



IMPACT REPORT

2024



In our first year, CRI has succeeded in preventing deforestation, opposing new oil and gas projects, and protecting the rights of Indigenous and other communities in places like Mexico, Uganda, and Indonesia.

With a highly experienced and well-connected team, we have worked alongside our courageous local partners to pressure and persuade governments and companies to change damaging practices and policies. We have used strategic litigation to turn greenwashing into commitments to protect forests and rights. Our work has been reported on by some of the most influential media in the world.

Here are just some examples of our impact and how we achieved it.



Mariama, a farmer from Sagea, Indonesia described abuses from the nickel mining industry

Mexico: Deforestation and Rights



CRI Senior Policy Advisor, Daniel Wilkinson (right), with Michoacán Governor Alfredo Ramírez Bedolla (center) and Secretary of Environment Alejandro Mendez (left)

CRI's first **report**, “Unholy Guacamole,” documented how increasing avocado consumption in the United States is fueling widespread deforestation, water shortages, and violence in the Mexican states of Michoacán and Jalisco. Although this was a longstanding and well-known problem, our report has finally led to action. The Michoacán government has now established a deforestation-free certification program — and the federal government has announced plans for a national program. Along with the **full-page article** in the New York Times and major media coverage in Mexico about our report, here are some of the key moments that got us here:

- In February 2024, six U.S. Senators sent a **public letter** to the Biden administration citing CRI's report and calling for the United States to work with Mexico to halt avocado exports from deforested lands. CRI then met with officials at the State Department, U.S. Trade Representative, Department of Agriculture, and Commerce Department.
- In March 2024, Michoacán Governor Alfredo Ramírez Bedolla and U.S. Ambassador Ken Salazar **announced** a joint commitment to halt avocado exports from illegally deforested land. Salazar said that “they shouldn't have the opportunity to sell those avocados to the United States market.”
- CRI worked with Ekō on a **petition** calling for ethically sourced avocados that gained almost 100,000 signatures and another with the Center for Biological Diversity that gained almost 50,000 signatures (also addressing how deforestation affects the monarch butterfly population).

- In August 2024, CRI published a **short follow-up report** with the Mexican NGO Guardian Forestal documenting how major U.S.-based companies continued to source from orchards on deforested land even after being informed by CRI about deforestation in their supply chains.
- Michoacán Governor Ramírez Bedolla then launched the **“Pro-Forest” Avocado certification program**, in which orchards can only be certified if they are determined by Guardian Forestal to be free of deforestation after January 1, 2018 — and if they “compensate” for lands deforested before 2018 by paying into a fund that will compensate Indigenous and other local communities for their forest conservation.
- In September, Ambassador Salazar issued a public statement in support of the “Pro-Forest” program. CRI then conducted a rare NGO briefing at an inter-agency task force meeting attended by senior officials in 11 government agencies, including the State Department, USDA, USTR, DOJ, EPA, DEA, and DHS.
- In October, a CRI delegation traveled to Michoacán at the invitation of the Governor and, along with Guardian Forestal, hosted a day-long consultation with local civil society leaders and academics to promote the certification program.
- After CRI and Mexican partners met with the federal Secretary of Agriculture, in January 2025 the federal government announced its support for a national certification program that would prevent the sale of avocados from orchards linked to illegal deforestation, water theft, and human rights abuses. The government said it would consider expanding the program to other agricultural products.
- On February 7, Governor Ramírez Bedolla presented the first certifications to avocado packinghouses participating in the state program. These include Calavo Growers, Mission Produce, and West Pak Avocado—three of the four top suppliers of avocados to U.S. markets.
- We have been told repeatedly by officials in the Michoacán government and the U.S. embassy, as well as our civil society partners in Mexico and the United States, that none of the recent developments to address deforestation in the avocado sector would have occurred without CRI’s reporting and advocacy. These efforts have also benefited enormously from the contributions of our partner organizations in the United States—including the Center for Biological Diversity and As You Sow—that have leveraged our research findings to press major U.S. companies to support the traceability initiatives in Mexico.

Indonesia: Transition Minerals and Rights



Children playing at the beach in Lelief, just outside of the Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park. © Muhammad Fadhli for CRI

In January 2024, CRI released a 124-page report, **“Nickel Unearthed: The Human and Climate Costs of Indonesia’s Nickel Industry,”** documenting deforestation, land grabbing, water and air pollution, violence, and intimidation of Indigenous Peoples in a massive, \$11 billion mining and smelting project that produces nickel for electric vehicles. We also documented how the project is powered by a massive use of coal equal to the amount used by Spain or Brazil in a single year.

- The report received major media coverage and was embraced by our local partners. It has raised alarm bells at the highest levels of government in Indonesia, the U.S., and Europe, and among companies such as Ford and Tesla.
- In June 2024, after numerous conversations with CRI, Eramet—a large French mining company—and BASF—a major German chemical company—announced that they were canceling their plan for a US\$2.6 billion nickel refinery that would have been disastrous for Indigenous and other local communities.
- For the first time, in 2024 Tesla’s annual sustainability report included multiple pages on the impacts of Indonesian nickel. Tesla said that it was now pressing its nickel suppliers to replace captive coal powered generation with renewable energy. In a separate social media post, a key Tesla employee cited the “critical feedback” from CRI and our partner NGOs for improvements in their sourcing practices.

- Under pressure from multiple NGOs, Indonesia's Just Energy Transition Partnership Secretariat began a study on captive coal power in the country, while the Ministry of National Development Planning started work for the first time on a decarbonization roadmap for the nickel industry.
- In a broadcast television segment that also featured an interview with CRI researcher Krista Shennum, the Minister of Spatial Planning and Agrarian Affairs engaged in a rare public discussion of the impacts of new nickel projects on local communities.
- In May 2024, Indonesia's investment minister, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, penned a piece on Foreign Policy responding to many of the key points in "Nickel Unearthed."

IWIP industrial complex. © Muhammad Fadhli for Climate Rights International



Uganda: Fossil Fuels and Rights



Residents from Nsunzu B village, in front of the drilling rig of the Kingfisher project. © Mathieu Ajar for Climate Rights International

Our September 2024 report, “**They Don’t Want People to Stay Here,**” documented systematic abuses by the Ugandan military in support of the Chinese National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) operated Kingfisher project and called for foreign banks and insurance companies to refuse further support.

- Before the report was released, the Ugandan government said it would soon announce new financing for Kingfisher by foreign banks. Many activists and NGOs have long called for an end to foreign support for new oil and gas projects in Uganda. No new finance or insurance has been announced since our report was released.
- In November 2024, the Ugandan government **announced** it was abandoning plans to obtain foreign financing for a \$4 billion oil refinery.
- Following publication of the report, various military officers, including the area's top officer, were replaced.

- Local residents reported that the military changed its behavior noticeably, including fewer checkpoints, searches, and evictions, and allowed them to resume fishing in Lake Albert. (Some of these gains appear to have been reversed, demonstrating the need for continued documentation and public pressure.)
- The report helped catalyze debates in European countries about investments by pension funds in fossil fuel companies, including in TotalEnergies—the majority owner of the Kingfisher project.
- CRI helped draft a European Parliament resolution on the human rights, environmental, and climate concerns outlined in our report and calling for corporate accountability.
- Following our report, journalists and civil society have increased their reporting on the Kingfisher project.

A woman sits in the Kingfisher oil development area. © Mathieu Ajar for Climate Rights international



European Union: Corporate Accountability



- The climate change and human rights movement had a major success in late May 2024 with the adoption of the European Union's (EU) Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). In addition to our timely **public statement**, our Brussels-based Advocacy Director, Lotte Leicht, worked closely with the Belgian government, which was then holding the rotating EU Presidency, other EU governments and parliamentarians, and NGO partners to salvage the CSDDD, which was under attack by business associations and a number of EU governments.
- The CSDDD is the first legally binding regional due diligence instrument in the world. It establishes human rights and environmental obligations for large companies operating throughout the EU — and their direct partners. The CSDDD will therefore require adherence by almost all major, multinational companies, including in their supply chains.
- CRI played a key role in the adoption of the EU's new Environmental Crime Directive, collaborating closely with EU member states, Members of the European Parliament, and NGO partners to strengthen criminal liability and justice for serious environmental crimes. The updated Directive, adopted by the European Parliament in February 2024 and by EU member states in March 2024, introduces stronger definitions, classifications, and penalties for serious environmental offenses—including those comparable to “ecocide”.

Strategic Litigation

- CRI's research in Mexico was the catalyst for a series of “greenwashing” lawsuits filed in 2024 against major U.S. avocado importers based largely on our research.
- The law firm Richman Law and Policy filed consumer protection cases against Mission Produce, WestPak, Del Monte, and Calavo in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, alleging that sustainability claims by the companies, including claims that their avocados are “sustainably” sourced, are false and deceptive in light of the deforestation and other environmental impacts caused by some of the orchards from which they source.
- The lawsuits seek injunctive relief to prohibit false advertising. The primary goal is a commitment to purchase only from orchards certified by the Mexican government. This will be a major victory for local communities.



CRI Media Coverage

We used our extensive contacts to obtain high profile coverage of our work in high impact media around the world

A full-page story in the *New York Times* about our first report on Mexico, and a follow-up story later that same week.



An editorial by the *Washington Post* about the Mexico report that named CRI and Daniel Wilkinson.



Op-ed by CRI Researcher featured on the *Los Angeles Times*



A long story on the *Guardian's* homepage about our climate protesters report.



- Stories in the *Wall Street Journal* and *Reuters* about our Indonesia report.
- A segment on the *PBS NewsHour* about our Mexico work.
- A half hour segment on *Democracy Now!* about climate protesters in which they played our entire 10-minute video.
- An in-depth article by *Reuters* on the August 2024 Mexico report and related CRI-supported lawsuits.
- We are regularly cited in major media, including the *Guardian*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Bloomberg*, *Reuters*, the *Jakarta Post*, major Mexican, Indonesian, and Ugandan media, the *South Africa Mail and Guardian*, and even the *Daily Mail and Telegraph* in the U.K.

