

2019 Annual Report



EarthRights International 2019 Annual Report



EarthRights is a nongovernmental, nonprofit organization that combines the power of law and the power of people in defense of human rights and the environment, which we define as “earth rights.” We specialize in fact-finding, legal actions against perpetrators of earth rights abuses, training grassroots and community leaders, and advocacy campaigns. Through these strategies, EarthRights seeks to end earth rights abuses, to provide real solutions for real people, and to promote and protect human rights and the environment in the communities where we work.

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A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

2020 marks the 25th anniversary of EarthRights International. I co-founded EarthRights in 1995 with Katie Redford and Tyler Giannini, working out of a one-room office in Kanchanaburi, Thailand, with a singular purpose: to defeat Unocal's Yadana pipeline. Since then, we have expanded our presence to two more continents with offices in Lima, Peru and Washington, D.C.; taken on dozens of cases against abusive corporations and institutions; and launched strategic campaigns to build power and supplement our legal work.

We've grown to over 60 staff members; trained hundreds of earth rights defenders through our EarthRights school and legal training programs; achieved landmark legal victories, including a significant win at the U.S. Supreme Court; and created a network of donors and supporters committed to supporting our mission.

While the world has changed significantly since 1995, some realities remain the same. Corporations still hold vast amounts of power, prioritizing profits over people, very often undermining human rights. Governments and financial institutions all too often support these corporate interests at the expense of communities. Meanwhile, we are on the

brink of a global climate emergency that will only continue to undermine human rights if extractive industries are allowed to recklessly exploit natural resources.

2019 was a key year for EarthRights. In a historic 7-1 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of our clients in the case *Jam v. International Finance Corporation*, determining that international organizations like the World Bank Group are not absolutely immune from lawsuits in U.S. courts. We launched our Cancel Corporate Abuse campaign to hold corporations accountable for human rights and environmental abuses. We represented dozens of clients facing abuse at the hands of extractive industries and supported allies around the world through coalition work and strategic partnerships.

Our Mitharsuu Center for Leadership and Justice in Chiang Mai continued to serve as a hub and safe space for defenders. In 2019, we convened activists from around the world at the center to strategize on climate justice, protecting defenders, and holding corporations accountable for human rights and environmental abuses. The EarthRights School celebrated the graduation of its 20th class in 2019. Alumni and staff gathered at the Mitharsuu Center to celebrate this important milestone.

2019 was also a pivotal year. Katie Redford transitioned out of her role as Director of EarthRights to join the Equation Campaign, a new initiative to confront the industries driving our climate crisis, support frontline communities, and mobilize those who are often left out of the climate debate. Despite these changes, EarthRights remains strong.

As we move into the next phase of our work, guided by our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, our mission is more urgent than ever. Governments around the world will need to adapt to new challenges, including global pandemics; EarthRights will be there to ensure that the policies to address emergencies such as COVID-19 do not repress human rights.

The challenges facing the world and the communities we serve are urgent, but together we can tackle them head-on. We will continue to harness the power of law and the power of people to forge a world where human and environmental rights are respected and corporate power is kept in check. We thank you for your support over the years. Together, we can forge a fairer world for all.

In Solidarity,
Ka Hsaw Wa

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SUCCESS



1995

Ka Hsaw Wa, Katie Redford, and Tyler Giannini launch EarthRights in Thailand with a \$35,000 grant from the Echoing Green Foundation to harness the power of law and the power of people in support of human rights and the environment.

1996

EarthRights publishes its first report, *Total Denial*, which is later made into the documentary film of the same name.

1999

EarthRights School is established to train human rights and land defenders from Myanmar (Burma). Our first U.S. office opens. Ka Hsaw Wa wins the Goldman Environmental Prize, honoring grassroots environmental activists.

2001

Aiming to strengthen the knowledge and capacity of indigenous leaders confronting extractive projects in their communities, EarthRights launches the “Amazon School for Human Rights and the Environment” program in Quito, Ecuador, in partnership with the Center for Economic and Social Rights.

2005

EarthRights wins a major victory with the settlement of *Doe v. Unocal*, the case that started it all. Ka Hsaw Wa is named Executive Director.

2006

Another training program, the EarthRights Mekong School, is established in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

2009

The Mekong Legal Advocacy Institute and the Mekong Legal Network are launched. The lawsuit *Wiwa v. Royal Dutch Shell* forces Shell to settle immediately before trial. Nigerian Plaintiffs represented by EarthRights are awarded \$15.5 million.

2011

EarthRights establishes its Amazon office in Lima, Peru. EarthRights partners with the Mae Tao clinic to establish the “Health and Earth Rights Training Center” in Thailand.

2015

EarthRights and five Indigenous Achuar communities from the Peruvian Amazon secure a major legal victory when Occidental Petroleum Corp agrees to settle a suit regarding the company’s environmental harms. EarthRights convenes the first Latin American Indigenous Legal Defense Seminar, where defenders from the region learn legal tools for defending their land and environment.

2017

The Mitharsuu Center for Leadership and Justice opens in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

2019

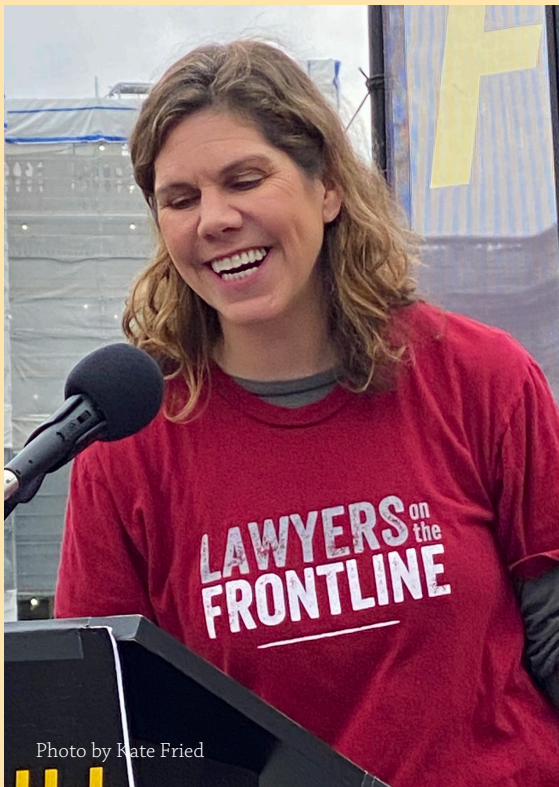
The U.S. Supreme Court rules that the International Finance Corporation is not immune from liability in U.S courts, delivering a victory for our clients in the case *Jam vs. IFC*. Katie Redford steps down as Director to join the Equation Campaign but continues to serve in an advisory capacity.

2020

EarthRights publishes its Strategic Plan for 2020-2024, articulating our vision of the world we aim to forge and our strategy for achieving it.



CELEBRATING KATIE REDFORD



Katie Redford

EARTHRIGHTS CO-FOUNDER

EarthRights Co-Founder Katie Redford transitioned from her role as Director to a member of our board's Legal Committee at the end of 2019 in order to establish and lead the Equation Campaign, a new initiative to aggressively and explicitly confront the industries undermining people and the planet, support movements and frontline communities, and help mobilize those who have traditionally been left out of the climate debate. From helping to establish EarthRights, to contributing to numerous legal victories over the years, and much more, we would not be the organization we are today without Katie's tremendous vision. Here, friends of EarthRights articulate her impact on the climate justice and human rights movements.

"Katie dreams up the kinds of ideas that sound far-fetched until she excitedly talks you through how they would come true. Her passion and fearlessness runs throughout EarthRights, which is why the team has achieved so many unthinkable wins these past 25 years."

Aaron Eske, EarthRights Board Chair and Senior Vice President at M&R Strategies.

"Katie is disarmingly lighthearted and easygoing, but her courage and passion run deep. Words like 'impossible' only strengthen her determination; she is a fighter. But I've never met anyone else who can fight so fiercely while simultaneously being so much fun."

Rebecca Lambert, Former EarthRights Co-chair and Co-Founder of the Equation Campaign

Kerry Kennedy, President, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

"I first met Katie in the 1990s through the Reebok Human Rights Awards. I was struck by her immediately - here was someone who was extraordinarily bright and committed, who had taken on a monumental struggle to hold a U.S. corporation accountable for human rights abuses. She was only in her 20s then, but already clearly a force to be reckoned with.

"Nothing about this movement was going to be easy. But she did it, and she prevailed. She not only held one company, Unocal, accountable, but many others, taking one case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. What's more, she built EarthRights International, an organization dedicated to protecting both human rights and the environment.

"Katie is a defender without borders, someone who champions causes for people in far-flung corners of the world who have been overlooked by many others. Katie meets these people in their pain, joins them on their journeys, and sees them as an equal partner. She is living proof that it is the people who become closest to the problem that are closest to the solution."

Katherine Maruca, Former EarthRights Board Member

"I met Katie on a rainy afternoon at an O'Hare Airport restaurant for a one hour meeting to discuss the *Doe v. Unocal* case. Two hours later, as she raced to catch her flight, Katie had so inspired me with her work that I became a volunteer teacher at the EarthRights School in Chiang Mai, Thailand. After teaching a short course in international human rights law there, Katie's infectious passion for social and environmental justice led me to become a Board member and eventually a Chair

of EarthRights. While her accomplishments are too numerous to list, it is her ability to inspire others that is at the core of her impact. Katie is my soul sister who taught me that it is not enough to care about human rights, we must all take action to ensure that they are respected every day, everywhere."

Neil Popović, EarthRights Board Member and Partner at SheppardMullin

"I first encountered Katie Redford in the early 1990s, when she and her co-founders were working to launch EarthRights. I was blown away by their ambitious vision and the audacity of their plans to create a new organization to promote and protect human rights and the environment. I had great optimism that Katie would grow into her role as a leader in this important movement. But I had it completely backwards. Katie didn't grow into the movement; the movement grew into her."

LOOKING AHEAD

As we reflect on our 25 years of impact, we are also looking ahead. We're using strategies we've developed through our experience working with frontline communities around the world in order to continue serving them and to ensure that the worst impacts of climate change are averted, earth rights defenders everywhere are able to effectively carry out their work, and corporations are held accountable for the harms they impose on communities and the environment.

EarthRights combines the power of law with the power of people through local-to-global collaboration and networks. We believe in the

agency of community leaders and activists, that the law can be a tool for justice rather than repression, and that public opinion can drive positive social change. Corporate actors carry vast power in most parts of the world, but through collaboration, we can shift power to the people.

Here is how we will achieve that vision over the next five years.

PUSH FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES

We will demand legal accountability from fossil fuel companies and governments for the climate-related damage they have imposed on frontline communities. This will include supporting these communities in their efforts to

resist climate-damaging fossil fuel projects, large hydroelectric dams, and agribusiness operations that contribute to deforestation and loss of community lands. To do this, we will train community leaders and activists on the impacts of

climate change, and help them defend their rights against resource extraction related to green technologies through strategic legal interventions and campaigns, and by forming coalitions among allied organizations.

DEFEND EARTH RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Continuing the vision articulated in our 2018 publication *Fighting Back: A Global Protection Strategy for Earth Rights Defenders*, we will implement a "protect, prevent, reveal, redress" strategy to support earth rights defenders on the front lines of resistance to fossil fuels.

This will include providing legal defense to earth rights defenders who have been criminalized, physically attacked, abused, or otherwise prevented from working to defend communities, land, and the environment.

We will also work with defenders to build their capacity to resist extractive projects by providing space for them to learn, strategize, and collaborate through our EarthRights Global School and alumni networks. The Mitharsuu Center for Leadership and Justice in Chiang Mai

will continue to serve as a hub for many of these activities. We will also expand our EarthRights Global School program into more regions around the globe and increase our focus on supporting women earth rights defenders, including those who participate in the EarthRights

School, Seminario, and Mekong Legal Advocacy Institute.

Finally, we will proactively address the root causes of attacks on defenders such as corruption, irresponsible land and fossil fuel development, and repression

from security forces, and work to strengthen national and global laws and policies regarding the protection of defenders and civic space, among other strategies.

DEMAND CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

We will continue to take on strategic litigation in the United States and in other countries to achieve broader influence in the global corporate human rights accountability movement. Our litigation targets will include corporations, governments, and

international financial institutions. We will continue to use mechanisms such as the Foreign Legal Assistance Statute to assist public interest lawyers in other countries in obtaining information which may be useful for their proceedings against a corporation. We will campaign

at the national and global levels to promote laws and policies that strengthen corporate accountability for human rights by expanding access to courts and remedies for victims of corporate human rights violations. This includes renewing efforts to promote

Photo by Chalefun Ditphudee



corporate human rights accountability legislation in the United States.

In recognition of the prominent role that Chinese and other non-Western companies play in human rights issues in many countries, we will explore an influencing strategy that could include bringing litigation, developing new materials for our training programs, promoting community dialogue through

our Community Developed Operational Grievance Mechanism (CDOGM), and potentially partnering with community-based lawyers and activists on cases, campaigns, and trainings.

To achieve this goal we will continue to file legal cases to hold corporations accountable for abuses, develop co-counsel relationships to expand our reach and impact; advocate for the

adoption of legislation in the U.S. to strengthen corporate human rights accountability; and adapt our curriculum, trainings, and campaign strategies to address harms inflicted by companies, among other activities.

RESPOND TO GLOBAL EMERGENCIES

The COVID-19 pandemic is imposing new threats against earth rights defenders and many activists have reported that governments are using this emergency as pretext for further repression. Meanwhile, we are in the midst of a full-blown climate crisis in which urgent action is needed to hold corporations accountable for climate damages and to support front-line communities resisting new fossil fuel projects. EarthRights will continue to stand with communities in pursuit of a world in which every person

lives with the dignity of justice and human rights on a planet where precious resources are shared equitably and preserved for the future.

To do this, we will continue to disseminate timely information on global pandemics such as COVID-19, illuminating the connection between these emergencies and our changing climate and how governments are using them to further criminalize and repress earth rights defenders.

We will also continue to support defenders under threat and maintain communication with communities who have isolated themselves for their own protection and remain under threat of human rights abuses and environmental harms.

To learn more about our vision for the future and our plan for achieving it, please read our Strategic Plan 2020-2024.

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

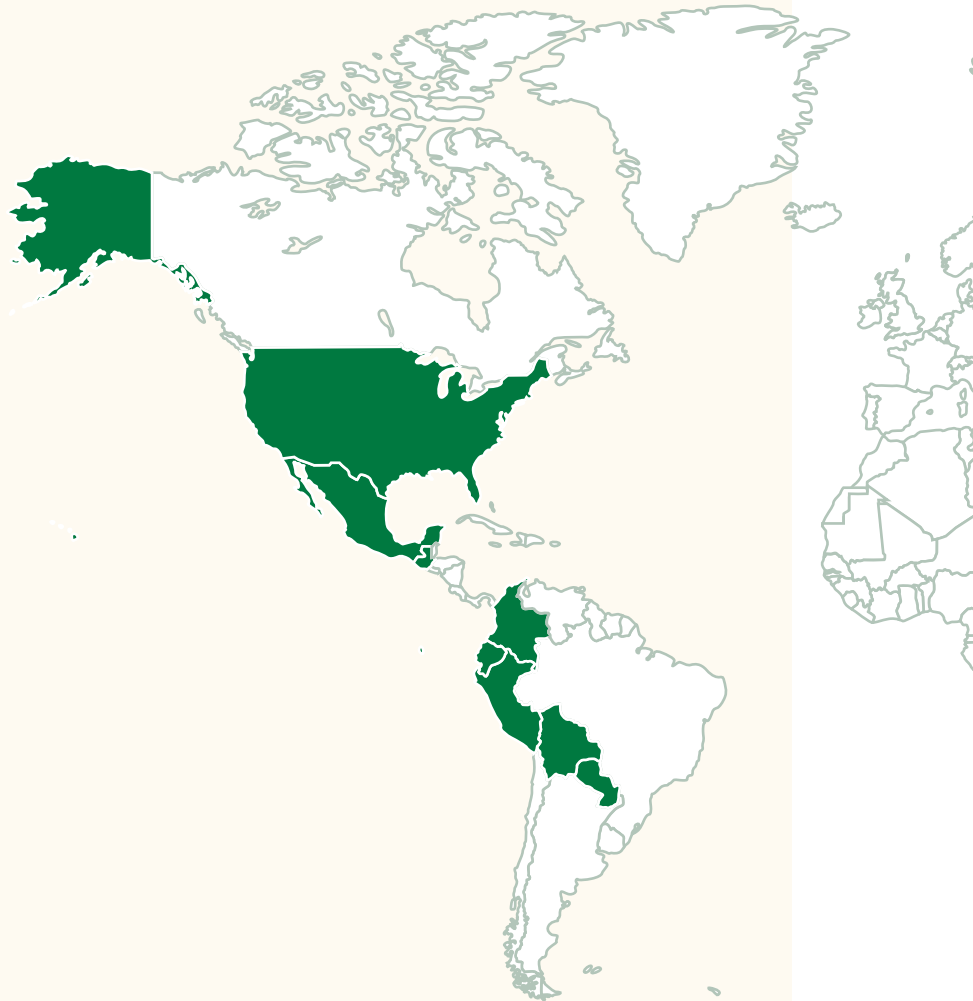
In February of 2019, the **U.S. Supreme Court** ruled in favor of our clients in the case *Jam vs. International Finance Corporation (IFC)*, declaring that international institutions like the IFC are not absolutely immune from lawsuits in U.S. courts. This was a major victory for EarthRights and our clients and an important step towards holding the IFC accountable for the negative impacts of projects that it funds.

We launched our **Cancel Corporate Abuse** campaign in October to hold corporations like Chiquita Brands International accountable for human rights abuses. We will continue to work with allies to urge the U.S. Congress to introduce legislation to that end.

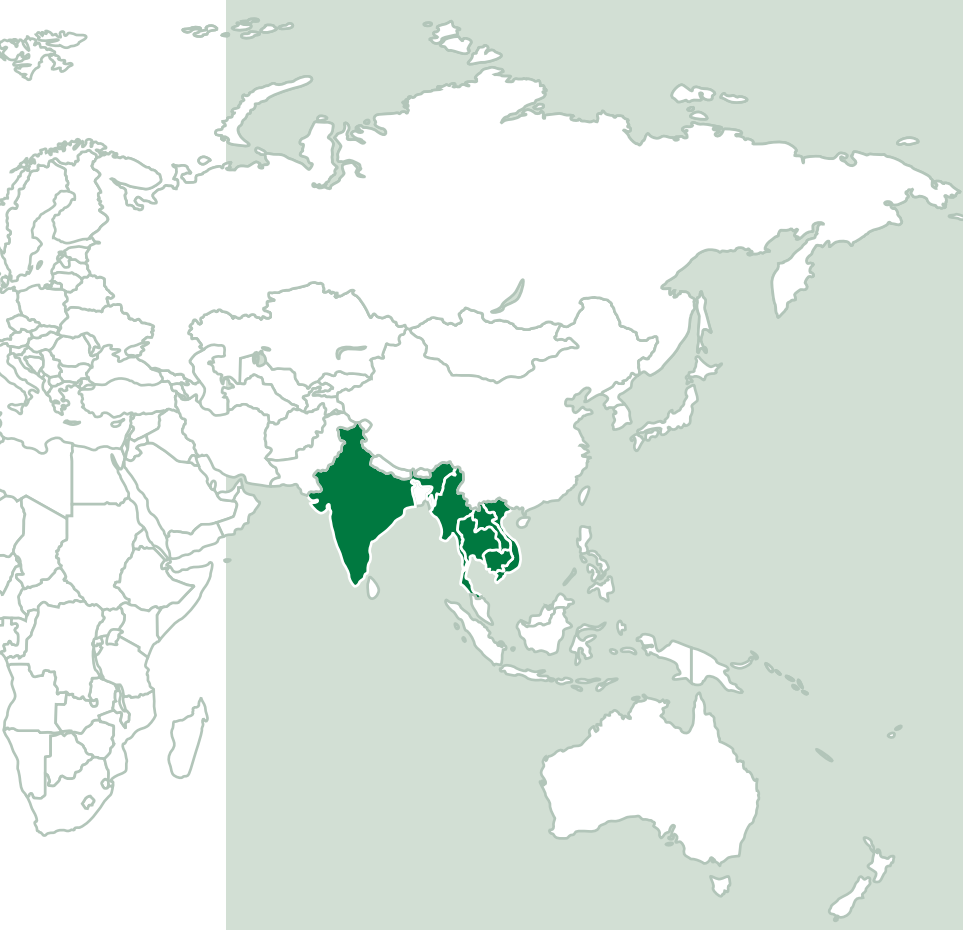
We also secured a key victory for our clients in Colorado—Boulder County, San Miguel County, and the City of Boulder—when a federal judge ruled that their **lawsuit against Exxon and Suncor for damages imposed by fossil fuels** should be allowed to move forward in state court.

EarthRights joined with allies from major U.S.-based climate justice organizations through **Fire Drill Fridays** and the **Stop the Money Pipeline** coalition to demand corporate accountability for the climate crisis.

EarthRights continued its partnership with the **Protect the Protest** coalition to provide legal and campaign support on cases designed to protect free speech



2019 HIGHLIGHTS



and limit outsized corporate power. The coalition supported efforts to introduce legislation in Kentucky and Virginia to curb the use of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation, which limit free speech and punish protestors, and is working to introduce similar bills in the U.S. Congress.

Our **Mitharsuu Center for Leadership and Justice**, which provides a safe space for defenders to strategize and learn, celebrated its two-year anniversary.

We convened the fourth session of the **Indigenous Latin American Legal Defense Seminar** in Lima, Peru, with 17 community leaders and indigenous lawyers from Colombia, Paraguay, México, Bolivia, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Peru. There, participants learned from each of the defenders' struggles, found common ground as human rights defenders in the region, and we gave them the legal tools they need to succeed in their individual and collective fights for justice.

Two of our co-founders, Katie Redford and Ka Hsaw Wa, brought together movement lawyers and leaders from around the world at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center in Italy to launch the **Power of Law, Power of People** project. This cutting-edge endeavor will ultimately lead to a book and an online learning platform to share strategies, stories, and lessons learned from our 25 years of experience leveraging the power of law and the power of people to protect human and environmental rights.

2019 PROGRAM UPDATES

CLIMATE JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The climate crisis presents one of the greatest global threats to human rights the world has ever faced. In 2019, EarthRights continued to serve as a leading voice in the fight to hold corporations accountable for damages imposed by fossil fuels, in supporting frontline communities resisting fossil fuel projects, and in calling on leaders around the world to safely transition to renewable energy sources.

In Colorado, we moved forward in our case brought by Boulder County, San Miguel County, and the City of Boulder against **Exxon** and **Suncor** to hold them accountable for climate damages. In April, EarthRights General Counsel Marco Simons appeared on a panel

hosted by the Union of Concerned Scientists and the University of Colorado to highlight the urgent need for climate litigation to protect communities from paying for harms imposed by fossil fuel activity. In September of 2019, a federal judge delivered a victory to EarthRights and our clients, ruling that the case should be allowed to proceed in state court, rather than federal court.

Also in September, our Amazon staff participated in the **Inter-American Commission on Human Rights'** (IACHR) 173rd Period of Sessions in Washington, D.C. There, EarthRights staff participated in a panel discussion on Indigenous people and rural communities, where we presented findings from our report

Climate Change and the Rights of Women, Indigenous Peoples and Rural Communities in the Americas, which was carried out as part of our coalition work with civil society organizations in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, and other Latin American countries.

In November, we supported efforts by **Senator Ed Markey** (D-Mass.) to introduce legislation that would allow the U.S. Government to impose sanctions on companies and individuals who recklessly worsen the climate crisis.

In Myanmar, we continued to support partners and communities affected by the **Tigyt coal power plant**. We



provided civil society organizations in the region with a legal brief on the plant's breaches of Myanmar law and potential remedies for those problems. Our partner in the area, the Myanmar Alliance for Transparency and Accountability, is using this information to educate government stakeholders and community leaders about this persistent problem.

Along the Salween River, EarthRights'

awareness-raising and leadership-building activities have contributed to a growing youth climate movement that is standing up for the rights of communities against extractive projects. In February, we launched a report detailing the transboundary effects of the **Honsga Coal** project on communities in the nearby Nan province in Thailand.

In the United States, EarthRights joined allies and activists for the

FireDrill Friday rallies, hosted by Jane Fonda and Greenpeace USA. Katie Redford appeared alongside other luminaries within the climate justice movement to deliver a rousing speech on the importance of climate litigation as a tool for addressing the climate crisis. Several EarthRights staff members, including Katie and Ka Hsaw Wa, participated in civil disobedience actions associated with the rallies.

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Around the world, corporations are gaining rights—at the expense of frontline and Indigenous communities. Companies in the natural resource sectors are frequently connected to human rights abuses and attacks against earth rights defenders. EarthRights is working to hold corporations, governments, and financial institutions accountable for respecting the rights of communities in the areas in which we work.

In March, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit revived our client Máxima Acuña Atalaya de Chaupe and her family's case against the U.S.-based **Newmont Mining**

Company. The family of subsistence farmers sued Newmont in the United States for abuse at the hands of the company's security forces. The lower court had dismissed the case, saying it should be heard in Peru. The Appeals Court vacated that decision, ordering the judge to take another look; EarthRights continues to seek legal remedies to protect Máxima and her family against Newmont's abusive practices.

Filmmaker Claudia Sparrow's documentary, **Maxima**, about Máxima and her family, won the audience award for a feature film at the 2019 Hot Docs film festival in Toronto. EarthRights also held a screening of

the movie for allies and supporters in Washington, D.C. in October.

To further call attention to corporate human rights abuses in Peru, EarthRights released **Contracts Between Peru's National Police and Extractive Companies: An analysis of the relationships that allow the violation of human rights and break the principles of the rule of law** in February. The report analyzes 138 agreements between the police and extractive industries in Peru and the human rights violations that these contracts often impose on communities.

EarthRights continued to build the

knowledge and skills of communities affected by the **Special Economic Zones** (SEZ) of Myanmar by holding two trainings on resettlement and land rights and organizing women's discussion groups to help increase women's participation and leadership in decision-making processes. These groups serve as safe spaces for women to discuss their concerns regarding the SEZs and development in their communities. In March, a cross-community exchange organized by EarthRights in Dawei provided community members the chance to share their progress in establishing Community-Driven Operational Level Grievance Mechanisms, as well as discuss gender and women's rights issues in their communities.

EarthRights continued to partner with allies from the **Publish What You Pay** coalition in 2019, advocating for greater transparency in the extractive industries to combat corruption and enhance corporate and governmental accountability. We worked with partners from the coalition, including Oxfam America, to oppose industry efforts to keep secret the payments companies

make to foreign governments and the U.S. government for the commercial development of oil, natural gas, and minerals. This work included urging the U.S. and Exchange Commission to re-issue strong disclosure regulations to require extractive companies listed on U.S. stock exchanges to publicly report the payments they make to governments at the project level.

In June, EarthRights partnered with the Center for Research on Multinational Corporations and the International Federation for Human Rights to co-host the annual **OECD Watch** conference, which brought together 50 civil society groups from around the world to establish strategies to combat shrinking civic spaces, corporate exploitation of natural resources, human rights abuses, weak governance, and threats against earth rights defenders. Attendees reviewed current guidelines for standards on corporate accountability and human rights, as well as grievance mechanisms for individuals and communities harmed by corporate abuse and discussed ways to strengthen them. The session will serve as a model for similar discussions in Latin America, Africa, and Europe over

the next few years.

EarthRights continued to represent clients in two cases involving the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private lending arm of the World Bank Group, in 2019. In February, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of our clients in the case **Jam vs International Finance Corporation**. Our clients, fishers and farmers from Gujarat, India, sued the IFC for its role in funding and enabling the destructive Tata Mundra Ultra Mega coal-fired power plant in their community. The Supreme Court issued an historic 7-1 decision, ruling that international organizations like the World Bank Group do not have "absolute immunity" and can be sued in U.S. courts for abuses inflicted to communities overseas. In our case **Juana Doe et al vs IFC**, EarthRights represented more than a dozen campesinos (farmers) in the Bajo Aguán region of Honduras who have been shot, killed, or otherwise terrorized by Dinant, a palm oil company funded by the IFC. In June, we responded to the IFC defendant's motion to dismiss the case.

EARTH RIGHTS DEFENDERS

As civic space around the world shrinks, human rights and land defenders play a critical role in protecting our planet's natural resources from exploitation at the hands of powerful corporations, governments, and financial institutions. Earth rights defenders are instrumental in supporting their communities in standing up for their rights: They expose injustice, demand accountability from their governments, and change laws that undermine human rights. Yet earth

rights defenders face increasing threats at the hands of corrupt governments and corporations. Criminalization is one of the most common risks for defenders, particularly in the regions where we operate. Often, criminalization is preceded by other threats, such as campaigns aimed at discrediting defenders and their organizations, or digital threats such as hacking and surveillance. Defenders also risk physical violence, and in some cases,

assassination. EarthRights has supported these brave leaders for 25 years, using community-based strategies to defend human rights and the environment while strengthening our network of earth rights defenders.

In 2019, EarthRights led and participated in numerous advocacy efforts to educate and engage stakeholders on threats facing defenders and opportunities for supporting them. We also continued

to serve as a hub on security and risk management, acting as a resource for a broad network of defenders in the Mekong region. We conducted trainings focused on risk management and assessment, security planning, and holistic approaches to security. To ensure our staff, students, alumni, and partners are well-equipped to respond to these emerging and intensifying security challenges, EarthRights provided ongoing support by developing risk assessment and travel requirements for medium and high-risk campaigns through an inclusive and collaborative process.

In 2019, our **Mitharsuu Center for Leadership and Justice** continued to serve as a safe space for staff, defenders, alumni, and partners to share and learn and support each other. Security training is a standard part of the EarthRights School curriculum to help students prepare for potential risks during their residency and field practicum, as well as in their community activism after graduation. EarthRights provided consistent risk-assessment support to program and project teams to ensure that their on-the-ground interventions are implemented in a manner that ensures the digital and physical security

of staff and communities. In addition to our climate work at the Inter American Commission on Human Rights 173rd Period of Sessions in September, EarthRights' Amazon team participated in a series of sessions on threats against earth rights defenders. In conjunction with these meetings, we released the report ***Misuse of Criminal Justice Systems to Retaliate Against Environmental Defenders***, written in coordination with organizations such as Amnesty International, Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental from México, Alianza Territorial Mapuche from Chile, Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Ambiental from Argentina, among others. EarthRights also supported **Milton Sánchez**, a criminalized defender from Peru who was featured in the report, during his preparation and speech in the IACHR Sessions.

EarthRights also supported Peru's **Wampis Nation** in their continued efforts to oppose Geopark's attempts to extract oil and gas in the Peruvian Amazon. In 2018, the Wampis Nation became the first Indigenous group to be accepted as an interested third-party in the process of approving an Environmental Impact Study for the

project. In 2019, the Wampis challenged the assessment and presented several observations on the study, which halted the project. In July of 2020, the Wampis declared victory as Geopark announced plans to withdraw from the area.

In the United States, EarthRights led coalition efforts to advocate for policy reforms to strengthen government protections for human rights and land defenders facing abusive SLAPP lawsuits as part of our work in the **Protect the Protest** coalition. We successfully defended Krystal Two Bulls, an Oglala Lakota/Northern Cheyenne woman who served as a media liaison for the campaign against the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock. In February, a federal judge dismissed racketeering charges brought against Two Bulls by pipeline company Energy Transfer. Energy Transfer re-filed claims in North Dakota state court but has yet to move forward in this case.

The topic of SLAPP lawsuits also garnered international attention in November when the HBO series ***Last Week Tonight*** with John Oliver covered the trend of corporations attempting to silence dissent through abusive lawsuits.





**NO
MINE
NO
WAR**

Photo by Chalefun Ditphudee

TRAINING AND LEGAL NETWORKS

For more than two decades, EarthRights has trained local communities, lawyers, and civil society leaders who work to defend human rights and the environment. We offer courses and workshops on community organizing, campaigning, advocacy, and legal issues through our EarthRights School, the Mekong Legal Network, the Mekong Legal Advocacy Institute, and the Amazon Indigenous Seminar.

EarthRights convened a week-long **Global Learning Exchange** at the Mitharsuu Center for Leadership and Justice. Participants included alumni and representatives from leading **schools, training centers, and programs around the world**, including countries such as India, South Africa, Mexico, Brazil, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and the United States. Participants shared resources and identified future opportunities for learning and collaboration.

Our **EarthRights School** successfully integrated a digital learning management system using Google Classroom into its curriculum in order to support students in their homework, critical thinking, and English language skills. The system enables students to create electronic portfolios of their work in order for them to demonstrate what they have learned and accomplished through their training with EarthRights.

The **Mekong Legal Network** celebrated 10 years of success in 2019. We launched the network in 2009 with a generous grant from Echoing Green. The network has grown to 23 members, consisting of representatives and lawyers from legal organizations in Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Membership meetings are held twice a year for networking, building capacity on relevant laws and legal strategies, and developing collaborative projects. The year saw network members affirming their vision of strategic litigation and commitment to public interest law, network engagement, and joint actions. In addition, a learning exchange for members from Laos took place in Loei province, Thailand, hosted by the Community Resource Centre.

EarthRights launched the **Myanmar Environmental Lawyers Network** (MELN) in 2015. In 2019 EarthRights hosted two MELN sessions with about 30 lawyers from Myanmar. The first workshop focused on land rights, which directed input from MELN members to the land law reform process. MELN members and partners from civil society organizations met with members of Parliament and the Law Drafting Committee to advocate for legal reforms and transparency. The second session focused on an environmental law framework and scope for reform. The workshop also brought Bertha Justice Fellows from EarthRights' Mekong, Amazon, and U.S. office together to share and learn about the law reform process. The session also highlighted the need for greater capacity-building for lawyers on environmental law.

EarthRights also hosted 17 earth rights defenders from Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Guatemala, Peru and Bolivia for the fourth session of the **Latin American Indigenous Legal Seminar** in Lima, Peru. Over the course of three work-intensive days, EarthRights provided these defenders with campaigning and legal tools to support their communities.

EarthRights launched the **Mekong Legal Advocacy Institute** (MLAI) in 2008 to provide a forum for lawyers and campaigners to address social and environmental issues in the region and to develop a better understanding of public interest legal advocacy strategies. Once a year, we convene an intensive, two-week program for junior lawyers seeking to use the law and legal advocacy as a tool for human rights and environmental justice. In 2019, 17 lawyers and legal professionals from five countries in the Mekong region participated in the program. We now have almost 100 alumnae lawyers throughout the region.

2019 FINANCIALS

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenue and Other Support			
Foundation Grants	\$ 364,971	\$ 4,819,992	\$ 5,184,963
Individual Contributions	197,482	-	197,482
Contracts	23,275	-	23,275
Net Investment Income	548,742	40,581	589,323
Other	8,767	-	8,767
Net Assets Released from Restrictions			
Satisfaction of Program Restrictions	4,575,053	(4,575,053)	-
Total Revenue and Other Support	\$ 5,718,290	\$ 285,520	\$ 6,003,810
Expenses			
Program Expenses			
Legal	\$ 2,147,023	\$ -	\$ 2,147,023
Advocacy and Campaigns	1,039,338	-	1,039,338
EarthRights Schools	353,895	-	353,895
International Cross-Cutting	610,878	-	610,878
Total Program Expenses	4,151,134	-	4,151,134
Management and General	399,126	-	399,126
Development	472,281	-	472,281
Total Expenses	5,022,541	-	5,022,541
Change in Net Assets	695,749	285,520	981,269
Net Assets, beginning of year	4,341,595	4,228,042	8,569,637
Net Assets, end of year	\$ 5,037,344	\$ 4,513,562	\$ 9,550,906

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