



EDITORIAL

The Thin Green Line

I was in Bolivia in November last year attending the 6th World Ranger Congress. The 260 rangers from 43 countries that attended the Congress are in the front line of caring for the planet's national parks and protected areas. I listened to many distressing stories from these front line defenders. Some of these defenders live with small indigenous groups protecting the way of life under what is called "co-management of protected areas" and in this way they are protecting basic human rights as well as the environment. I heard in detail the story of a mayor in Peru being shot in his own town when trying to control illegal logging, a ranger in Guatemala escaping from poachers only because he knew the jungle better than the gang and an account of 6 Brazilian rangers checking a jungle clearing in a protected area only to find hundreds of miners - nothing could be done as the thin green line is far too thin and they would be killed if they challenged the illegal mining.



One of the big threats in South America is mining and the companies and economic systems that are fuelling this destruction. Greater effort needs to be made to ensure governments are made to account to the law and international agreements they have signed. In addition large international corporations must be held more accountable to the social and environmental "best practices" they advocate.

At the Congress, I was involved in drafting the Santa Cruz Declaration which has both environmental and human right implications and illustrates the pressure on rangers working in protected areas.

What can we do as individuals? Here are some simple actions:

1. Buy ethically. If you buy a gold ring or other jewellery make sure it is ethical and not mined in a way that is human rights and environmentally destructive. See <http://bit.ly/cuPiXt> and <http://bit.ly/9AvTfM> for more information. If a friend is buying jewellery for a special occasion, bring to their notice that if it is not ethical they may be wearing blood and suffering on their body!
2. Write letters on the Vedanta's bauxite mine in India, and Barrick's mining in Papua New Guinea as covered below.
3. Discuss with families and friends – what are the limits - how much of our planet should be mined to maintain the life style we want. This is not only an issue in developing countries but also in NZ with the report coming out soon regarding mining in our own national parks.

Contact kithowden@xtra.co.nz for more information.

Kit Howden

TAKE ACTION

Papua New Guinea

A new fact sheet is now available on our website on the forced evictions and police brutality which took place around the Porgera gold mine in the highlands of Papua New Guinea last year. This is a very useful resource for taking action on this issue. You can download it from <http://bit.ly/9PCeKU>

India

Amnesty is continuing to lobby Vedanta and the Indian government on our concerns that a major mining project and refinery expansion will negatively impact the human rights and health of the communities living near the projects. <http://bit.ly/cJdEBa>

There is an e-letter on this action which you can access here <http://bit.ly/92SuVQ>

The company involved - Vedanta Resources - is holding its annual AGM in July 2010. AIUK has prepared a petition which will be submitted to the company during the AGM and can be found at <http://bit.ly/9ykdua>.



Nigeria

Work continues on this action which focuses on the oil industry in the Niger Delta and the chronic effects that oil-related pollution has on the human rights of people living in the region.

There is a set of three postcards available for sending to the Nigerian authorities and Shell. If you need larger quantities for events please contact Chris Kerr (chris.kerr@amnesty.org.nz). Please keep sending the postcards to help maintain the pressure.

Climate change

Amnesty International continues to support the development of a long term, fair and just response to climate change, in the wake of the inconclusive and disappointing Copenhagen conference in December.

Visit <http://bit.ly/cBWycw> for more information



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- Keep writing letters and sending postcards (if you receive replies to your appeal letters, please forward copies to the AI office).
- Volunteer to attend events as an EDeN member.
- Share with us your specialised skills or knowledge in human rights and the environment.
- More resources are available on the AIANZ website. Keep checking the site eden.amnesty.org.nz regularly for more information.

Want to do more?

We are very interested to hear from you if you would like to take a more active role in EDeN. We would like to expand the co-group to include two or three more people who bring new skills, energy and enthusiasm to our team. We meet every six weeks to plan actions, discuss strategy and coordinate the network. Some areas we are interested in developing are: membership support, utilising social networking sites, event coordination, newsletter editing, policy and strategy.

If you would like to know more please email eden@amnesty.org.nz

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Links to interesting news articles and websites.

- The UK government has created the world's largest marine reserve around the Chagos Islands, but islanders, who were evicted to make way for the US air base on the island of Diego Garcia, say a reserve would effectively bar them from returning. <http://bit.ly/ckGCCl>
- And another dam thing... <http://bit.ly/bX60K7>
- Buying the farm - the international buy-up of agricultural land <http://bit.ly/98dqJ0>

That's all for this edition.

Regards,
Nick Keenleyside.

The Environmental Defenders Network (EDeN) is co-ordinated by Kit Howden and Nick Keenleyside in conjunction with Research & Advocacy Co-ordinator Chris Kerr. You can contact us by email at info@fragileworld.org.nz or eden@amnesty.org.nz

Share on:   