



FIRST PEOPLES WORLDWIDE

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US Government Publishes Human Trafficking Data

In July 2016, the State Department published its annual Trafficking in Persons Report, which rates governments on their efforts to acknowledge and combat human trafficking in their countries. The report can serve as a resource for companies to use when assessing Country Risk, since human trafficking is one of the worst social impacts tied to many industries. However, some of its findings may be misleading.

For example, Canada and the US received the best ratings possible despite the widespread connection between resource extraction and human trafficking in both countries. Additionally, the report improved the ratings for the Philippines and Thailand, two countries with thriving sex industries and well-known problems with forced labor. Some human trafficking watchdog groups allege that politics played a role in the scoring, since both countries are key US allies.

When companies research social indicators, they should reconcile government statistics with those provided by credible NGOs and other third parties to ensure accuracy and identify loopholes. Additionally, companies should ensure that data specific to vulnerable populations, such as Indigenous Peoples, is not subsumed within countrywide data.

Sources: [Huffington Post](#), [Reuters](#), [Trafficked Report](#), [Trafficking in Persons Report](#)

Reducing Illegal Resource Development

Law enforcement agencies and Indigenous Peoples in Pará, Brazil have entered a partnership to stop illegal logging in the Amazon. Under the agreement, communities use their knowledge of

the land to guide police officers to remote illegal logging camps on or near their territories. So far, the collaboration has shutdown numerous operations, yielded 24 arrest warrants, and shed light on one of the largest illegal logging networks in the Amazon.

Illegal resource development is sometimes perpetuated by licensed corporate activities in close proximity, which create infrastructure and market access for illegal resource development to thrive. Companies might consider this model to reduce illegal resource development in areas where they do business.

Sources: [Ecosystem Marketplace](#)

Avoiding Human Rights Checklists

An article in the Foley Hoag CSR and the Law blog provides guidance on how companies can avoid turning human rights due diligence into checklist exercises that fail to yield good practice on the ground. The article suggests that human rights information, instead of being compiled into a single report once a year, should be up to date and tailored to appropriate internal audiences. For example, data needed by managers overseeing supply chain risks may be different from data needed by managers responsible for public disclosure.

The article also advises companies to steer clear from assigning the task of human rights due diligence to a single individual. Instead they should ensure the “right people across the company feel ownership over and responsibility for the management of human rights considerations.”

Sources: [Foley Hoag](#)

Reforestation Law Raises Concerns

In July 2016, India passed a reforestation law that simultaneously violates Indigenous Peoples rights and ignores the critical role of Indigenous Peoples in conservation. The law gives state governments authority to earmark land for development and assign compensation for it, language that is expected to pave the way for more forced relocation of Indigenous Peoples in

the country. India is one of the focal points of Survival International's campaign to stop conservation evictions.

Additionally, the law gives state governments nearly \$900 million per year for reforestation efforts, even though studies have repeatedly shown that Indigenous Peoples can protect forests more effectively and efficiently than centralized bureaucracies. A 2008 study by the Rights and Resources Initiative found that Indigenous-led conservation costs \$3.50 per hectare, whereas Western conservation costs \$3,500 per hectare.

Sources: [Voice of America](#)

Supporting Sustainable Jobs

In July 2016, MMG awarded a three year contract to Waanyi ReGen, a joint venture between the Waanyi Prescribed Body Corporate (the business arm of the Waanyi Native Title Holders) and ReGen (a reclamation firm), for care and maintenance at the Century Mine. The mine, which has had approximately 1,000 Indigenous employees throughout its life cycle, will wind down production this year, and the contract will ensure continued jobs in areas such as land and water management, and erosion prevention. According to the MMG CEO, "our objective has always been to create a lasting positive legacy and this commitment endures during this next phase in Century's life. The award of the contract to the Waanyi ReGen further reinforces our support for the Waanyi People."

Indigenous Peoples can make especially good partners during the care and management phase of mines. Because of their ties to land, they are likely to remain in the project area for a long time and have a vested interest in ensuring the reclamation process is done properly.

Sources: [MMG](#)

First Nations Push for Consultation

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation is suing the Yukon government for failing to consult them about mineral exploration on their traditional territory. The lawsuit seeks to build on a 2012

legal victory, in which the court recognized the Ross River Dena Council's right to be consulted about mineral exploration on their traditional territory, even for "low impact" activities such as tree clearing and trail building.

The key difference is that the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation has a final agreement (also known as a modern day treaty) regarding their land claims, whereas the Ross River Dena Council does not. While the 2012 case determined that First Nations without agreements must be consulted about mineral exploration on their traditional territory, this one seeks to expand the requirement to the traditional territory of First Nations with agreements, even if such territory is not part of their recognized land claims.

Sources: [Yukon News](#)