

Forum:	Environment Committee
Issue:	The issue of providing humanitarian help to uncontacted peoples
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Position:	President Chair

Introduction

In the 21st century, people are connected to each other more than they have ever been in history. Yet, there are still more than 100 uncontacted tribes that live, in total isolation, without having any contact with civilization. These groups manage to preserve their isolation and pursue their own ways of life. However, it is unfortunate to say that there are many factors that put these cultures at risk. Many outsiders desire their land and resources. They are threatened by these people's contact, as these contacts are usually violent, but more importantly because these outsiders bring diseases such as measles, to which uncontacted people do not have immunity. The survival of uncontacted peoples is another matter of human rights, but it is an especially important one as these people add diversity to human life. They have a unique view of life and know things that we do not know. Overall, uncontacted people should be protected from being destroyed by a society highly prone to invading.



Picture 1: The Uncontacted Indians of Brazil

Definition of Key Terms

Uncontacted peoples: Uncontacted peoples are isolated tribes who live without significant contact with global civilization.

Civilization: An advanced state of human society, in which a high degree of science, industry and government has been established.

Immunity: The ability to resist a particular disease.

Tribe: A group of people who live together and share the same language and culture.

Measles: A contagious disease to which uncontacted peoples do not have immunity. Its most obvious symptom is red spots emerging on the body.

Influenza: Influenza is another infectious disease that is fatal for uncontacted peoples. It causes severe fever and aches.

General Overview

There are approximately 150 million tribal people who are distributed across more than 60 countries. Most of these tribes' land ownership rights are recognized by the law. However, uncontacted peoples' rights are not sufficiently respected anywhere in the world. Besides the fact that uncontacted peoples have basic rights every human being acquires from birth, the importance of these tribes come from the benefit they provide to humankind's diversity with their original culture and knowledge. Uncontacted peoples suffer from the risk of extinction due to various reasons. Civilized societies treat these people with violence and slavery in order to steal their land and resources. These crimes are often overlooked because they are considered to be made for the sake of "progress" and "development". However, forcing development to uncontacted peoples is not beneficial for them, and it destroys numerous tribes.

1) Environmental Destruction and Exploitation

Uncontacted peoples are dependent on their land to sustain their lives. Outsiders want their land and resources for logging, mining, ranching or settlement. One of the people belonging to the Awa tribe has said "The loggers are destroying all the land, monkeys, peccaries and tapir are running away. Everything is dying. We are all going to go hungry." These types of environmental destruction and exploitation poses a great risk for the uncontacted tribes. The outside contact is hostile and violates a great number of human rights. The uncontacted people need their lands to be protected.

2) Disease Outbreaks

Outsiders who invade uncontacted peoples' lands also bring various diseases with them such as influenza or measles. As uncontacted peoples in isolation do not have immunity for these diseases, diseases end up being fatal. In 1971, for instance, the Brazilian government officials have infected women

with gonorrhea, whose children were born blind as a result. Cases of HIV were also seen in these communities as a result of the rise in prostitution.

3) Starvation

As outsiders invade uncontacted peoples' land for their resources and destroy their land, these people become deprived from their food sources. As a result, malnutrition increases. These tribes normally self-suffice by means of hunting, fishing and growing crops. However, when their land and resources are being stolen for development projects, they cannot thrive. Between 2005 and 2015, more than 86 Guarani children living in Brazil died because of malnutrition.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Survival International:

Survival International is an organization that help uncontacted peoples defend their lives and protect their lands.

FUNAI:

FUNAI stands for Fundação Nacional do Índio, which translates to the National Indian Foundation. FUNAI is the Brazilian government body that establishes policies regarding indigenous people, some of whom live in isolation. Their responsibilities include tracking their locations and protecting their land from outsiders' invasions.

Brazil:

Brazil contains many different uncontacted tribes including the Awá, Guarani, Kawahiva, and Yanomami. The Brazilian government has a body named FUNAI to protect the indigenous people.

Paraguay:

The tribe Ayoreo lives in a forest in Paraguay that has the highest deforestation rate in the world. Much of this tribe's land has already been sold to cattle ranchers and private landowners. This forces the Ayoreo to live on the run. The biggest threat to the Ayoreo is a Brazilian firm named Yaguarete Porá, which plans to bulldoze the forest to create a cattle ranch. Without the forest, the tribe cannot survive as they would not have any food or shelter. Both the Paraguayan law and the country's constitution recognize these people's right to the ownership of their land. However, landowners continue to illegally bulldoze the forest.

Australia:

Australia hosts approximately 500 different Aboriginal peoples. It is believed that Aboriginals first came to Australia 45,000 years ago. After the British invasion, Aboriginal peoples' land were stolen and destroyed. The principle governing Australian law was "terra nullius", which means "nobody's land". This principle suggests that the land belonged to nobody before the British arrived and, therefore, could be taken over. This loss of land has had tragic influences on Aboriginal peoples, such as spreading diseases that have killed thousands of people. Following the first British invasion, the number of Aboriginal peoples decreased from one million to 60,000. Today, Aboriginal people still have to deal with racism, discrimination, and violence.

India:

India is home to multiple tribes including the Dongria Kondh, the Jarawa, and the Sentinelese.

The Dongria Kondh reside in the Niyamgiri hill range in eastern India. A mining company (Vedanta Resources), founded by Indian billionaire Anil Agarwal, built an illegal refinery that annexed village forest, which is crucial for the local tribes. It has also destroyed many villages, displacing over a hundred families. Villagers also blame pollution from the refinery for various health problems and crop damage.

The Jarawa also face many threats from outsiders like tourists and poachers. They are susceptible to diseases these outsiders bring, to which they have no immunity. These outsiders are also known to sexually abuse the Jarawa women.

The Sentinelese are a tribe living on North Sentinel Island, who wish to remain uncontacted. They have first attracted attention during the 2004 Asian tsunami, when a member of the tribe was photographed by a helicopter. After the tsunami, there were two distant visits made in order to check they were healthy. Then, they declared that there would be no further contact made with this tribe.

Timeline of Events

1910	The Indian Protection Service (SPI) is founded.
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1950	A smallpox epidemic destroys the Kulina Indians of Brazil.
5 December 1967	FUNAI is created to take over SPI's responsibilities.
19 December 1978	Indians are officially put under the protection of FUNAI through the Indian Statute.
1986	Several Ayoreo Indians are killed when the New Tribes Mission attempts to relocate them in Brazil.
1988	The Confederation of Indian Nations of the Ecuadorian Amazon demands protection of Indian land rights.

UN Involvement

The United Nations have produced a resolution regarding the rights of indigenous peoples every year since 1991. An organ of United Nations that deal with the rights of indigenous peoples is United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR). OHCHR carries out a number of regional activities in order to protect the rights of indigenous people including supporting legislative initiative. The Human Rights Council of the United Nations has also shown effort by establishing the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) to provide the HRC with advice in alliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in order to promote and protect indigenous people's rights.

Relevant UN Documents

Rights of indigenous peoples, 1 December 2016 (A/RES/71/481)

Rights of indigenous peoples, 23 December 2015 (A/RES/70/232)

Rights of indigenous peoples, 18 December 2014 (A/RES/69/159)

Rights of indigenous peoples, 18 December 2013 (A/RES/68/149)

Treaties and Events

[ILO Convention 169](#) is the only existing international law that protects tribal peoples' rights. However, most governments refrain from ratifying it. Although this convention does not directly target uncontacted peoples, it has some articles that may concern uncontacted peoples. There are no treaties or conventions signed that are solely about uncontacted peoples.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The organization Survival International has worked to help uncontacted peoples protect their lands and continue their life in isolation. Their efforts include raising awareness in order to overcome prejudices that uncontacted people need progress and development, and publicizing their rough location when they need protection of their land. Before Survival International was founded, it was believed that uncontacted peoples in Brazil would disappear by the 21st century. On the other hand, today, there are more than 150 million uncontacted people all around the world. Violation of uncontacted peoples' lives are no longer being overlooked and courts are more willing to stand up for these peoples' rights. Still, in infringement of international laws, uncontacted peoples' rights keep being violated in the name of "progress" and "development".

Possible Solutions

Uncontacted peoples live the best quality of life when they live on their own without contact to the civilized world. When they see any outsider, they show hostility and make clear that they prefer to be left alone. Therefore, it is crucial that no one goes to uncontacted peoples' land. As uncontacted tribes usually remain unknown, it is important to detect their location and draw attention to their existence, so that their land will not be destroyed or invaded. This detection can be made by flying airplanes over their lands. After the location of the tribes is detected, these people should be protected from outsiders such as illegal loggers or poachers. Governments may send troops to expel outsiders from tribes' land. Governments can also be encouraged to demarcate and recognize uncontacted peoples' land in laws. Lastly, it is of great importance to raise awareness in the society to break the prejudice that uncontacted people need development. Educating the public about these peoples' lifestyles, rights and why it would be better for them to be left alone could create a bigger difference than you think.

The real question arises, however, when uncontacted people need humanitarian help. The delegates should focus on finding solutions to send uncontacted people humanitarian help in ways that will not disrupt their culture, lifestyles, land or existence.

Notes from the Chair

<http://www.uncontactedtribes.org/where>

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