearly impossible to monitor, and illegal loggers will inevitably find ways to enter indigenous reserves in search of the valuable timber.

Peru is currently the world's largest exporter of mahogany, and more than 80% of the harvested mahogany timber enters the United States (UAC 2011b). Schulte-Herbruggen (2003) describes the invasion of loggers into uncontacted reserves as an "irresistible temptation" because of the high prices which mahogany sells on the market. The market price for Peruvian mahogany is around \$1,500 per cubic meter, "and with a single tree producing \$1 million worth of furniture there is significant incentive for loggers to flout the law and for governments to be less than vigilant in enforcing it (Intrator 2006). Illegal logging will continue in uncontacted reserves as long as high demand remains in the United States and other first world countries (Castillo 2004). In a video released by the Upper Amazon Conservancy (2006), an indigenous man in the Alto Purus region is interviewed and asked how to eliminate illegal logging in Peru.

The moment they prohibit mahogany, it won't be forbidden for people to enter the forest. Rather, it will be prohibited to sell it to the United States and Europe. That's how you solve the problem. How did they solve the problem of the fur trade? Was it by laws that made it illegal? No, it happened when they said in Europe...you know what? We're not going to buy any more furs. And the problem was over. So in the United States they should say... You know what? Peru is working improperly, so we won't buy any more mahogany from Peru. And Bam! It will be like that, everything goes back to normal. That's the solution. (UAC 2011c)

It is easy to blame Peru and its government for a loose certification system and lack of enforcement, but in reality a large proportion of the blame can fall on the United States and other countries like China with high demand for mahogany products. Intrator (2004) explains the uncontacted tribes "isolation is coming to an abrupt and destructive end. They are being pushed into more and more marginal areas where they face sickness, starvation, and cultural dissolution, and all because of your coffee table." The first-world countries and peoples requesting mahogany products are partially responsible for the extinction and decimation of several uncontacted tribes living in the Peruvian Amazon.

While stopping the exportation of mahogany to first-world countries will greatly help the issue of illegal logging in uncontacted reserves, it is no way the magical solution to eradicate all invasions and destructions of indigenous tribes living in voluntary isolation. Other tree species, including cedar, are of high value to loggers and can be found in abundance throughout uncontacted indigenous reserves (Schulte-Herbruggen 2003). With the lackadaisical enforcement and high demand for tree species, illegal logging within the reserves is inevitable. An effective solution must reevaluate the entire logging system within Peru and emphasize the protection of uncontacted peoples before considering the forestry market.

Conclusion

The vast amount of evidence of illegal logging in uncontacted reserves throughout Peru proves two vital facts: uncontacted tribes exist in Peru, and the government is failing at protecting the lands and the rights of these peoples. While former Peruvian President Alan Garcia denied the existence of some uncontacted tribes and opened up their lands for timber and oil exploitation, a new hope arose when Ollanta Humala was elected president in 2011 (Wallace 2011b). David Hill, a reporter for New Internationalist, described Humala's goal for the uncontacted tribes of Peru: "prohibit any oil company, loggers or mines from operating in the *aislados*' (isolated) territory, and recognize its residents as true and legal owners- not deny their existence" (Hill 2011). Journalist Scott Wallace also discussed the change of opinion in the new Peruvian government on uncontacted tribes, stating Peruvian officials are "promising to adopt a series of measures aimed at bolstering protection for isolated indigenous tribes and those in the initial stages of contact" (Wallace 2011b). While these statements are easy to say, they are much harder to actually put in motion. Protecting the lands of uncontacted Indians in Peru from logging involves commitment and collaboration between the government and those involved in the logging system, and certain steps must be taken if the government wants to achieve its new goals.

Legal logging concessions border most uncontacted indigenous reserves in Peru, creating easy access into these lands. If the concessions did not directly border the lands, entering the uncontacted indigenous reserves would become harder and more expensive for loggers, thus reducing their desire to invade these areas and make contact with indigenous peoples in isolation. This would also help in increasing the regulation of logging throughout Peru. With the current

concession system, one tree may be five feet within a concession and legal to cut, while another five feet in the opposite direction could be located on an uncontacted indigenous reserve. With a land buffer set up between the two areas, the ability to invade indigenous reserves becomes more difficult, while the ability to monitor the forestry system becomes slightly easier. Also, the inspections to approve that timber is “sustainably logged” must be stricter and better enforced. An increase in flyovers to discover illegal logging camps, and more enforcement along the rivers where timber is transported, will help ensure the wood is coming from loggers with permits who have remained within their concessions.

To further reduce the incentives of entering uncontacted peoples lands, the demand for mahogany must be reduced. The size of the Amazon makes it nearly impossible to regulate and watch over all loggers. However, if outside countries like the United States did not pay such high prices for the timber, loggers would have no reason to invade these territories in search of the last viable mahogany stocks in Peru. The people of the United States can live a healthy life without the purchase mahogany. The uncontacted people of Peru, however, may vanish throughout the Amazon as long as mahogany demand exists in first-world countries.

The indigenous people living in voluntary isolation within Peru wish to remain apart from the rest of the world, and their decision should be respected. The impacts from contact include disease, violence, loss of land, and genocide. A future for these uncontacted tribes is only possible with a revamping of the entire forestry system in Peru. Once tribes have been contacted, there is no going back to a previous life. The time to act is now.

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