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Indigenous Peoples tell UN: “Jaguars Are NOT Carbon Credits! and Stop Digital Colonialism!”

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April 27, 2026, New York – Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations denounce the commodification and digital expropriation of our territories and sacred animals such as [jaguars](#) and [whales](#) for the carbon market, which uses tokens, blockchain, and cryptocurrencies, as [digital colonialism](#) and a false solution to the climate crisis promoted for extractivism.

The fever for “[digital gold](#)” based on commodifying nature and [land grabs with the click of a mouse](#) has been [compared to Columbus’ invasion](#).

Alarmed by [digital jaguar carbon credits sold for cryptocurrency](#), Arlen Ribeira, an Indigenous leader of the Huitoto people of the Peruvian Amazon and President of the Federation of Native Communities of the Border of Putumayo (FECONAFROPU) explains that “no animal in our Amazon should be sold as a carbon credit; doing so amounts to selling the spirits of our ancestors embodied in jaguars. These most sacred beings and the rainforest are NOT for sale!”

Regarding the [Inter-American Development Bank’s Jaguar Impact Initiative](#) which aims to span 18 countries from Mexico to Argentina and seeks to commodify jaguars as “[natural capital](#),” the Amazonian leader points out that it is ironic that this very same bank financed the Camisea project’s extraction of natural gas, which was “[devastating](#)” for [Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation](#) (“uncontacted tribes”) as well as for the habitat of jaguars.

At the opening of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, UN Secretary-General António Guterres hailed Indigenous Peoples as “the great guardians of nature.” María Ercilia Castañeda, Vice President of CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador), one of the world’s most important Indigenous movements, agrees with the UN Secretary-General and emphasizes that “for Indigenous Peoples, first comes life, second comes life, and third comes life. Jaguars and the forest are subjects of rights, and defending them is our duty.”

According to Global Justice Ecology Project, “in Peru, the Jaguar Amazon REDD Project of the offset firm Greenoxx pretends to [protect jaguars by logging the rainforest](#), where they live. The project consists of the timber company Inversiones Forestales Chullachaqui SAC logging the REDD project area and the sawmill operator Forestal Otorongo SAC turning the logs into planks ‘for at least 80 years.’ Even though deforestation is the number one threat to jaguars, the project has been certified by Verra’s Climate, Community and Biodiversity Gold Standard. Greenoxx’s [Madre de Dios Amazon REDD+ project also logs the Amazon](#), which endangers jaguars, the climate and Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation (‘uncontacted tribes’).”

Carmen Tene of ISA Sumak Kawsay of Ecuador declares “we reject the conversion of [biodiversity—80%](#) of which is found within Indigenous Peoples’ territories—into digital carbon and biodiversity credits to supposedly offset the pollution caused by the destroyers of the climate and Mother Earth. We say: ‘ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! Jaguars are NOT carbon credits! Our sacred animals are our ancestors, our guides, and our family. Hands off nature!’ Our territories and our sacred animals are neither commodities nor digital tokens; they are life, culture, and ancestral responsibility. We demand respect for our rights, for free, prior, and informed consent, and for our self-determination. There can be no climate justice without justice for Indigenous Peoples!”

Unfortunately, not just jaguars are being targeted by digital colonialism. Without the free, prior, and informed consent of the thousands of Indigenous Peoples and communities residing in the Amazon, the company O.N.E. Amazon seeks to [convert the entire Amazon into 750 million digital files](#)—called “Digital Asset Securities”—each representing one hectare, and sell them as carbon credits for \$100 in cryptocurrency.

Felipe Bonilla of [Acción Ecológica](#) denounced that “in Ecuador, companies like O.N.E. Amazon are drafting contracts without the approval of community assemblies, which entails violating rights to autonomy and self-determination. In territories such as those of the Shuar and Sapara peoples, these contracts involve the appropriation of territory and ancestral knowledge including language as well as the rights of the Indigenous nation to represent itself before other institutions. These agreements and contracts span extremely long time periods ranging from 30, 50, to even 99 years. Such digitalization, therefore, constitutes a contemporary form of colonialism and territorial expropriation.”

The Executive Director of Indigenous Environmental Network Tom Goldtooth explained that digital carbon credits based on jaguars, other sacred animal relatives and the territories of Indigenous Peoples are tracked and [monitored by satellites, Artificial Intelligence](#), and the [Internet of Forests](#) (IoF) which “require highly [polluting mega-data centers](#) that appropriate Indigenous lands, and use large amounts of water and energy derived not only from burning fossil fuels, but also from nuclear power.” It is noteworthy that the [majority of the uranium](#) used for nuclear energy worldwide comes from mining operations on or near Indigenous Peoples’ territories.

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