



# Uncontacted

Hidden In The Forest

Alina Herrmann

**This textbook works in combination with the app “Uncontacted”. Through that, you can get a new experience of learning about uncontacted tribes in an interactive way, which will assure the best learning experience.**



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**Uncontacted**

# tribe

*[traɪb] noun*

a group of people, often of related families, who live together, sharing the same language, culture, and history, especially those who do not live in towns or cities:

- a tribe of Amazonian Indians
- the Masai tribe

Cambridge Dictionary<sup>1</sup>

# uncontacted peoples

*[un'kɒn.tækted pi:p(ə)ls] noun*

uncontacted peoples, also referred to as isolated peoples or lost tribes, are communities who live, or have lived without significant contact with global civilization

Collins Dictionary<sup>2</sup>

**Introduction**

**06**

**08**

**History**

**Contact**

**12**

**16**

**Threats**

**Organizations**

**20**

**22**

**Tribes**

**What can be done?**

**40**

**42**

**Sources**





## Introduction

Nowadays, everyone is connected to each other through the internet, no matter where in the world they are. This gives the possibility to be in constant exchange and contact with others, and therefore the feeling of never being alone. But while this is the normal situation for most of the population, there are some people for whom it is completely different. For uncontacted tribes, contact with the outside world is something completely unknown, dangerous and life-changing.

Nowadays, around **100** uncontacted tribes are left. The numbers in **Brazil, around 77**, are likely to be the most accurate as they took aerial surveys and asked indigenous neighbour groups if they have encountered with tribes. In **Peru** are roughly **15 tribes** located and in **other Amazonian countries around five**. While most of the uncontacted tribes are found in the Amazon region, there are **two tribes living on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands** (India) and around **12 tribes in Papua**, which belongs to Indonesia. There are still speculations about uncontacted tribes in central Africa and Malaysia, but those have stayed undiscovered until today.



Figure 1: Distribution of uncontacted tribes

All of these tribes only had little or indirect contact. "There's always some contact with other isolated tribes, which have contact with other indigenous people, which in turn have contact with the outside world" (Rebecca Spooner, Survival International)<sup>3</sup>. They either stay in **unintentional, actively out of need or voluntary isolation**. The most common reasons for their isolation are unpleasant meetings with other groups in the past, which scared them to reach out to the outside world.



A threat all uncontacted tribes are facing is their **lack of immunity to diseases**. As they have been staying in their own group for many decades or centuries and often only had periodically encountered with neighbouring tribes, their bodies never had the chance to build immunity to common diseases. A simple cold, which can be normal on a regular basis, **can be deadly** for them, especially if they have **no source of medicine**. However, as more tribes are getting discovered, some are able to get medicine and vaccination from outside, while still continuing with their original lifestyle.







## History

Hundreds of years ago, most of the tribes on this planet were uncontacted or only had small contact with neighbouring tribes. However, due to a broader development of the civilizations, changes in the tribe's surroundings and colonialism, more tribes got discovered and most often forced to join civilizations and leave their culture behind. But also in more recent history, tribes had to face different encounters, which shows very well why they want to stay on their own.

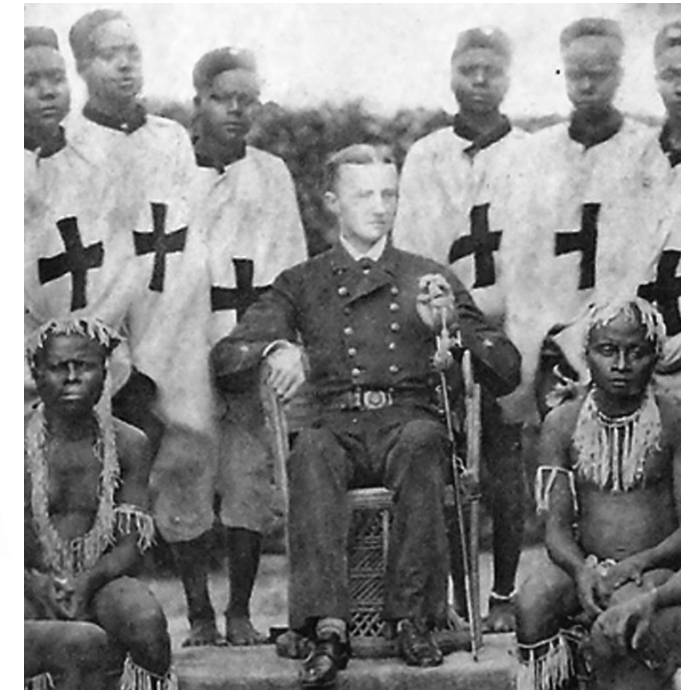


Figure 2: Portman with Andamese tribe men

## Andaman and Nicobar Islands 1879

**Maurice Vidal Portman** (1860-1935), a British officer working in **Port Blair**, the capital of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, was stationed there to take pictures of the native inhabitants for the British Museum. He was the **first European to visit the North Sentinel Island**, home of the Sentinelese, in **1879**, where he wanted to find out more about that remote and uncontacted tribe. It took him and his team, consisting of armed men and other original Andamese tribe men, some days until they **met a group of Sentinelese**, an older couple and four children. For **scientific reasons**, they decided to take the group with them to Port Blair and **study them**<sup>4</sup>.

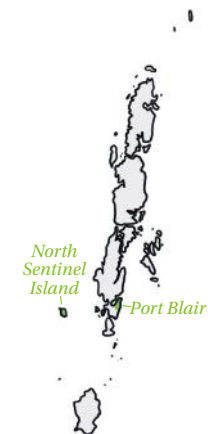


Figure 3: Andaman map

In Port Blair, the **couple died quickly**, due to the exposure to illnesses, their immune system is not used to. The children were sent back to the island with gifts. However, the children also brought back germs to the island, which is likely one reason why the tribe **got more hostile against outsiders**. For Portman, this was not his last visit, and he came back to the island more often in the following years. The pictures, which he took of the tribe members, but also of other tribes, often had a homo-erotic touch, which is **seen difficult nowadays**<sup>5</sup>.



## Putomayo region

### 1879-1913

During the mid of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, **Charles Goodyear** discovered a new way of treating **latex**, harvested by the rubber tree, which makes it a material for a lot of different uses. During the change of the centuries, more rubber was needed as **John Dunlop** and **Henry Ford** started using it for car tyres, which started the **rubber boom**. Rubber trees grow in the **western part of the Amazon** and as many entrepreneurs wanted to earn a lot of money through the boom, they bought land there. However, to have a positive income, they needed to pay the people working for them little or nothing, which is why many **started to enslave tribes**, that lived within that **Putumayo River region**, such as the **Bora, Witoto and Andoke tribes**. As compensation for their work, they received products like hammocks, machetes or clothes. Due to the bad conditions, **many slaves died** from diseases, bad treatment or were killed for entertainment.

The tribe's people that did not want to work for the rubber companies were **either killed or could flee** to the southern region of the Putumayo, which made them live hidden within the forest. This forced them to **find new food sources, learn new skills and abandon traditional ones**, such as agriculture and canoe construction. While escaping, many tribes were also **confronted with epidemics**, as they met different people. Furthermore, tribes **had to break apart while escaping**, which explains why there are still a lot of similarities within some tribes today.



Figure 4: Putumayo region map



Figure 5: Indigenous slaves during the rubber boom

**Walter Hardenburg**, an American Engineer, travelled to the plantages but was **held in prison** by one of the plantages' owners. He was held there for over a year and later (1909) reported about the conditions in a magazine called "Truth". He called Putumayo "**The Devil's Paradise**" (Hardenburg, W. 1909)<sup>6</sup>. This was the first time the rest of the world heard anything about how bad the conditions were. **In 1910, Roger Casement**, a British counsellor, was sent to the plantages to investigate and then **reported it to the UK court**, which started to investigate further until this **holocaust was ended in 1913**<sup>7</sup>.

“The agents of the Company force the pacific Indians of the Putumayo to work day and night... without the slightest remuneration except the food needed to keep them alive. They are robbed of their crops, their women and their children... They are flogged inhumanly until their bones are laid bare... They are left to die, eaten by maggots, when they serve as food for the dogs... Their children are grasped by the feet and their heads are dashed against trees and walls until their brains fly out... Men, women and children are shot to provide amusement... they are burned with kerosene so that the employees may enjoy their desperate agony.”

Walter Hardenburg, Truth, 1909

In total, around **90%** of the whole indigenous population **was vanished, within 30 years**. **Many tribes died completely**. The ones that survived, had traumatic memories from that time. This event explains why the tribes tried to stay hidden in the forests and are scared of the outside world. Today, many of

the tribes **are not uncontacted anymore** and some now live in different towns and cities. In the **1980s the Colombian government gave back the land** that was stolen from the tribes to the descendants. In total, the territories were **bigger than 6 million hectares**.

“We are sent far, far into the forest to get rubber, and if we do not get it, or if we do not get it quickly enough, we are shot.”  
Omarino, slave that was freed in 1911



Figure 6: Amazon map

## Brazil

### 1960s-1980s

During the **1960s and 1970s**, the Brazilian government has seen the Amazon as free land that could develop further. Therefore, the tribes got **little or no warning at all**, before their **settlements got destroyed** and they sometimes also got killed.

During the **1970s and 1980s**, the government of Brazil slowly made an effort into contacting tribes, living within the Amazon in a **friendly way**. The contact had its main origin in the plan to **resettle the uncontacted tribes**. They wanted to **lure them with tools and other objects**, that are of a bigger value for tribes, mainly followed by the consequence of **violent actions** by the tribes or **transmitted diseases**.

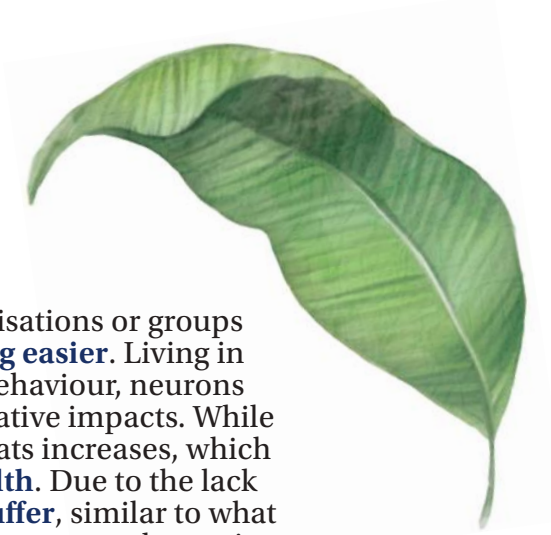






## Contact

Being in constant contact with others has become normal to modern society, especially due to technological evolution. However, for uncontacted tribes, contact is more of a rarity, as most of them only had little or no contact within the past. But what does contact mean to uncontacted tribes? And what is the best way of contacting them?



Just like animals, human beings form organisations or groups together with others, which **makes surviving easier**. Living in groups can have a **positive impact** on our behaviour, neurons and hormones. Therefore, isolation has negative impacts. While being in isolation, the awareness of life threats increases, which has a negative influence on our **mental health**. Due to the lack of contact with others, our **immunity can suffer**, similar to what uncontacted tribes are experiencing. Furthermore, a change in **sleep behaviour and genetics** may occur. Even the probability of **mortality can increase**. This shows the significance of contact with each other. Without it, humanity would probably not exist anymore, as the establishment of groups had an important role during history when it came to defence as well as working on new inventions.

Cacioppo,  
Norman,  
Bernison,  
Hawley, 2011

“What was especially surprising was that social isolation was as strong a risk factor for morbidity and mortality as smoking, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, and high blood pressure.”

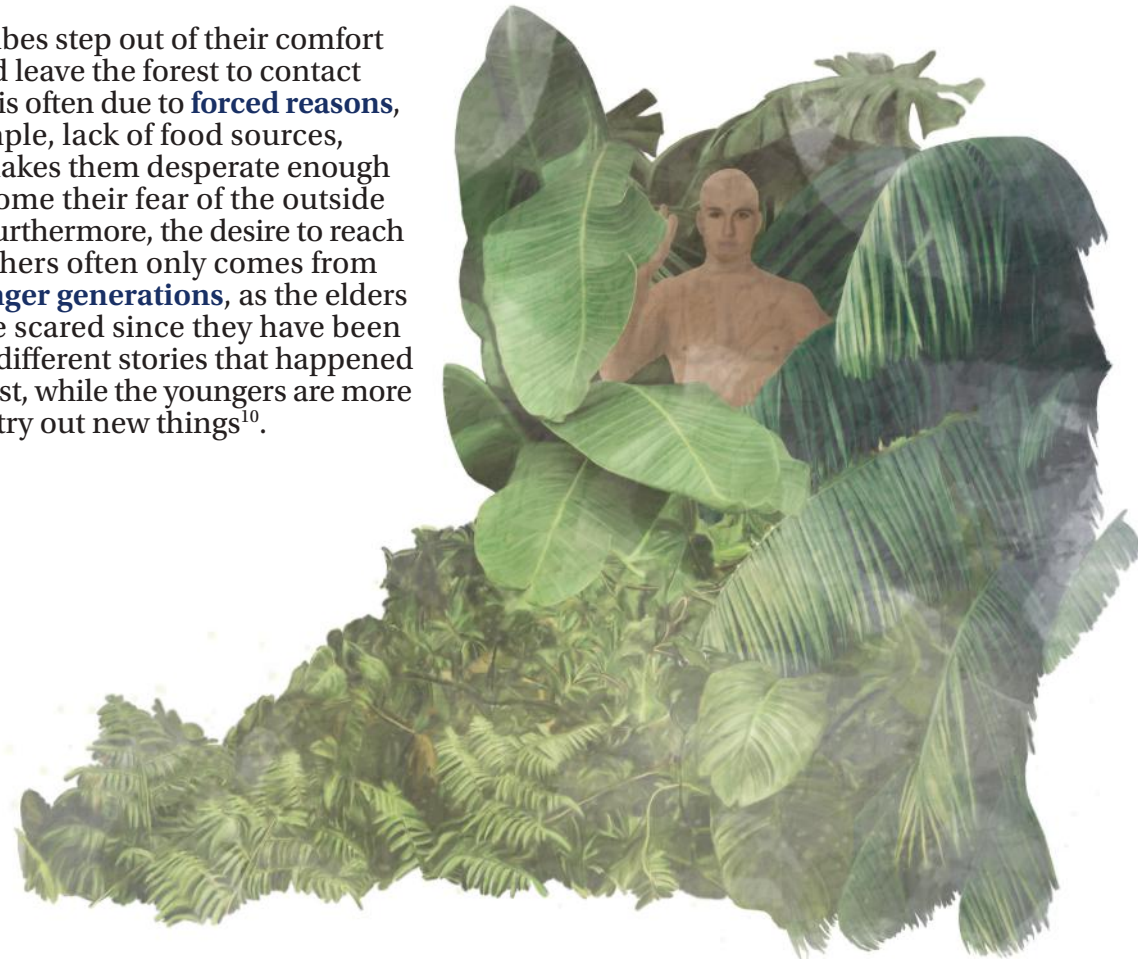
## Different definitions of contact

- Physically touching someone
- Connecting with others
- Establishing and maintaining relationships
- Communicating with others, strangers, friends and family
- Medicine for depression and loneliness
- Connecting with different people from all over the world
- Seeing, hearing, touching, communication between each other (facial, gesture, verbal)
- Conversation, discussion, shared experience - making connections physically and emotionally





When tribes step out of their comfort zone and leave the forest to contact locals, it is often due to **forced reasons**, for example, lack of food sources, which makes them desperate enough to overcome their fear of the outside world. Furthermore, the desire to reach out to others often only comes from the **younger generations**, as the elders are more scared since they have been hearing different stories that happened in the past, while the youngsters are more likely to try out new things<sup>10</sup>.



The first contact is a **special moment** for the tribes, but also for the other side they are meeting. For the tribes, contact can mean that **their life might change**. The contact can have **positive**, for example through help with food, or **negative impacts**, when the group/person they are meeting has bad intentions. Often the first contact happens with **missionaries**, that try to convert them to a specific religion. Other common first contacts happen with **loggers, drug traffickers or poachers**, that often illegally enter tribes' reserves and have negative impacts on the tribe's behaviour around people as they often threaten them to kill someone or actually do it<sup>11</sup>.

Therefore, even for **anthropologists, building trust is something complicated**. The tribes tend to think that they are nice to them to **lure them into a trap** with different presents until they get close enough to kill them. Most workers from FUNAI (more on p.21) got killed during the first contact, as the tribes are unsure whether they **have good or bad intentions**, as everyone that looks different from themselves is seen as an enemy before the first contact<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, some anthropologists believe that it is easier for the tribes to understand that they are on the **same level when they do not wear any, or similar, clothes**<sup>13</sup>.



Even if **presents** such as food, material or clothes might seem like a good idea, in the beginning, they **can be dangerous** for the tribes. The items can **transmit diseases** and **start an epidemic** within the tribe, contain something **dangerous** for the tribe or their surroundings or **make the tribe dependent** on the outside world.

It is widely believed that the tribes **should make their own decision** whether they want to contact the outside world or not and therefore, it is **forbidden to contact** them in most countries. However, anthropologists are allowed to step in contact, as they do not give any harm to the tribes. Still, anthropologists are barely ever the first ones to get into contact with the tribes.







## Threats

Survival International, an organization that supports the rights of worldwide tribes, has described uncontacted tribes as the most vulnerable people on earth. This is mainly because of the different threats they are facing, which can differentiate depending on their location and the responsible government, against which they most often cannot defend themselves, without any further help from the outside world.



## Immune system

As the tribes have been staying in **isolation** for many centuries, they were not able to build up an immune system that **protects them from common diseases**. Therefore, every contact with a person from the outside **can end deadly** and even **objects like clothes or food can transmit viruses** and start an epidemic within a tribe. Furthermore, they have stronger infections when it comes to Hepatitis B once they come into contact with it<sup>14</sup>.



## Logging

Logging has especially **increased within the Amazon** but is also a problem in other regions. The land is then often used for industry, which **makes it impossible** for the tribes to stay where they have been living.



## Land loss

Land loss is often a **consequence of logging**, but can also occur due to a **changing nature or use of that land**. This means that the tribes have to move away and find a new place where they can live. This is difficult as many areas are **not as far off** from other communities or they might have to find new food sources and **learn new skills** to survive.





## Wildfires

Similar to logging and land loss, wildfires mean that the tribe is **unable to continue to live** the way they did before. Even if the fires do not affect them directly, they have an **impact on nature and the animals** surrounding them. Once a wildfire reaches their land, they are unable to fight against it and their **only option is to escape**.



## Tourism

Even if most tribes live far off from any tourist places some are still **affected by tourists**. The Jarawas for example, have a road that goes through their reserve, which makes it able to offer **"Tribe Tours"**, from which tourists might have the chance to catch a glance at the tribes. The tribes themselves, therefore, cannot live as they used to and tourists tend to hand them **presents, which make them dependent** and forget about their traditional living<sup>15</sup>.



## Food shortage

Food shortage can have many **different reasons**, but if the food sources are gone, the tribes **cannot survive without reaching out**, which is something unusual for them.

## Intertribal conflicts

Tribes are not only scared of the outside world, but also willing to **attack other isolated tribes** if they come too close to them. Those intertribal conflicts have already **vanished complete tribes** in the past, but in contrast to conflicts with the outside world, these fights happen at eye level.

## Ignorance

Back in 2007, **Alan Garcia**, a Peruvian politician, did not believe in the existence of uncontacted tribes and rather thought that they are made up by environmentalists, to save the forest. The **denial can cause severe problems**, as the infrastructure would be build **without thinking of the consequences** for the tribes.



## Road plans

With the road that goes through the Jarawa's reserve, one can already see the **problem of how road plans can end up**. In Peru, there have been similar plans, to connect towns that are more off, however, the highway means "loss of environmental services, loss of food security, loss of land belonging to one of the uncontacted tribes, loss of biological diversity, and the possible invasion of our territories by colonists and mestizos" (HILL, D., 2012)<sup>16</sup>.



## Oil and gas exploration

Currently, much of the logging happens due to the **search for oil and gas**. There are many parallels to the **rubber boom** (p. 10), during which the Amazon got a lot of interest and the tribes' land was taken away.







## Organizations

As the tribes are facing many of the different threats on a daily basis, different organizations have formed to support them. With that, it is possible for the tribes to have a voice to the outside world, without having to step out of their uncontacted situation. The organizations also act as the opponents to missionary programs, which train missionaries and send them on missions to contact the tribes and convert them to a specific religion, as they believe everyone should have the right to learn about it and have the same faith.



Figure 7: Logo Survival International

## Survival International

Survival International was founded in **1969** by a group of people that fought against the **genocide of Indians living in the Amazon**. “We exist to prevent the **annihilation of tribal peoples** and to give them a **platform to speak to the world** so they can bear witness to the genocidal violence, slavery and racism they face on a daily basis. By lobbying the powerful we help defend the lives, lands and futures of people who **should have the same rights** as other contemporary societies.” (Survival International)<sup>17</sup>



## FUNAI

FUNAI (Fundação Nacional do Índio, National Indian Foundation) is part of the **Brazilian Government**. It was founded in **1967** and ever since they promote the rights of indigenous people. They **provide isolation** for tribes that are newly contacted, regulate land, carry out policies for the tribes and contact them if they are in a serious threat<sup>18</sup>.



Figure 8: Logo FUNAI

## Upper Amazon Conservancy



Figure 9: Logo UAC

“We partner with indigenous communities and their federations to **build conservation capacity, strengthen protected areas and promote well-informed, sustainable public policy**. We pride ourselves on the time spent in the most remote and difficult to access parts of the Amazon headwaters, working hard to protect the forests and way of life of the settled and isolated indigenous tribes who live there.” (Upper Amazon Conservancy)<sup>19</sup>

## FENAMAD

“FENAMAD has been created by men and women of the indigenous communities of the region to **channel their proposals and demands** towards the state and civil society, thus supporting the **defense of our rights and contribution** to the well-being of our people.” (FENAMAD)<sup>20</sup>



Figure 10: Logo FENAMAD





## Tribes

Due to a more connected world, urbanization and colonialism, uncontacted tribes can only be found in the most remote areas nowadays. Especially the Amazon is an area in which it is easier for the tribes to hide and stay uncontacted by the general outer world, as the area is so large and undiscovered in most parts. Even if someone wants to search and contact them, this makes it more difficult for them, as it takes a long time to find the exact living area.



As a consequence of that, most of the tribes that are still uncontacted today can be found in the **Amazon region and close to it**. The main advantage of the tribes in Asia is that they **all live on islands**, which makes it easier to **separate from the outside world**, even if they all had at least a little contact. However, the smaller the island, the easier it is for the tribe to stay isolated, as a reserve is **easier to be segregated** and to clarify in which areas no one else is allowed in.



Figure 11: Individual tribe locations

A good example for this are the **Sentinelese**, who live completely **alone on the North Sentinel Island**, from which the other islands are several kilometres away. However, living on an island is not the main factor whether a tribe can stay uncontacted or not. Other tribes, that have been living on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, such as the **Jangi or Onge** tribes, have had more problems and are **not seen as uncontacted tribes nowadays**, as they had to fully integrate into the society when more people moved there.





# Mashco Piro

The tribe of the Mashco Piro lives close to the **Brazilian border in Peru in the Manú National Park**, near the Curanja river. Other names they are known for are **Cujareño people and Nomole**. The lifestyle they are living fits the **nomadic hunter-gatherers**. The tribe of the Mashco Piro is likely to be the **biggest existing tribe** nowadays, however, there are no official numbers of how many members there are.

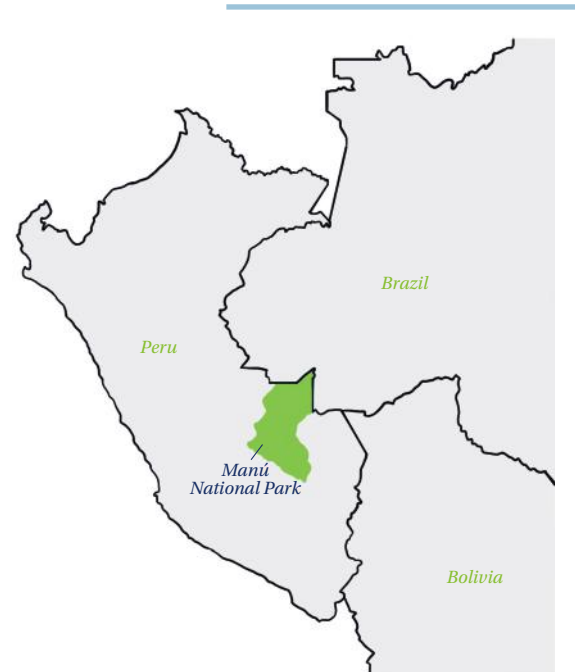
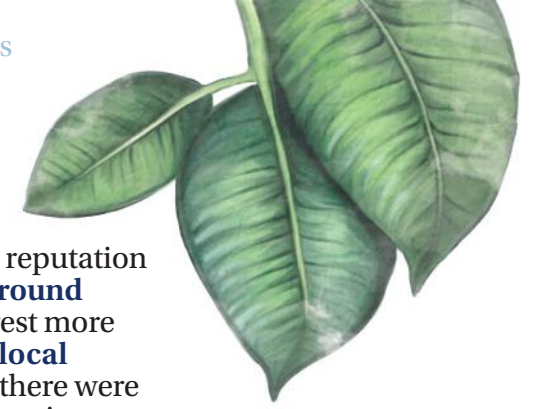


Figure 12: Location of the Manú National Park

Language-wise, the Mashco Piro speak an **Arawak language**, which is **close to Yine**, the language that is spoken by locals, besides Spanish. The phonetic system of both languages is similar to each other, which **makes communication between locals and the tribe easier**, even though there are still some differences. However, more and more locals start to only speak Spanish as their main language, which differentiates more from both languages. An example of this is the word “tree”, which is “árbol” in Spanish, whereas the Mashco Piro word is “gaamuna” (transcribed by Steve Parker) and in Yine, it means “gagmuna”<sup>21</sup>.

They find their food within the **area of the river**. However, due to **higher flooding** in the past years, it has been getting more difficult to find **turtle eggs**, one of their main nutriments<sup>22</sup>. Due to a **change in food, a change of behaviour** can be seen among the tribe.



The Mashco Piro have had a fearsome reputation amongst locals for many years now. **Around 2011**<sup>23</sup> they started to leave the rain forest more often and different **encounters with local villagers** happened. In the beginning, there were **smaller signs**, like some items disappearing. As the encounters happened **more frequently**, it shows that something is happening, which forces them to change their lifestyle. At one point over **100 tribe men came to the town**, when the villagers were gone for an election.



The villagers **understood** this in the beginning, as they have also **been living in the forest until the 1950s** when they have been converted by missionaries. Until today, they **see the Mashco Piro as their cousins** and therefore have empathy, but after some time they started to lose their patience, even if they first saw their stealings as a way of “harvesting”. **Villages have been destroyed** while the locals were gone, and many items were stolen. However, the locals are **not able to defend themselves**, as there are laws to protect the tribes.

Still, both sides are **in fear of each other**, and the locals see no other solution than defending themselves, even if the tribes should be left alone, something that is not always possible. In spring 2015, the disputes reached a peak when **tribe members killed a 20-year old man and his wife**. After that, the locals wanted to take revenge and **destroyed the camp of the Mashco Piro**. As a conclusion of that, the Peruvian government has sent a team to the region **to find solutions and solve the problem**.

Nowadays, the Mashco Piro **leave the forest more often**, as they realized no harm is done to them, which was the reason to stay hidden. Still, it is rather the **younger members that are more open to the world**, while the elders are more scared, as they are used to living in isolation and they have been told the horrific stories of the past by their ancestors.





Some people have adopted a **lifestyle between both worlds**. While they still live in the forest, they live closer to villages and have contact with the locals, but also visit the tribe from time to time. One of them is Epa, he **tries to mediate between both parties**, while still being neutral. He still has family members within the tribe and **does not want to abandon his past life** completely while still enjoying the benefits of more modern society.



However, even if he tries to mediate in that conflict, he **can be a threat to the tribe** as he can bring viruses from the village when visiting the tribe. During the 1980s, the tribe was affected by a cold, after they have been in **contact with employees of a big oil company**. As a consequence of their weak immune system, which was not used to such diseases, around **half of the members, roughly 300 to 400 people, died**.



The different encounters with the locals show a **need for actions** that need to take place, to protect both the tribe and the villagers. The locals themselves **do not have access to electricity or clean water** and the doctor of the village **needs more equipment** to be able to treat villagers, or in some severe cases also tribe members. Even recommended vaccinations are missing, which could **protect the tribe better**. As the village is secluded from any bigger cities or towns, small teams would be needed to treat them. This is also the case for treatments of the tribe itself, which is an **intervention with their traditional life but can also save many lives**.

Even if tribe members decide to **leave that lifestyle** and move to one of the villages around, their future is not looking too bright. The small villages **lack opportunities for jobs** and in the past, many former tribe members ended up in prostitution or poverty.

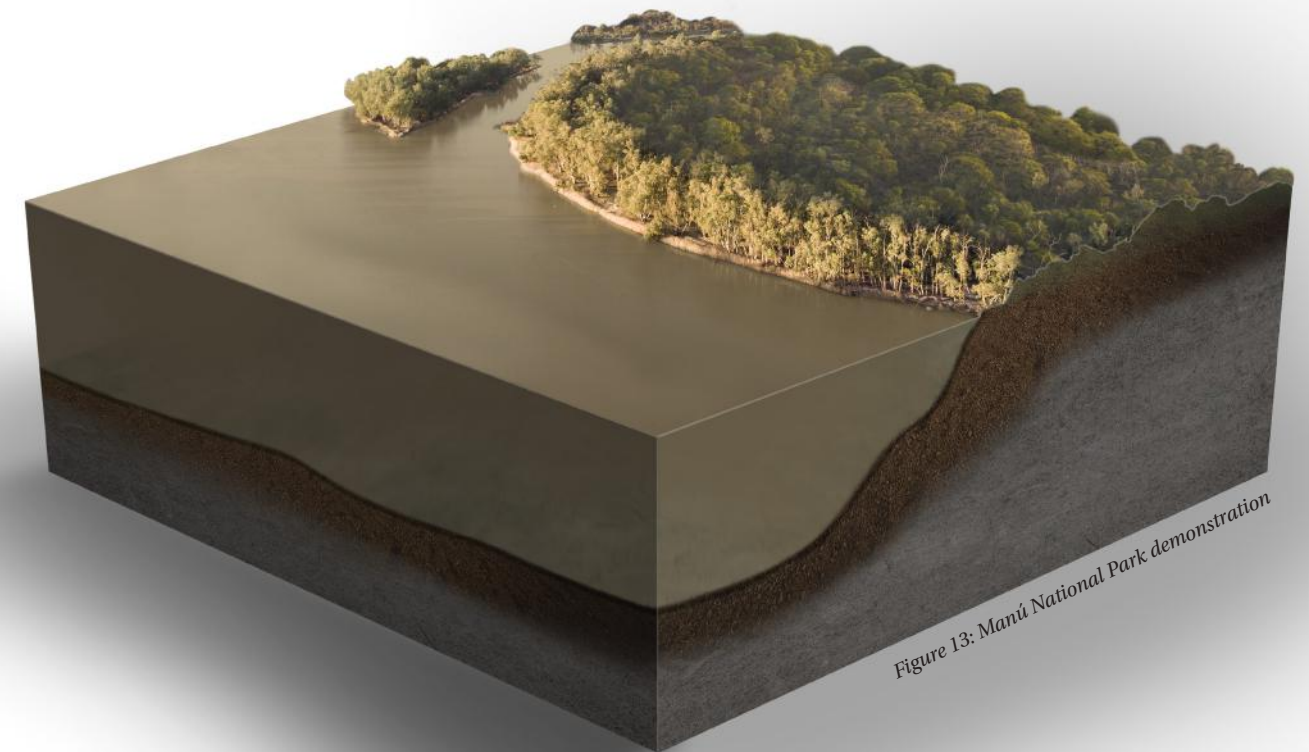


Figure 13: Manú National Park demonstration

## Manú National Park

The Manú National Park belongs to the **UNESCO world heritage sites** and spreads over an **area of 19,000km<sup>2</sup>** through Peru. Within that area **three different ecological zones** are located, which are the steppe grass landscape in the Andean highlands, the mountain cloud forest and the rainforest more in the north, where some uncontacted tribes, including the Mashco Piro, are located.

Different animals such as **blue macaws, different monkey species, jaguars, tapirs and giant otters** can be found within the Manú National Park. The biggest fish within that area is the arapaima. As parts of the park are declared as a **culture zone**, there is only one street that connects some villages. Around 80% of the park belong to the **restricted zone**, in which only locals are allowed, to protect the tribes living there<sup>24</sup>.



# Jarawa

The Jarawa are a negrito tribe living on the main island, Andaman, of the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**, which belong to India, and are located close to Myanmar. The name means “**hostile people**” or “**stranger**”. Their estimated population is roughly between **275 and 400**<sup>25</sup>. Due to several contacts that happened in the past, the Jarawa do not count as an uncontacted tribe anymore but are a perfect example of how **contact can change their life**.

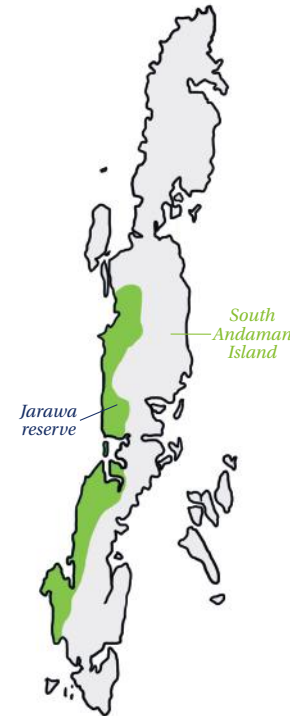


Figure 14: Location of the Jarawa

The Jarawa tribe belongs to the group of **hunter tribes** and they **have been hostile to outsiders** for many years in the past. However, since **1989 they have gotten in contact** more often through an official team of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. As they started to build up more trust towards that team, they still had a hostile reaction towards strangers. However, due to the regular contact, the tribe also got a higher **exposure to viruses**.

Before the contact was established, they have **plundered villages** to get equipment and food which they needed and in **1997** they have been going out of the forest more regularly and were behaving more friendly towards complete strangers<sup>26</sup>.

Many people believe that the **government should provide facilities** for the Jarawa, as has been done for the Onge tribe. However, this would **increase the dependency** of the tribe on the outer world, while other people argue that it **can increase the living standards** of the tribe and new inventions should not be denied to tribes.

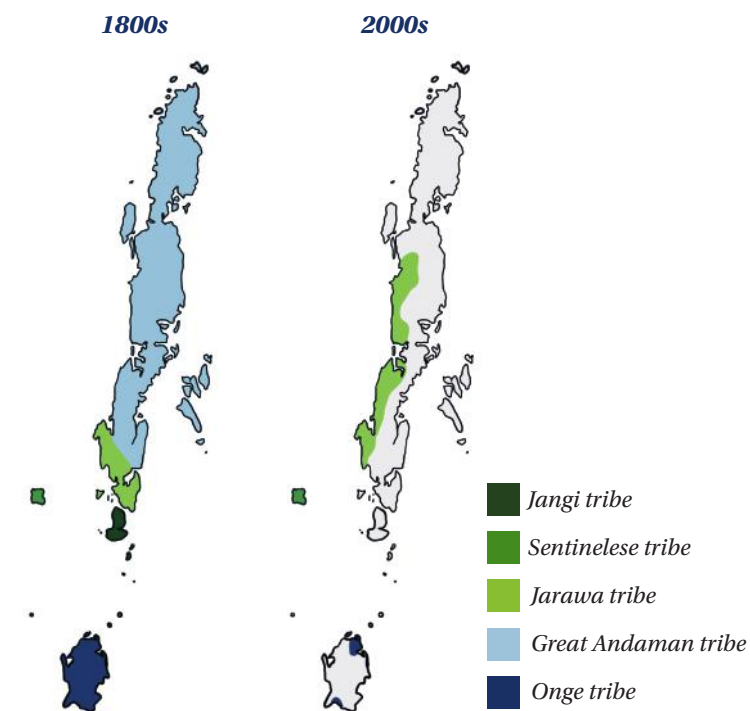


Figure 15: Change of the tribes' location from 1800-2000

The tribes on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are most likely the **oldest tribes in the world**. Through estimated numbers, they have been living there even before the pyramids were built around 2550 B.C. Due to a **change of population and new settlements** on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a movement can be seen within the different tribes on the islands. Due to urbanization their **areas have decreased** and are likely to continue to do so in the future.

During the **tsunami** which happened after Christmas in **2004** within the Indian Ocean, over **3,500 people died** on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands<sup>27</sup>. However, the tribes have not been affected by the tsunami too much, as they have interpreted the signs of nature right and were able to protect themselves. Within the tribes, **only some people died** as a consequence.





The reserve in which the Jarawa live is **protected since 1956**, however, it is **legal to use the road** that goes through the reserve, as it connects the south and the north of the island. In conclusion of that, there are **different tourist tours** offered, with the official main attraction of visiting the north of the island, which allows them to drive through the reserve. However, the actual main attraction for the tourists is the **possibility of seeing members** of the tribe.



Before entering the reserve, the **police has checkpoints**, where they examine the reason why one wants to drive through the reserve and tell everyone that it is **prohibited to take pictures or videos** within that area.

The tourists **see this as a game** and feel proud after spotting members of the Jarawa. But the tourists are not only disturbing them within their everyday life but can also **endanger their existence**. Through one small wrong action, the tribe **could be completely dead in 10 years**, if a disease is transmitted or they give the tribe a dangerous item.



Normally, the tribes find everything they need within the forest which is why it is an **intervention in their traditional lifestyle** give them gifts. But as the contact they have has changed, they **now wear clothes, use mirrors, scissors or flashlights** to orient themselves at night. In addition to that, their **hunting behavior also had to change**. Pigs have been their main source of food but as they are now also hunted more by other locals, they have to switch to hunting deers instead. In the long-term, the Jarawa either **have to adapt to the life of the outside world, or are going to extinct**, if the government does not support them further<sup>28</sup>.

**“We don’t like the outside world. We don’t want to have interaction and being too close to your world.”**  
Jarawa boy, 2013<sup>29</sup>

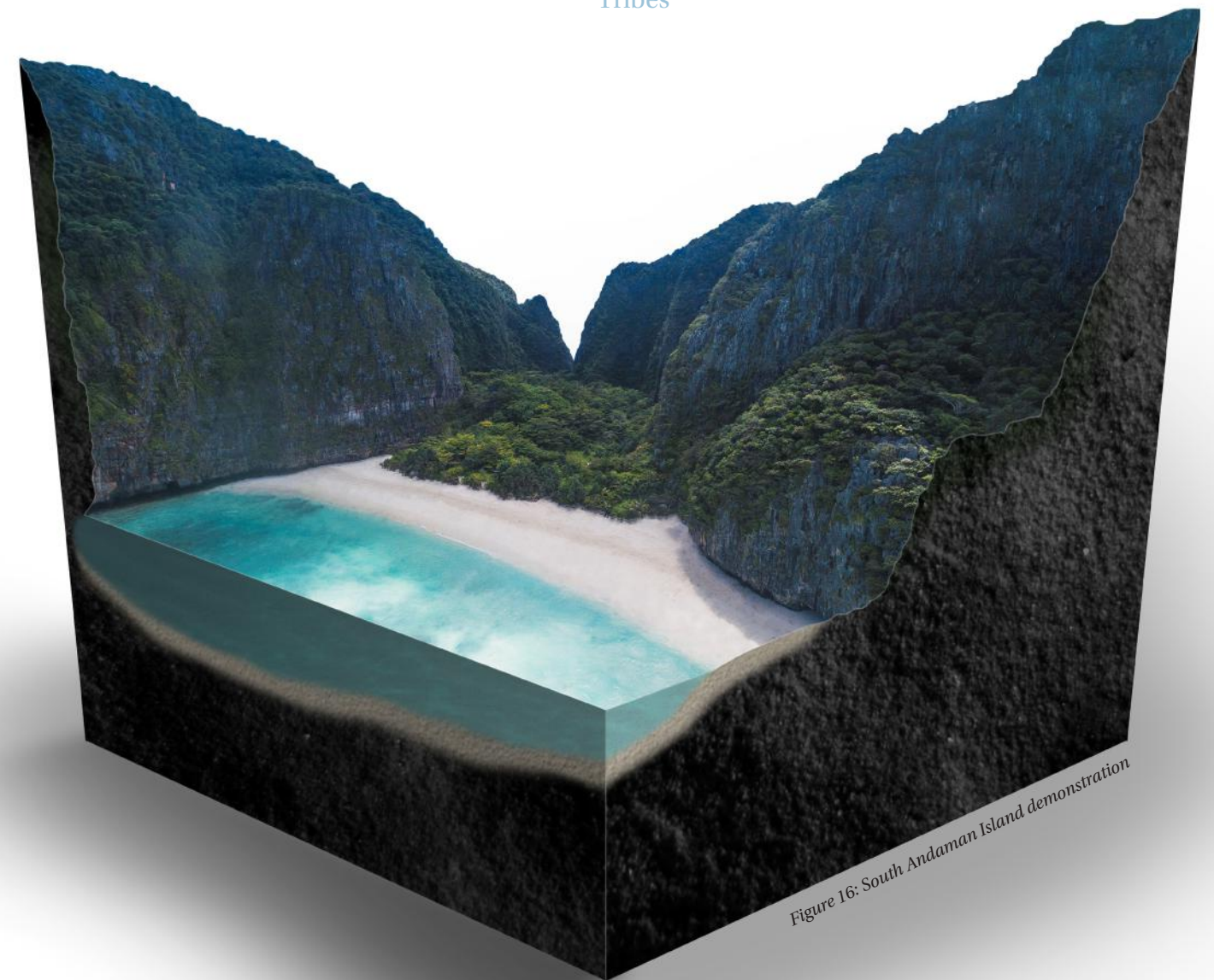
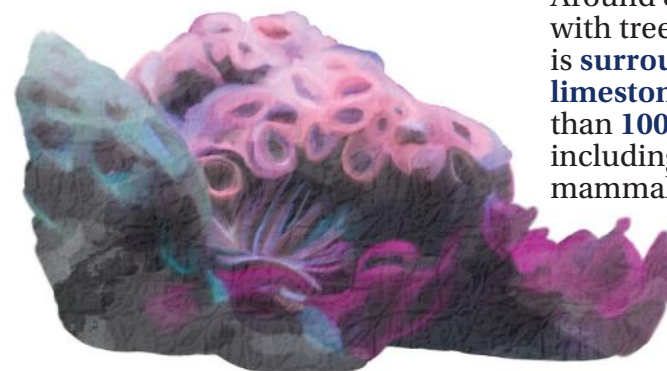


Figure 16: South Andaman Island demonstration

## South Andaman Island

The South Andaman Island is part of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which belong to India and range from the west of Myanmar to Sumatra (part of Indonesia). The islands form an arch, which **spreads over a distance of 700km**. There are around **250 islands**. The **climate is subtropical** with a low temperature of **21°C in the winter and a maximum of 33°C in summer**. Throughout the year the **precipitation is high**, as different monsoons and cyclones hit the islands.

Around 80% of the island is covered with **rainforests** with trees that can reach a height of 30m. The island is **surrounded by coral reefs**, and consists out of **limestone**, while **volcano islands** are also close<sup>30</sup>. More than **1000 different species** can be found on the island, including a wide range of birds and reptiles and different mammals, such as rats and bats<sup>31</sup>.





# Sapanahua

The Sapanahua, consisting of **35 members**, are a tribe living in the **Amazon in Brazil**, close to the Peruvian border. They have been uncontacted until they had to flee out of their well-known surrounding in **2014**, as their living space has been destroyed by **illegal loggers**. After they have **stepped into contact** they now live at a river-side instead of being hidden in the forest.

In June 2014, a **video of three young men** belonging to the Sapanahua tribe has occurred and went viral. Within that video, they try to communicate with locals and also **plunder some of the houses** in search of food. As they did not know what was awaiting them, they came armed with arrows, however, **the contact was friendly**, even if small language barriers existed. The Sapanahua speak a dialect that is **close to the language locals speak**, this made the first, but also following contacts easier.



Figure 17: Location of the Chico Mendes Extractive Reserve

Coming out of the forest, was the only option of the three young men at that time, otherwise, they **would have been killed**. After they came in contact, FUNAI started to **support the Sapanahua with food, clothes, tools and medicine**, which is needed as they came in contact with new infections. Furthermore, FUNAI makes **regular checks** if everything is all right with the tribe, while still making sure, that the tribe can continue their original lifestyle. The area that they now live in is protected, to secure the tribe.

Before the contact, they did not know what clothes were, but now they do not want to live without them. Furthermore, they also do not want to **miss out on plates, spoons or pots** anymore. Before they came into contact, it was normal for them to **not eat for several days and stay awake at night** to not get attacked by loggers, coca farmers or drug traffickers, which have illegally entered the reserve. A group of loggers was also the final reason to step out of the forest after they have **killed part of the tribe with guns and machetes**<sup>32</sup>.

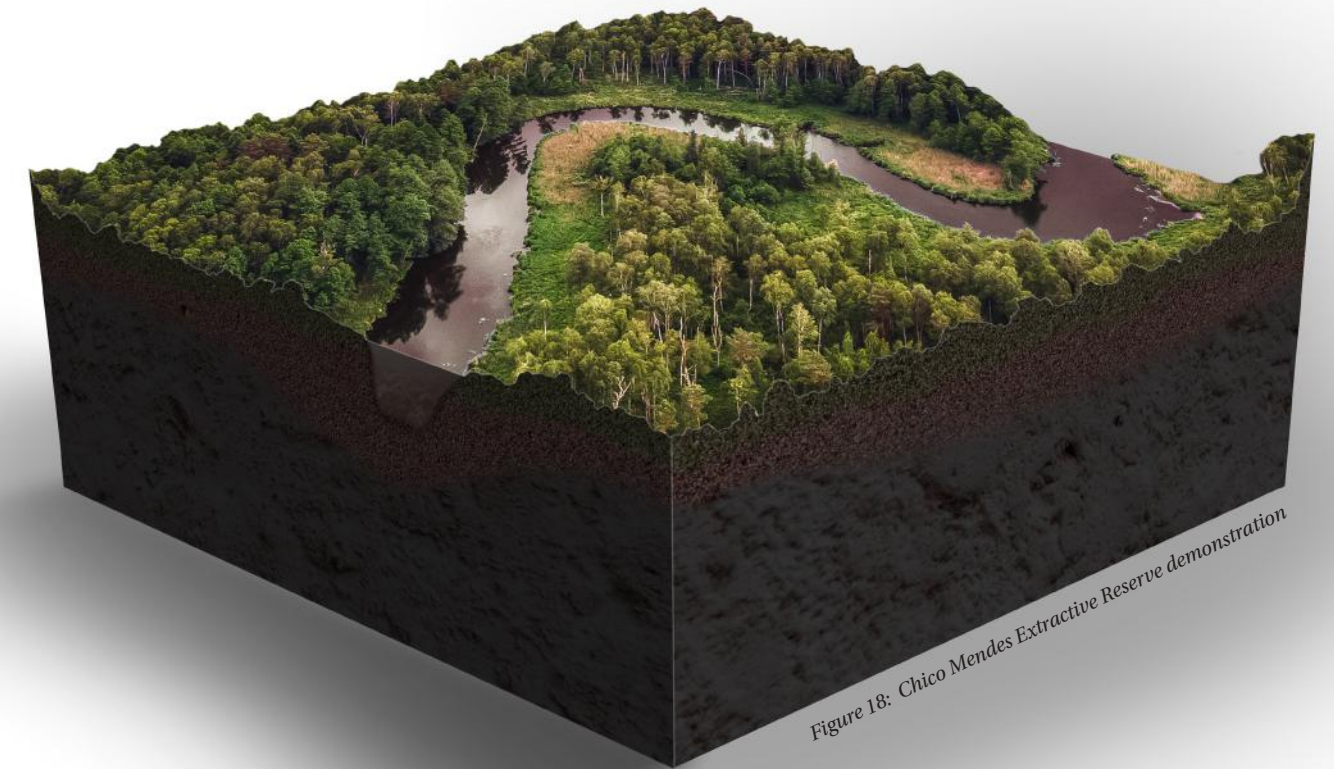


Figure 18: Chico Mendes Extractive Reserve demonstration

## Chico Mendes Extractive Reserve

The Chico Mendes Extractive Reserve, the **largest in the Amazon**, is an area within **Acre, Brazil**, located next to the Peruvian and Bolivian border. It is the oldest of its kind in Brazil, which was **introduced in 1990**<sup>33</sup>. Still, even if it is a protected area for local tribes and animals, **deforestation has occurred** within the last years more often.

As the reserve is part of the Amazon, the annual **precipitation is much higher** than in the rest of the country. The height level within the Amazon is rather low in comparison to the rest of South America<sup>34</sup>. Within the forest, the most dangerous animals for the tribes are **snakes and jaguars**. They find their food sources mainly in **wild boars, turtles, armadillos, fish or reptiles**<sup>35</sup>.



# Sentinelese

The Sentinelese are often described as the **most uncontacted tribe** in the world. With a number between **100 and 200 members**<sup>36</sup>, they live on the North Sentinel Island, which is a western island of the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**. They have likely been some of the **first people that moved away from Africa** and have lived on the island for over **55,000 years**. As their language is so different from any other tribe around, they must have been isolated ever since<sup>37</sup>.

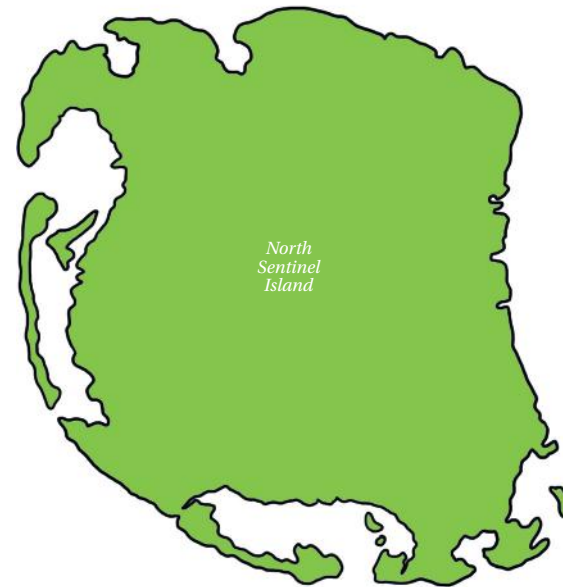


Figure 19: Location of the Sentinelese

The **Onge and Great Andamanese** tribes, both as well from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, **have had a similar living situation** as the Sentinelese, but are nowadays contacted and supported by the government. As the Sentinelese have been completely isolated by the rest of the world for many years, their way of life is similar to people from the **stone age**. They get **metal from shipwrecks** that are washed up to their shore. Out of this, they craft weapons and tools. Sometimes, due to the island's structure, complete boats with their crew are drifting to the island, who the Sentinelese kill and from which they get more equipment than from shipwrecks. This lastly happened to **two fishermen in 2006**<sup>38</sup>.

It is believed that the Sentinelese **have been cannibals** in the past, even if there is no official confirmation for this thesis. The members **live in huts with around ten people** per hut. Nowadays, they **hunt fish and wild boars**, which live on the island. If they are left alone, and the food supplies continue to be steady, there is **no threat of extinction** for the Sentinelese. As further protection, the island was declared as a **reserve in 1956**, and no one is allowed closer than 5km around the island<sup>39</sup>.



They are **hostile** against people from the outside world because they have always been a threat to the tribe and barely ever came in contact in a friendly way. One example that has scared them until today was the incident with **Portman in 1879**, during which he took members to the capital of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and two of them died.

During the **1960s an anthropologist** tried to learn more about the Sentinelese. He has **prepared his mission for over 25 years** until he was finally able to make **friendly contact with tribe members in 1991**, which was also his last contact, as the laws changed and even anthropologists were forbidden to come close to the island.

After the **tsunami in 2004**, the government sent a helicopter to the North Sentinel Island, to **check whether the tribe has survived or not** and to offer help if necessary, as it was unlikely for the tribe to survive after being directly hit by the tsunami. After spotting the helicopter, the tribe **started to attack it with arrows**, which was seen as a sign that they do not need help and **want to be left alone**<sup>40</sup>.



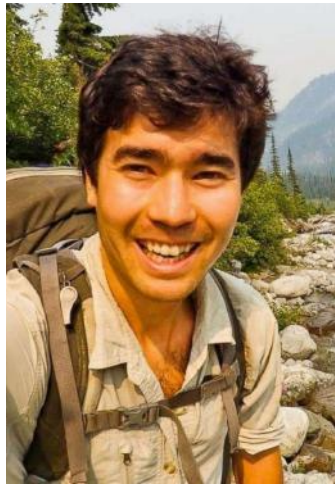


Figure 20: John Allen Chau

The case of **John Allen Chau** and his contact with the tribe has been the most popular. The 27 years old man was an **American Christian Evangelic preacher** and prepared to be a missionary for the tribe since 2015 on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. He believed that the tribe **has a right to modern knowledge and beliefs**. In Port Blair, he was able to find local **fishermen that were willing to bring him close to the island**.

On **15<sup>th</sup> November in 2018**, the fishermen helped him to get to the island, for which they had to illegally enter the prohibited area. For the last part of his journey to the island, Chau **used a canoe to cross the corals**. With him, he took different gifts such as fish, footballs or pens, with which he wanted to **show his friendliness** towards the tribe and build up trust. His plan was to stay for a longer time or even forever with the tribe. However, as he got closer to the island, a **young member of the tribe has attacked him** with an arrow and he **went back to the fishermen** in the evening.

During the night he handed a 13-page long journal to the fishermen, as he already **believed he might die soon** due to his injury, which he was scared about. Still, on the next day, 16<sup>th</sup> November 2018, he told the fishermen to come back in the evening and then **started his second attempt**. When the fishermen came back in the evening, they were **not able to spot Chau anywhere** in the water and waited for the next morning, during which they saw how his body was **buried at the beach** by tribe members. It is unclear how he died but it is most likely that he was shot by an arrow again.

The fishermen did not directly go to the police but **contacted a friend of Chau**, who contacted the missionary organisation, which supported him during his mission. Only through that the US embassy and police found out about the incident. Officially, the police have registered a **case of murder by an unknown person**, as the Sentinelese can not be arrested. However, they started to **investigate the fishermen and other people that helped** Chau to get to that island.

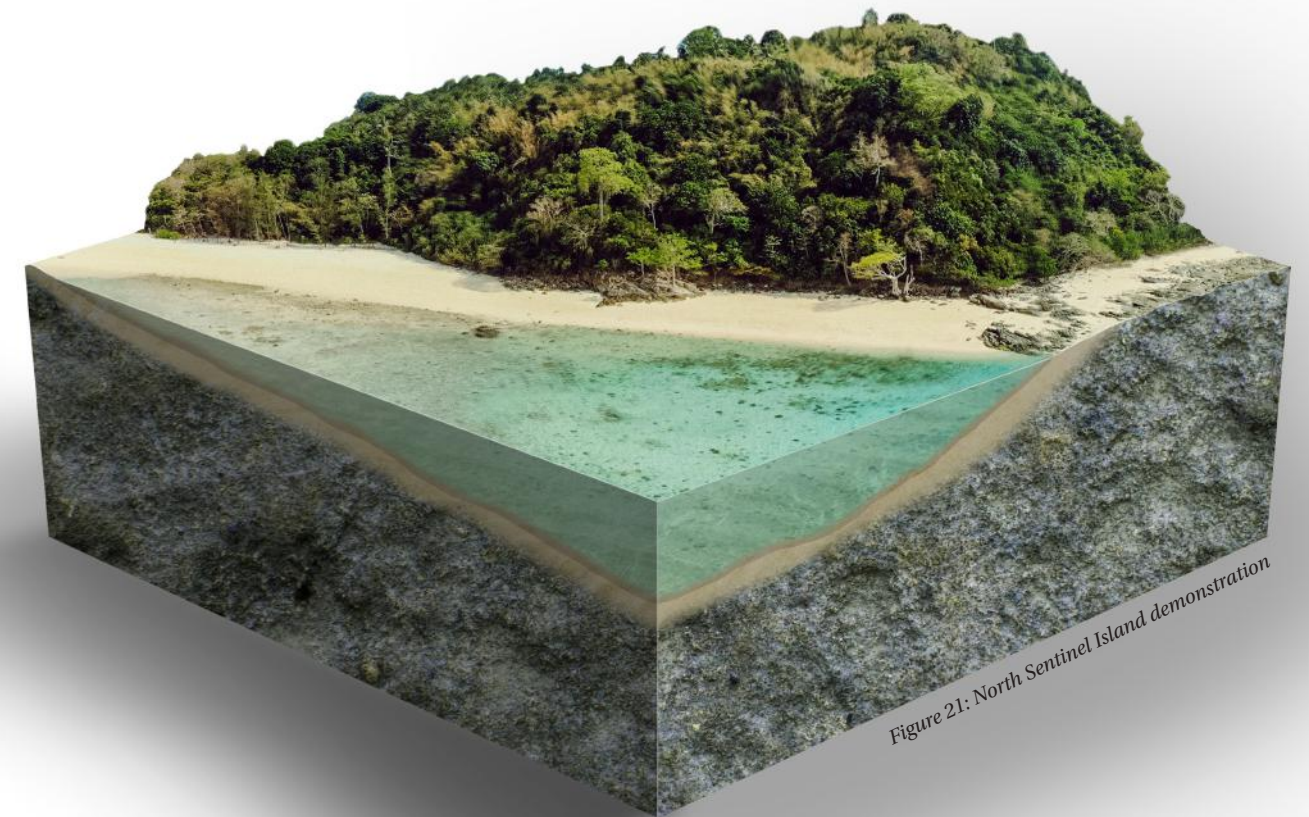


Figure 21: North Sentinel Island demonstration

## North Sentinel Island

The North Sentinel Island belongs to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and is the **most western and remote island** out of all. The island itself is based on **limestone and coral**, which can make walking on it difficult. It is surrounded by a coral reef, which builds up a **protective wall** around the island and makes it difficult to reach with a boat due to the current.



The light soil on the island makes planting **coconut trees** easy and the jungle on the island with its open glades provides a **space to live** for the tribe. The jungle mainly consists out of bullet-wood trees<sup>41</sup>. Since the island itself stayed undiscovered during the past years, it is **unclear what species live on the island**, besides boars and crabs. Within the water sharks and turtles can be found.





# Papuan tribes

The Papuan Island **belongs to both Indonesia** (western part) and **Papua New Guinea** (eastern part). Within that island, more than **300 tribes** can be found, out of which around **40 are believed to be uncontacted**<sup>42</sup>. The exact numbers of the uncontacted tribes and where they live are not published, in order to **protect the tribes** from people of the outside world. In addition to that, the area is very remote and has only few roads, which **makes it impossible to find all of the tribes**<sup>43</sup>.

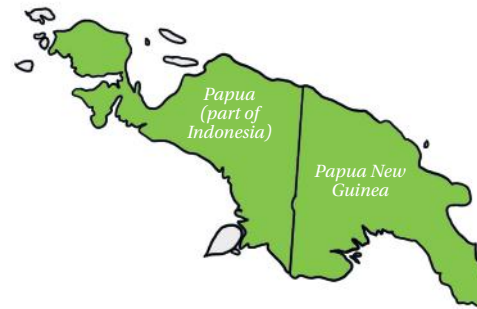


Figure 22: Papua

The **civilization of Indonesia started in 1963**, which had a severe impact on the tribes of Western Papuan. **Resources**, which the tribes needed to survive, **were exploited** in order to build up new towns and cities. Furthermore, **racism towards the tribes** has been a big problem within the Indonesian military and many have **killed or tortured tribe members**. Only in 2010, the Indonesian **government admitted one case** of two tortured tribe men<sup>44</sup>.

The region, and the tribes, can be divided into the **highland**, within the middle of the island, and the **lowland**, closer to the coast. Within the highland, the tribes are based more on **agriculture** while the lowland tribes are **hunters and gatherers**. Some tribes have **similar languages**, while some have **individual languages**, which differ from all others<sup>45</sup>.

As there is **no organisation within Papua** directly, the tribes do not have anyone that tries to protect them. It is not only racism that is a major threat to them but also **tourism, logging, mining and plantations**<sup>46</sup>.

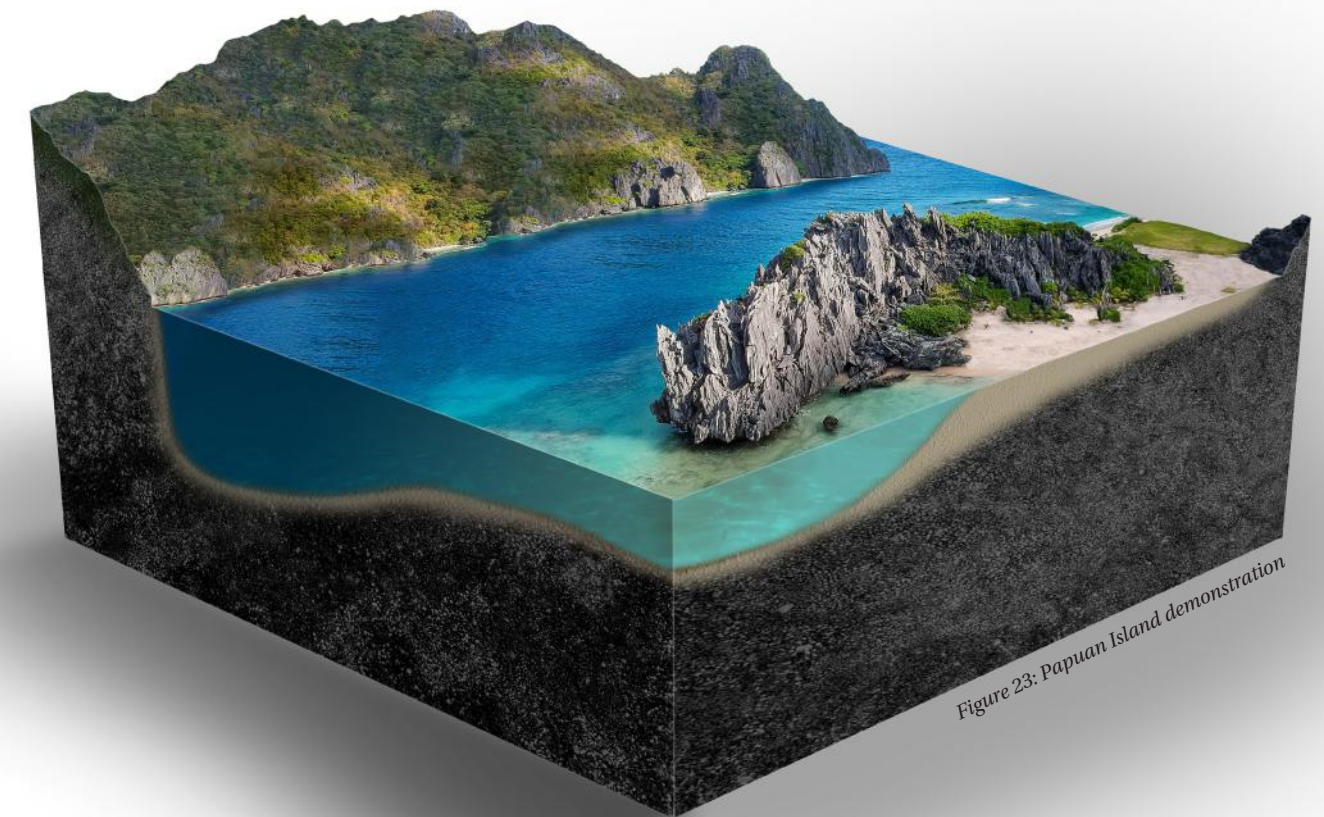


Figure 23: Papuan Island demonstration

## Papua

The area of Papua is segregated from others, as it is an island. The highest altitude goes up to **2,270m**. In between the mountain ranges, **valleys with grass and tropical rainforests** can be found. The trees range from **palms, rubber trees, mangroves to sandalwood**.

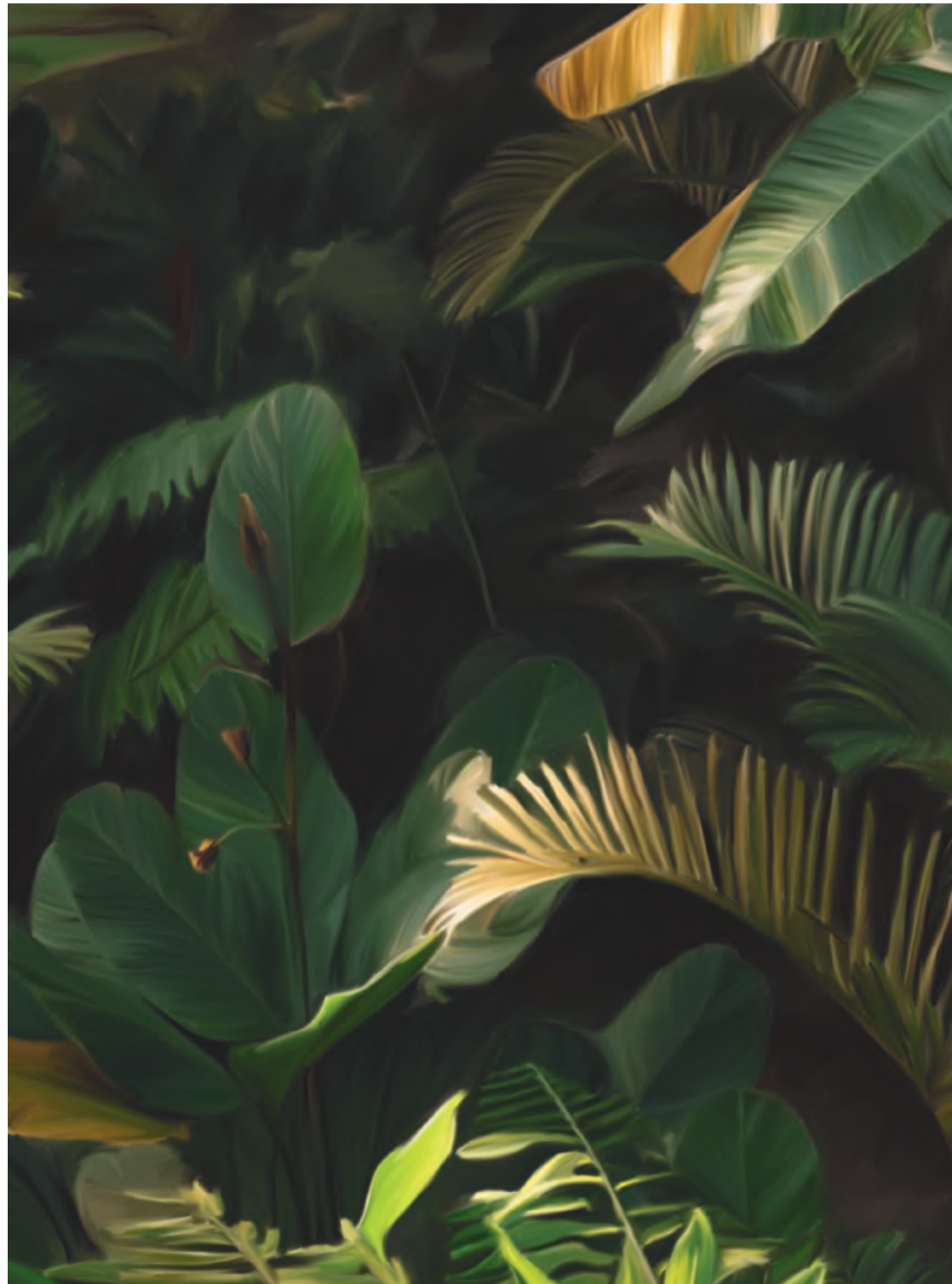


Echidna

**Different animals** can be found in Papua such as kangaroos, echidnas, crocodiles, snakes, turtles, as well as boars. The animals differ depending on the location on the island. The most common food crops are **rice, beans, potatoes, corn, peanuts and soybeans**<sup>47</sup>.







## What can be done?

Help and support are what the tribes need the most, to be able to continue their lives the way they want to, without being forced to be part of the outside world. There are many different factors, which can have an impact on the tribe to leave their known area, and therefore, there are also many different ways of supporting them, even if it seems like it is impossible to help them from distance.

## Awareness

One of the main aspects that need to be worked on is the **awareness of the existence** of the tribes. When logging happens in the Amazon, the first thing people tend to talk about is the decline of different species within that area, but how often are people aware of the fact that complete tribes can vanish through it?

## Understanding

It is necessary to create a bigger understanding for the tribes among society. For many it can be **challenging to comprehend** why the tribes want to stay in the forest, even if we have got many new inventions they could have an advantage of. Therefore, some also do not understand why they have **hostile behaviour** against strangers, as they **do not understand the history** of the tribes. In addition to that, it is important to understand the importance of why they need to be protected.



## Petitions

Signing petitions is **one way of supporting** the tribes from **wherever you are**. With that, the governments are able to see that many people care about this matter and **that they need to act**. Especially laws that protect the tribes are necessary, so it is not legal to contact the tribes or get close to them or their living space. Through that, the impact of the outside world **is not a threat anymore**.

## Donations

If you want to support the different organizations (see p.20) and do not have the time to be part of one, it is **best to donate** to them, as they are committing to the tribes directly and **can speak up for the tribes**. Furthermore, they are often closest to the tribes, without having direct contact.





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