

5TH NEWSLETTER



Ethical Conservation Course postponed

We have decided to postpone our Ethical Conservation Course. This is due to difficulty in finding external financing to cover the costs of the many great local conservationists who inquired and applied to the course. We were positively surprised by the interest in the course and believe that we should accommodate all the requests for financial scholarships. Therefore, we are taking the time to reorganize to secure more funding and will restart the application process in the near future.

We believe we will be able to run the course early next year. Please let us know if you have ideas for fundraising for the scholarships. Remember it is a course that criticizes and calls for drastic changes in the way mainstream conservation is managed, and therefore it is very unlikely to get funding from the conventional conservation funding sources.

Armed conflicts, refugees and the environment

We are currently in the midst of what is commonly referred to as the world's worst refugee crisis in history, with at least 22 armed conflicts and an estimated 68.5 million forcefully displaced people worldwide. These clashes and forced migration result in millions of deaths, severe traumas and extreme poverty for millions more. Slavery is still common in many places around the world. States of the Global North are less and less welcoming to deprived migrants, while their economies remain largely based on arms trade and therefore on the continuity of these wars¹.

Most of these social crises are connected to environmental issues in one way or another, and even more so to Neoliberalism, and to our consumption choices. For example, young children are being worked as slaves in Congolese cobalt mines, extracting minerals used to make smartphones and electric cars. These mines also put extreme pressure on local fauna, including great apes. Several of the conflicts in Africa are funded through the exploitation of

¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2017/02/10-countries-export-major-weapons-170220170539801.html>

natural resources such as oil, diamonds, timber and minerals, resources used mainly by the Global North.

Climate change is often used to explain the growing violence. However, Political Ecology, Political Economy and Social History researches on the connections between climate change and armed conflicts conclude otherwise. Although they all agree that climate change is real and is directly related to human activities, they conclude that there is weak or no evidence pointing to a direct relationship between climate change related phenomena, such as short term warming, droughts or floods, and armed conflicts. However, there is strong evidence that climate change mitigation strategies, like REDD projects, biofuels and externally funded food security programs, do create and aggravate social conflicts. These findings are comparable with our claims that economically based solutions promoted by mainstream conservation are damaging to both nature and wildlife. You can find more information about the connection between the refugees crisis and the environment [HERE](#).

We at Reclaim Conservation believe that social and environmental crises are directly connected, and both local people and biodiversity are the victims of current economic systems and wrong solutions. Therefore we believe that all victims deserve help.

Aniye is a new movement founded by Noga Shanee of Reclaim Conservation which aims to help African refugees in Uganda. Aniye means 'we have come' in the Zande language of South Sudan. It is a new, inclusive grassroots movement of refugees and international volunteers who want to make a difference. Their traveling school project works from the grassroots level, to reach every community they are invited to, share their knowledge and expertise and encourage refugees to organize, initiate, improve their lives and hopefully learn to defend themselves and the environment.

Troubles continue at Chaparri Private Protected Area, Peru

You might remember our publications from the beginning of the year about the murder of José Napoleón, an environmentalist villager who was brutally murdered on the last day of 2017 for defending the Private Conservation Area, Chaparri. The murder followed many threats, violence and abuses toward the group defending the reserve. The long struggle is related to a big group of land invaders who took over large parts of the reserve and deforested it. This is most probably with the intention to dissolve the area's conservation status, and open it for use by the several mining and water residuary concessions petitions for this area.

Unfortunately, the government of Peru still has not pressed charges against anyone related to the murder. On the other hand, the villagers defending the reserves are repeatedly being prosecuted for many different and false charges. For example, villagers were photographed fighting to stop a big forest fire started by the land invaders to the reserve. These photos were used to report to the police as if the villagers were the ones starting the fire. Therefore each of them are facing legal charges against them, which they must defend against using their own

resources and time. The Chaparri case demonstrates the exceptionally high levels of corruption of the Peruvian Justice System, when it comes to the interests of extraction companies. The most distressing news from Chaparri is that Mr. Javier Ruiz, one of the most determined, brave and efficient actors in this straggle, has received a sentence of 3 years in jail for a crime he never committed. We are now planning a few events in Spain in order to fundraise for his legal costs and help support his family in this hard time.