

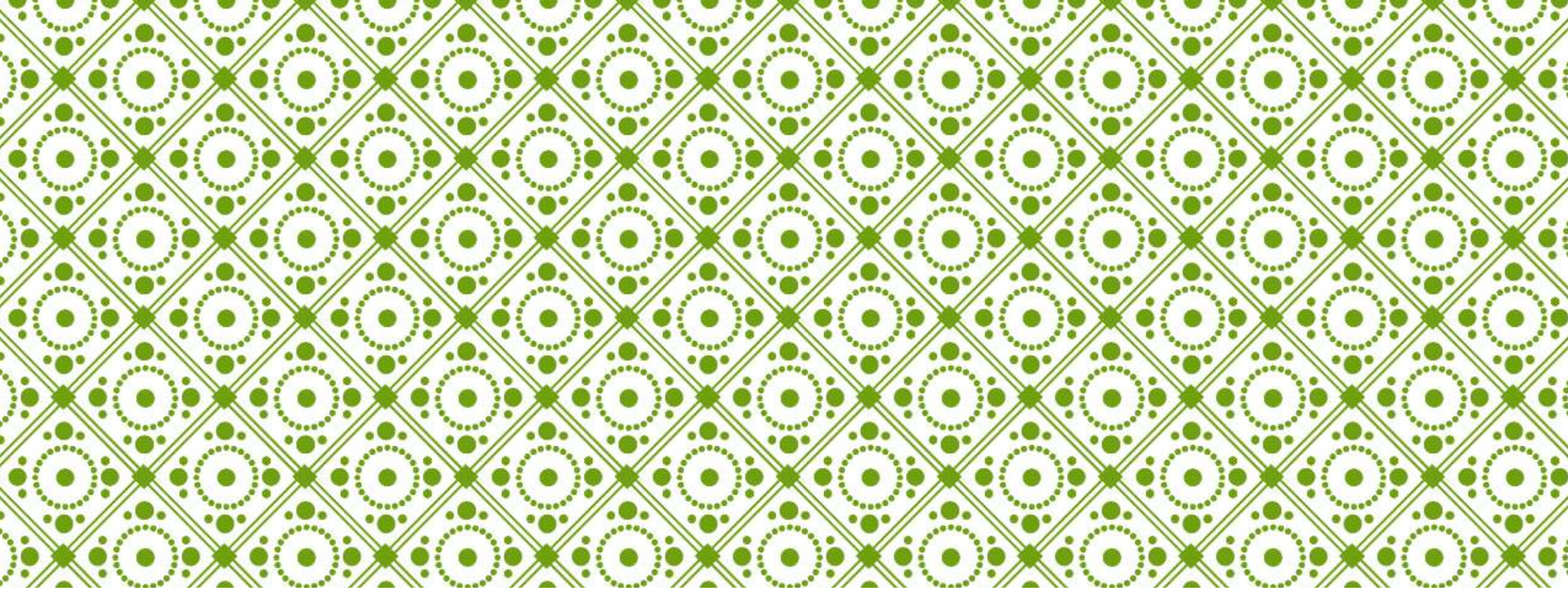
# COMMUNITY-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING IN THE ECUADORIAN AND PERUVIAN AMAZON: TECHNOLOGIES AS INSTRUMENTS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Lorenzo Pellegrini

**Plenary** at the “**Environmental Issues conference: The Role of Society and Economy.**”  
Leiden University, **March 2019.**

## Abstract

GIScience, drones, smartphones and bespoke apps are being deployed in the Ecuadorian and Peruvian Amazon by community members living next to oil installations to produce evidence on the impacts of the oil industry. The activity is a result of a project combining citizen science, scholarly activism, indigenous and mestizo mobilization. The project, which started in 2011 and is still ongoing, brings together social movements, academics and some (mostly local) government authorities. The evidence produced has been used for campaigning at various levels. Taken together, the tools and strategies deployed are instruments in the David and Goliath slow struggle for environmental justice.



# COMMUNITY-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING IN THE ECUADORIAN AND PERUVIAN AMAZON

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# OUTLINE

The context

The classic: Texaco-Chevron case

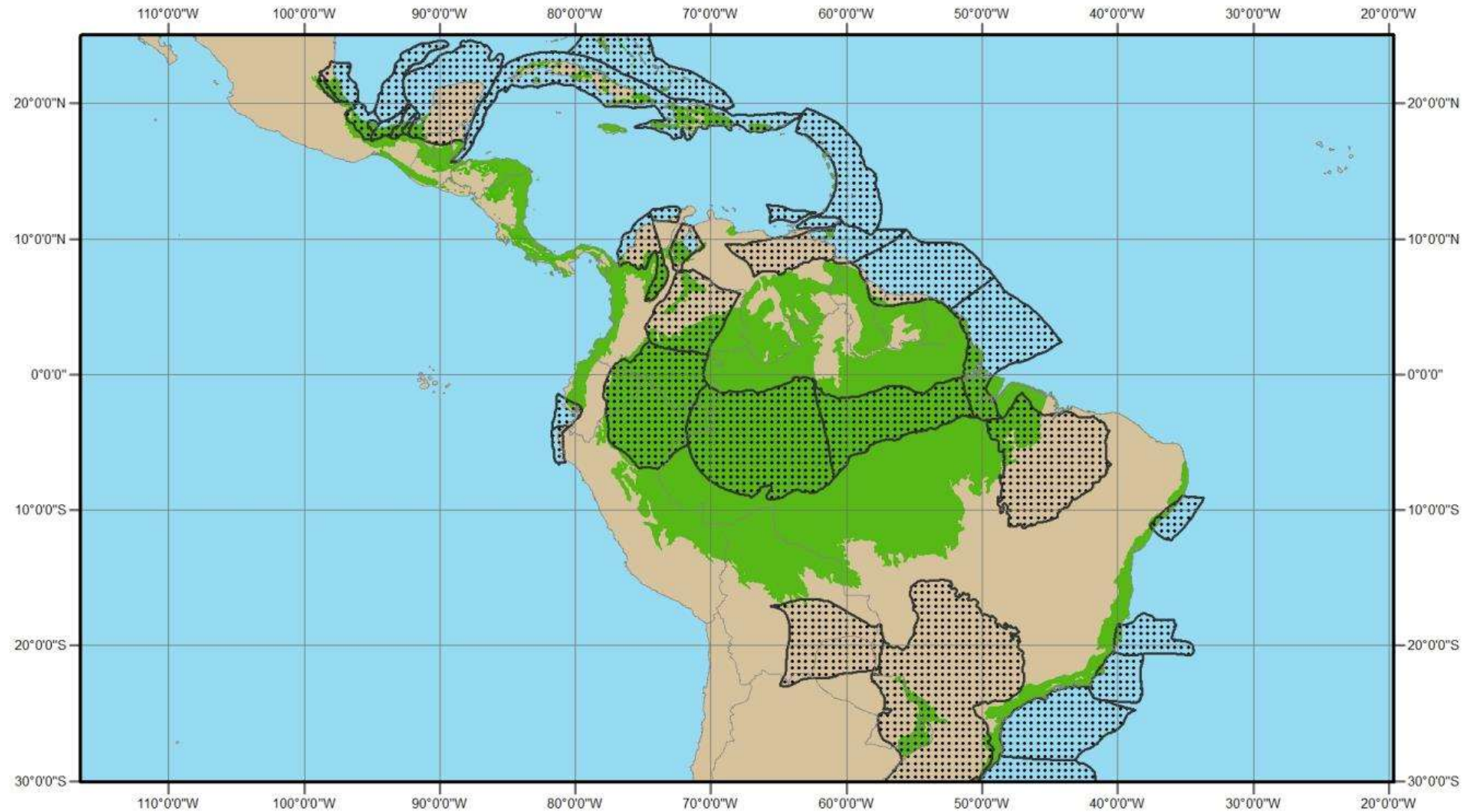
Monitoring, communities and scholarly activism

# AMAZON





# AMAZON



# THE CONTEXT











# THE TEXACO LEGACY

Oil spills

Production waters

Drilling muds



# TEXACO

A classic: Multinational company getting away with anything. In league with elites, dictators and a weak state –poor environmental regulation and supervision

# THE TEXACO/CHEVRON CASE

Starts in the US, in 1993

Decision in 2011 in Ecuador with a 19 billion USD decision, later reduced to 9.5 billion USD, confirmed in 2018 by the Ecuadorian constitutional court





# THE TEXACO/CHEVRON CASE

Evidence:

Epidemiological studies

Technical reports

Analyses

Procedurally:

Accusations and counter-accusations

# THE TWISTS AND TURNS

Since 2011, pursuing Texaco-Chevron assets in the US, Canada and Argentina

September 2018, The Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague ruled that Ecuadorean courts' \$9.5 billion judgement against Chevron for environmental damages is illegal and should not be enforced. Based on Bilateral Investment Treaty entered into force in 1997, contradicts Ecuador Constitution --Article 422, separation of powers...

# MEANWHILE...

Hydrocarbon extraction continues, intensifies and expands (e.g. Yasuni-ITT)

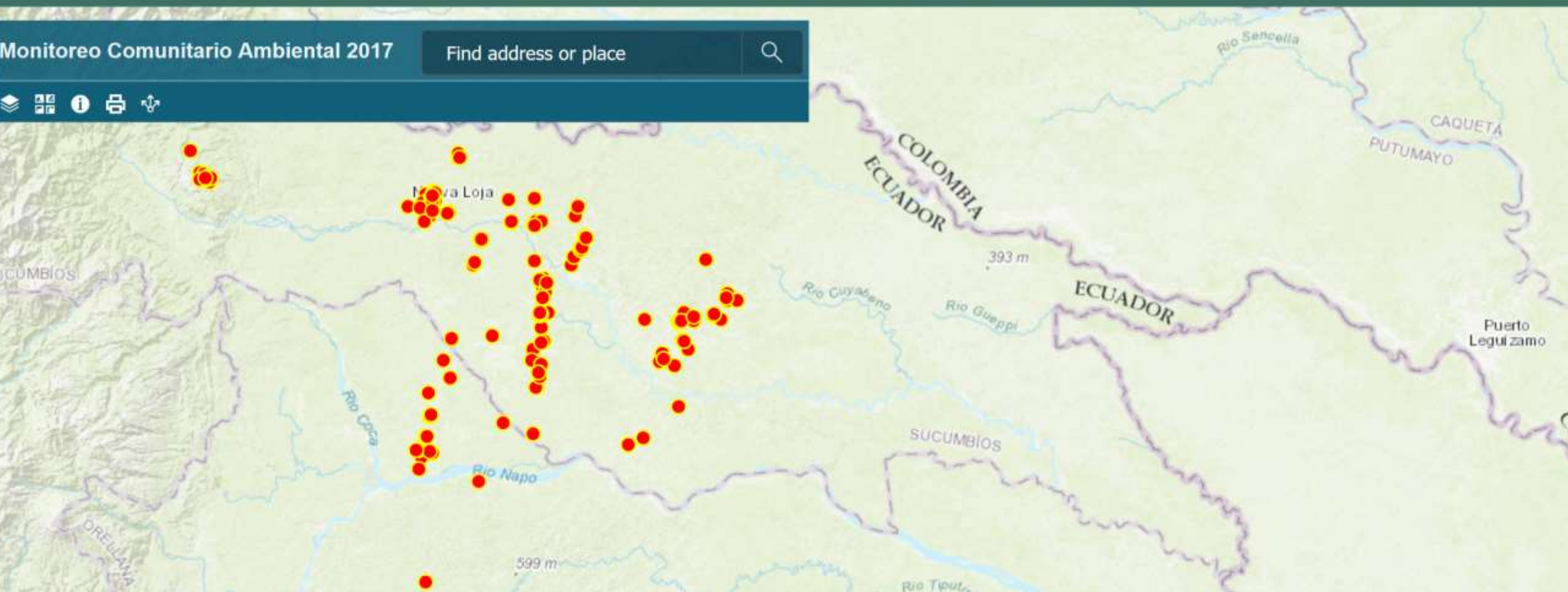
Together with the its 'accidental' impacts



# Mapa Interactivo de Monitoreo

Monitoreo Comunitario Ambiental 2017

Find address or place



# MONITORING TECHNOLOGY

Open Data Kit

Community

Software

Help

## The standard for mobile data collection

The Open Data Kit community produces free and open-source software for collecting, managing, and using data in resource-constrained environments.

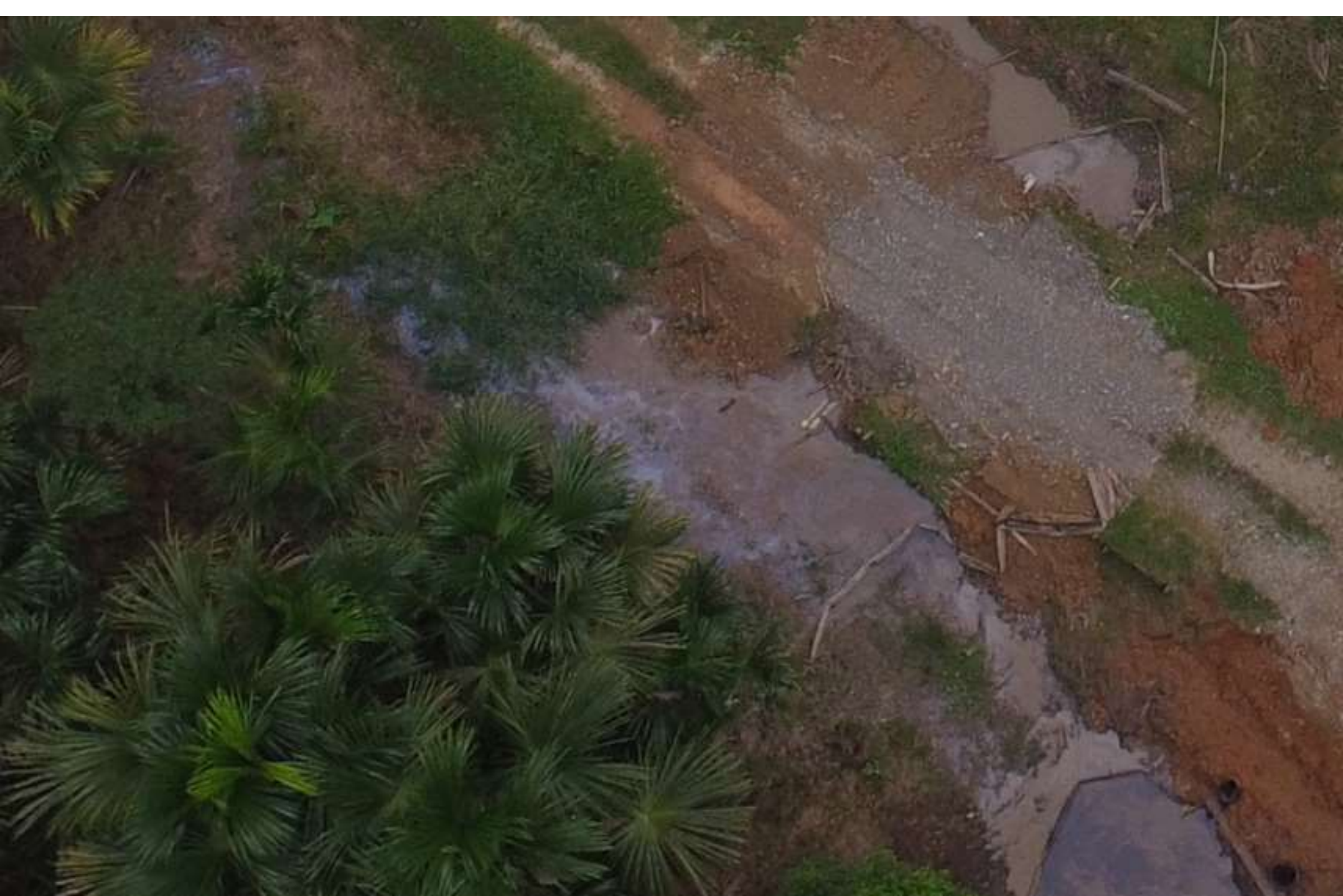
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# After years of toxic oil spills, indigenous Peruvians use tech to fight back

Fidel Sandi's Achuar community has been plagued with oil contamination for decades - but he is now able to collect and gather evidence for his claims



**Dan Collyns** in San Cristobal, Peru

🐦 @yachay\_dc

Thu 14 Dec 2017  
10.00 GMT



🕒 This article is over 10 months old

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# IMPACTS

Transparency –accountability?

The media

The state –petrostate?

The movements

The Amazon Law (Ecuador)



# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE —STRUGGLES

Silent/structural/slow violence

The slow struggle for environmental justice

The Shuar in Loreto Peru (Orta-Martínez, Pellegrini, & Arsel, 2018).

# PARADOXICAL STRUGGLES

The motives underpinning mobilization

Maria's Paradox: the misery of living without development alternatives (Arsel, Pellegrini, & Mena, 2019)

# LEARNING LESSONS —MORE STRUGGLES

Using corporate impunity as an argument to preempt investment in extractive industries (Costa Rica, El Salvador)

Ending corporate impunity —the Global Campaign for the Binding Treaty on transnational corporations and Human Rights

The transition: away from fossil fuels towards environmental sustainability and social justice





# CONCLUSIONS

Environmental justice redefined

Positionality: Slow environmental justice struggles and (scholarly) activism

# THANKS

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