

Between the savannah and the wetlands, hope and life open their way: The Case of the Corcovado Community

National context

The life and struggle of this community, as the case of many others in the country, takes place in a context of an intensified armed conflict, as a result not only of the State's failure to comply with the Peace Agreement, but also because of the power exercised by armed groups on the region.

Territorial context of the community

The community is settled in an area that has historically been hit by the armed and social conflict in Colombia. There, the human rights violations committed by State agents, insurgency, paramilitary groups, mobs, and armed drug-trafficking groups, as well as private stakeholders linked to land dispossession and extractivism (gold, extensive livestock, oil palm, among others.), have left deep pain among its inhabitants, and serious impacts on the territory and the environment.

Food autonomy

Despite the adverse conditions, the community has always made significant efforts to stay in their territory and guarantee their food supply autonomously, thanks to the combination of a food obtention system based on fishing, small livestock, agriculture, breeding of minor species and trade of surplus in rice crops. This work of care and production, which has been built for generations, makes the community to have a very valuable and important knowledge about their common goods and their management for the preservation of the environment. Likewise, the role of women in the entire process of use and conservation of seeds and native minor species stands out.

Where is the community?

The community is located in the wide region of La Mojana, in the north of the country, one of Colombia's richest areas in biodiversity.

What is the community like?

It is made up of 28 farming and fishing families grouped in a rice production association. Each family is made up of about 6 people, mostly minors, youngsters, and older adults. Historically, the community has suffered from state neglect, which means, access to basic rights such as health, quality education, and transportation is not guaranteed, and there is insecurity derived from the conflict. In addition, there is a high rate of teenage pregnancies, as well as migration of young people in search of safety and better living conditions

Affection

Since the 70s, the community has lived and worked on a farm of approximately 400 hectares; such land is not properly legalized under the name of the farmers because the ownership of the property has been registered under the name of people who did not inhabit the territory and were linked to drug trafficking or false owners. In the mid-80s, a process of property ownership extinction was initiated, since it was in the hands of drug traffickers, but that process did not continue, and the state archives related to it "disappeared". Thus, the community, which had been promised the legalization of its long possession of the property, has not been able to achieve this, and is currently in risk of eviction by a false owner of the property who had previous attempted a violent eviction.

Latent threat

The eviction of these families from their territory would have an irreversible impact on their Right to Food and Right to Life, which is why FIAN Colombia has been supporting them for some years in order to build skills in the advocacy of their Rights. Recently, we managed to have an organization specialized in legal issues for farmer organizations to legally support the case.

The need for international solidarity

Given the situation of the community, it is necessary to obtain an international contact and/or support that can provide direct guidance or prepare aid mechanisms in case of eviction or life-threatening situations against the farmers.

Living conditions of the community, according to the latest community census

121 People
65 men
56 women
51 boys and girls
59 adults
11 elderly

Type of dwelling: There are 30 houses registered in total; only one of them has brick walls, the rest are made of wood, with thatched roofs and dirt floor. The houses usually have three rooms: a kitchen, a large room shared by adults and infants, and a deposit for rice and tools.

Electricity: The community does not have a legalized electric service. Just three years ago they had a very basic community and self-managed network.

Water: The community does not have any drinking water service, so they use rainwater, water from wells that they have drilled (groundwater) or dug (pond type).

Bathroom: most houses do not have any sanitary services installation.

Cooking: All the families cook with firewood, and there are gas and electric stoves in just a few houses, which are used for very specific situations and needs. Wood-burning cooking has had a major impact on women's health.

Agricultural production: Among the great variety of foods, the most important are rice, banana, corn, cassava, yam, coconut, avocado, zapote, guava, pineapple, annona, cherry, papaya, cocoa, almond, cane, mango, orange, soursop, tamarind, lemon, achiote, guama fruit, quenette, pumpkin, watermelon, borojo, coriander, coffee, banana, green beans, chili, pepper, red beans.

Livestock and fishing: cows, horses, pigs, chickens, ducks, rabbits, more than 10 types of fish.

Road infrastructure: to access the community, people have to make long journeys by river and motorcycle. When rain levels increase, horses are used.

Education: Girls and boys have to walk 40 minutes to get to the nearest school. During rainy season, the journey can be longer or classes are stopped because the teachers cannot arrive.

Health: the nearest health post is in the nearby urban area.



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