

Survival



The global movement
for tribal peoples' rights

Progress can kill

I don't want this life

Bushman Botswana

Contains images some may find distressing

These places [resettlement camps] have turned our people into thieves and beggars and drunkards. I do not want this life. First they make us destitute by taking away our land, our hunting and our way of life. Then they say we are nothing because we are destitute.

Jumanda Gakelebone, Bushman Botswana

Outsiders who come here always claim they are bringing progress. But all they bring are empty promises. What we're really struggling for is our land. Above all else this is what we need.

Arau, Penan Malaysia

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Progress can kill: how imposed development destroys the health of tribal peoples

Foreword

Industrialized societies subject tribal peoples to genocidal violence, slavery and racism so they can steal their lands, resources and labor. These crimes are often carried out in the name of progress and development.

And yet the notion of "progress" - which grew of age with colonialism - is hardly ever questioned: it is simply thought to be good for all.

For the poor citizens of the poorer nations, its main pillars are schooling, which they hope leads to more money, and healthcare, which they pray brings longer life. Survival International is not challenging this: some do see their dreams fulfilled, though others just get poorer.

It is different for tribes - those peoples who are dependent on their land for their livelihood, largely self-sufficient, and not integrated into the national society.

Imposing "development" on tribal peoples just doesn't work. Even the new healthcare, even in the richest nations, is never enough to counter the effects of introduced diseases and the devastation caused by land theft. As many tribespeople tell us repeatedly, the new clinics fail to cure them of illnesses that they never knew before.

This study does not deny the genius and achievements of science, or support a romantic view that harks back to a mythic golden age. Nor is it a rejection of change - all societies change always.

Our study does, however, show that forcing development on tribal peoples never brings a longer, happier life, but a shorter, bleaker existence only escaped in death. "Progress" has destroyed many tribes and threatens many more.

The end

**90% of many Amerindian tribes
died following contact with
Europeans, mostly from disease.
Others were wiped out entirely.**

**Loggers made
contact. Half my
people died**

Murunahua Peru

They all died. My uncle and cousins died as they were walking... they started to cough, they got sick and died right there in the forest. Some were small children. They put all the bodies in a big hole and everyone was wailing and crying.

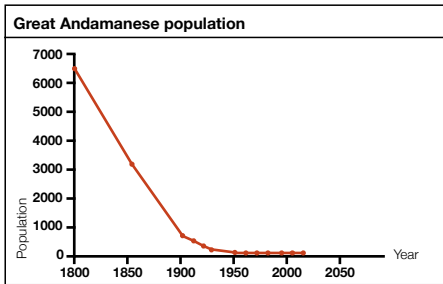
Shocorua, Nahua
Peru

Contact

The British put the Great Andamanese tribes in a "home" to bring them "progress." All 150 babies born there in the 1860s died; 99% of the tribe perished. Today, 51 survivors rely on handouts; tuberculosis is rife; most men are alcoholics.

Another Andaman Islands tribe, the Jarawa, remain largely isolated and self-sufficient. They are still very healthy, but are vulnerable to new diseases to which they have little immunity.

Their survival is threatened by a road which cuts through their land, and from poachers stealing their game. The Indian Supreme Court has ordered the road closed, but it remains open. Hundreds of tourists travel through the Jarawa's land every day, treating the tribe as though they are animals in a safari park.



A child stands by the road which runs through his tribe's land.



The statistics of infant and perinatal mortality are our babies and children who die in our arms... We die silently under these statistics.

Mick Dodson, Yawuru, former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner
Australia

We are still living in pain and trauma. We are in pain already and more and more pain is falling on top of us... People are getting sick, tired...

Yalmay Yunupingu, Yolngu, Aboriginal teacher and artist
Australia

On average, Aboriginal people on their own land live 10 years longer than those in resettled communities.

Life expectancy

Progress has brought displacement, impoverishment and the destruction of communities to the Aboriginal peoples of Australia.

Compared to other Australians, Aboriginals are:

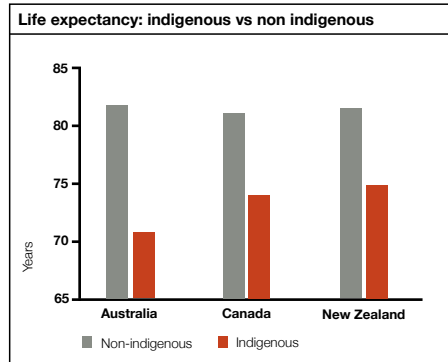
Two times more likely to die as a child

Three times more likely to die of avoidable causes

Seven times more likely to die of diabetes

Nineteen times more likely to die from rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease

Their life expectancy at birth is ten to fifteen years less than other Australians.



HIV/AIDS

**In 2002, over 40% of deaths of
Bushmen in one resettlement
camp were due to AIDS.**

*Our death rate is
increasing. Our
people die of HIV*

I am sick now, I am about to die... Here there are different kinds of diseases that we do not recognize... When you get sick, you die.

Bushman woman who died of AIDS in 2006, aged 29. Prior to the tribe's eviction from their ancestral land, this was unheard of. Botswana

HIV/AIDS

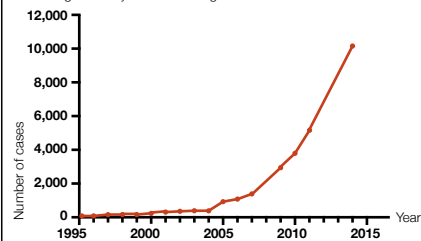
"Progress," from road building to relocation, brings prostitution, sexual abuse and diseases. Brazilian government workers infected 35 Parakanã women with gonorrhoea when the tribe was first contacted in 1971. Some of their children were born blind.

In Peru, oil and gas workers have overrun the Matsigenka Indians' land. In 2015, 11 cases of HIV were confirmed in Matsigenka communities. Health officials say the outsiders are responsible for the rise in prostitution.

Indonesian occupation is disastrous for Papuan tribespeople, who suffer 15 times the national rate of HIV/AIDS. Youth are particularly affected. However, government focuses health education and testing on the Indonesian colonists.

Official cases of AIDS in West Papua*

* Actual figures likely to be much higher



A nurse helps a tribal patient dying of AIDS. There is now an epidemic of the disease in both Papua New Guinea and West Papua.



Starvation

In one of Brazil's wealthiest regions, Guarani children are dying of malnutrition.

It's like having
a gun cocked
against our heads

We were a free people who lived surrounded by abundance. Now we depend on government aid.

Guarani-Kaiowá leaders
Brazil

No Hadzabe ever died of hunger when we had our land. But now that so much of our land has been taken and is still being taken, many Hadzabe are hungry.

Hadza elder
Tanzania

Starvation

In one of Brazil's wealthiest regions, 12,000 Guarani-Kaiowá are squeezed into an area which can support 300. Many others have no land at all, and are forced to live on the roadside.

Malnutrition is rife. From 2005 to 2015 at least 86 Guarani children died as a result. Agribusiness has destroyed the forest which used to provide Guarani with their food, but when the Indians take back their land, malnutrition drops.

Ethiopia's Kwegu tribe hunt, fish and grow crops alongside the Omo River. For centuries, this self-sufficient people thrived in a country renowned for famines. But now they are starving: their land has been stolen to make way for development projects, such as vast agricultural plantations.

I always remember one old man said, "The whites – they're going to finish us off. They're going to finish off our houses, finish off our fish, even our crops. And once all our forest is gone, we as a people will be finished. It's all going to change and our land will become very small." And you know, that man, all those years ago, calculated absolutely right.

Paulito, an elderly Guarani shaman, Brazil

Aché woman starving after being forced out of the forest, Paraguay.



Obesity

**In Australia, 37% of urban
Aboriginal children are obese or
overweight by 24 months old.**

***Junk food is
killing our
people***

When I was a kid, 15 years ago, there was zero diabetes... Our grandparents were hunting and eating healthy country foods.

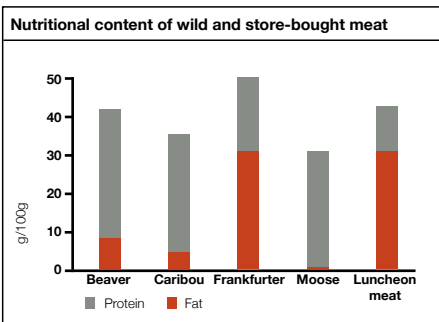
Giant (Michel Andrew), Innu Canada

Obesity

Landless tribal peoples are forced into a sedentary life and many become dependent on processed foods. The change from high-protein to high-fat food is disastrous, leading to obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes.

In Arizona's Pima reservation, more than half of Indians over the age of 35 have diabetes. The rate is far lower for those living in the mountains. If untreated or detected late (common for tribal people) diabetes can lead to blindness, kidney failure, strokes, heart disease and amputations.

According to the International Diabetes Institute, without "urgent action" there is "a real risk of a major wipe-out of indigenous communities, if not total extinction within this century."



Indigenous children in some parts of Canada are 15 times more likely to suffer from type 2 diabetes than other Canadians.



Suicide

Brazil's Guarani tribe has a suicide rate 34 times the national average.

The youngest to kill herself was nine years old.

**We are committing
suicide because
we have no land**

Guarani Brazil

**There's no future,
there's no respect,
there are no jobs and
there's no land where
we can plant and
live. They choose to
die because they are
already dead inside.**

Guarani
Brazil

**How many suicides...
will it take to open
our... ears to the silent
screaming... from
the hearts and souls
of those who are
gone, and of those
who grieve and keep
screaming, "Help...?"**

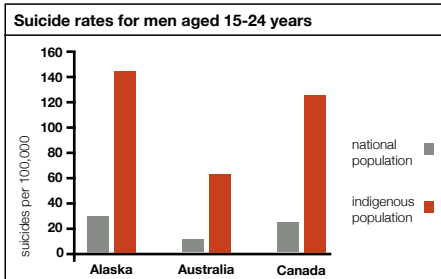
Cheri Yavu-Kama-
Harathunian, Kabi Kabi elder
Australia

*The Guarani asked
Survival to use this image
to publicize their plight.*

Suicide

Forced relocation traumatizes tribal people across the world. They are taken to an alien environment, where there is nothing useful to do, and where they are treated with racist disdain by their new neighbors. Their children may be taken to boarding schools which separate them from their communities and forbid or ridicule their language and traditions.

Alienated and without hope, many take to drugs and alcohol. Domestic violence and sexual abuse soar. Suicide is a common escape. In Canada, some indigenous groups who have lost their connection to their land have suicide rates 11 times the national average; those with strong links often see no suicides at all. In Brazil, at least 72 Guarani-Kaiowá Indians killed themselves in 2013 - the highest suicide rate in the world.



Addiction

Bayaka children from Congo are paid with glue to sniff in exchange for emptying latrines.

***We are forced to
drink to forget our
troubles***

I lost a son to alcohol. And I also lost a sister... I keep losing family... It keeps going on and on and on.

Noah Papatsie, Inuit
Canada

We were ashamed of ourselves... [We had] lost our mastery. Our sons were ashamed of us. We had no self-respect and nothing to give our sons except violence and alcoholism. Our children are stuck somewhere between a past they don't understand and a future that won't accept them and offers them nothing.

Boniface Alimankinni, Tiwi
Islands
Australia

*Alienated Innu children
turn to sniffing gas from
plastic bags.*

Addiction

Dispossessed tribal people often take to drugs, usually the cheapest and most easily available such as alcohol and gas. Babies are born with fetal alcohol syndrome, children get little care from addict parents, teenagers follow suit. The cycle cannot be broken by merely treating symptoms: entire societies fall apart.

Baka from Cameroon, illegally evicted in the name of conservation, often end up receiving alcohol as wages. The going rate for half a day is five glasses of moonshine.

Among Innu youth, gas sniffing is a chronic problem. It causes convulsions and permanent damage to the kidneys, eyes, liver, bone marrow and heart. Charles Rich, II, accidentally set himself on fire when gas sniffing. A child who witnessed his horrific death said:

My name is Phillip. I'm a gas sniffer. I sniff gas with my friends. I don't go home... And I sniff gas because both my parents are drinking and I'm mad... At one point Charles ran towards me when he was in flames, but because I was sniffing gas and the fumes were very strong on me, I ran away. I was afraid I would be caught on fire too.



Land

**Tribal people aren't "backward,"
they choose to live on their land,
in their own ways.**

**What we want is
real progress.**

We need land rights

Penan Malaysia

Land is life

**The Dongria Kondh grow over 100
crops and harvest 200 wild foods,
providing a highly nutritious diet
even in times of drought.**

Land is our life.

We are rich in the
forest

Dongria Kondh India

**When we have land,
we have freedom, and
more than that we
have happiness.**

Leia Aquino Pedro, Guarani
Brazil

**If you destroy the
forest, you destroy
us too.**

Pire'i, Awa
Brazil

Land is life

India's Jarawa tribe have only had friendly contact with their neighbors since 1998. Experts described their nutrition as "optimum" and said they "enjoy a life of opulence."

When uncontacted Mashco-Piro Indians came out of the forest in Peru, they appeared robust and healthy and were filmed laughing and joking with local Yine Indians. As their lands had not yet been invaded, these Mascho-Piro could continue to live in the way that they choose.

The Awá, from the Brazilian Amazon, were struggling to survive when their land was stolen by ranchers and loggers. After a major Survival campaign to remove the invaders from one Awá territory, Haamo Awá said, "We are happier and healthier now and we can feed our families."

**It's not that the Yanomami do
not want progress, or other
things that white people have.
They want to be able to choose
and not have change thrust upon
them, whether they want it or
not.**

Davi Kopenawa, Yanomami shaman, Brazil

*Dongria Kondh woman
harvesting millet.*



**Health and freedom
Tribal people who control their
lives and lands are far healthier
than those who have had
“progress” forced on them**

***You don't have to take
care of us. We'll take
care of ourselves***

Dongria Kondh India

We want to participate actively and have close control over healthcare... because we know our reality and the needs of the communities we represent.

Joint letter from the leaders of seven Indian organizations Brazil

Health and freedom

If they are to survive, indigenous people must control the changes they want to make to their own lives. Outsiders' projects should not simply be imposed.

The Yanomami Indians of Amazonia suffered catastrophic disease when miners invaded their land in the 1980s. Twenty percent died. They needed their land and their own healthcare.

It happened. A 23-year campaign by Survival and the Pro-Yanomami Commission ended in 1992, with the creation of the 23 million acre Yanomami Park under Indian control.

Survival supported an initiative which sent independent medics to work with shamans. The number of deaths soon halved.

Some peoples, particularly in Australia and North America, are now trying to rekindle in their youngsters a connection to, and appreciation for, their lands and traditions, links which had been obliterated over recent generations. Such links have been shown to reduce addictions and help prevent suicides.

These models for tribal healthcare are tried, tested, and cheaper than alternatives: outsiders must treat the people and their knowledge with respect; tribespeople must be trained to administer treatment to their own people.

Yanomami shaman, Davi Kopenawa during a shamanic healing ritual.



We are against the type of development the government is proposing. I think some non-Indians' idea of "progress" is crazy! ... They come with these aggressive ideas of "progress" and impose them on us, human beings, especially on indigenous peoples who are the most oppressed of all. For us, this is not progress at all.

Olimpio, Guajajara
Brazil

It's crazy when these outsiders come and teach us "development." In our land, we don't have to buy water like you, and we can eat anywhere for free.

Lodu, Dongria Kondh leader
India

Conclusion

Taking tribal land and imposing "progress" causes untold misery. The data we provide to prove this are the tip of an appalling iceberg, a permanent blight on the development of the colonial nations that continues today. The facts are indisputable, though they are usually whitewashed in the history books.

Tribes are never destroyed by a lack of progress or development; they are annihilated by land theft, invariably justified by out-of-date, racist views about their supposed backwardness. Their health and well-being plummet, while rates of depression, addiction and suicide soar.

But it doesn't have to be like this. Tribal peoples who live on their own land are invariably healthier, with a far better quality of life than the millions of impoverished citizens marginalized by growing inequality.

The key to tribal peoples' futures is to ensure their land remains under their control. Where it has been taken, tribes need support to regain as much of it as possible. They can then rebuild an identity through reasserting their sense of their rightful place in the world. And they can tailor their own values to adapt to a changing world, just like the rest of us. Unless they control their own development, ultimately they won't survive.

Act now!

The future is in your hands. Together, we can stop forced "progress" from annihilating tribal peoples.

Since 1969, Survival has helped hundreds of tribal communities keep their lands. But we depend on you. We need your money, energy and enthusiasm to help us fight one of the most urgent and horrific humanitarian crises of our time.

Donate

We accept no government funding, so without your support we can do nothing. Visit survivalinternational.org to make a donation.

Take action

If you won't help tribal peoples, who will? Visit survivalinternational.org to find out more.

Spread the word

To order more free copies of this booklet please email info@survivalinternational.org



If it weren't for Survival, we Indians would be dead

Yanomami Brazil

Survival International

Survival is the global movement for tribal peoples' rights. It is the only organization that champions tribal peoples around the world. It helps them defend their lives, protect their lands and determine their own futures.

Tribal peoples have developed ways of life that are largely self-sufficient and extraordinarily diverse. Many of the world's staple crops and drugs used in Western medicine originate with them, and have saved millions of lives. It's often wrongly claimed their lands are wildernesses even though tribal peoples have been dependent on, and managed them for millennia. Tribal peoples are better at looking after their environment than anyone else. They are the best conservationists and guardians of the natural world.

Even so, tribal peoples are portrayed as backward and primitive simply because their communal ways are different. Industrialized societies subject them to genocidal violence, slavery and racism so they can steal their lands, resources and labor in the name of "progress" and "civilization."

Survival's work is preventing the annihilation of tribal peoples. It works in partnership with them. It gives them a platform to speak to the world. It investigates atrocities and presents evidence to the United Nations and other international forums. It supports legal representation. It funds medical and self-help projects. It educates, researches, campaigns, lobbies and protests.

This is the most meaningful and effective long-term solution for tribal peoples and it has won many victories for their rights and survival. Davi Kopenawa, a Yanomami spokesman, says his people would not have survived without Survival's successful 20-year campaign for their land.

Survival won't give up until we all have a world where tribal peoples are respected as contemporary societies and their human rights protected.



What kind of development is it when the people lead shorter lives than before? They catch HIV/AIDS. Our children are beaten in school and won't go. Some become prostitutes. They are not allowed to hunt. They fight because they are bored and get drunk. They are starting to commit suicide. We never saw that before. Is this "development"?

Roy Sesana, Bushman Botswana

Photo credits Front cover © Survival Bushman boy at resettlement camp, Botswana. His community was forcibly evicted from its ancestral land. The government claimed this was for the tribe's "development." In fact, Bushmen call the camps "places of death"; p5 © Salomé/Survival; p7 © Mikkel Ostergaard/Panos; p11 © David Gray/Reuters; p15 © Don McCullen/Survival; p19 © Dominick Tyler/Survival; p23 © João Ripper/Survival; p27 © Dominick Tyler/Survival; p33 © Toby Nicholas/Survival; p35 © Fiona Watson/Survival; p39: © Clémence René-Bazin/Survival