




International Day Against Tree Monocultures

21 September 2008



A blurred background image of a forest path. The path is a dirt road that curves through a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The lighting is soft, suggesting an overcast day or a shaded forest interior. The overall tone is muted and naturalistic.

Tree monocultures cause serious impacts in the communities where they are established:

- **Big national and international corporations occupy vast areas of lands that formerly provided livelihoods for local populations.**
- **They destroy large areas of natural forest.**
- **They dry up local water sources and waterways.**



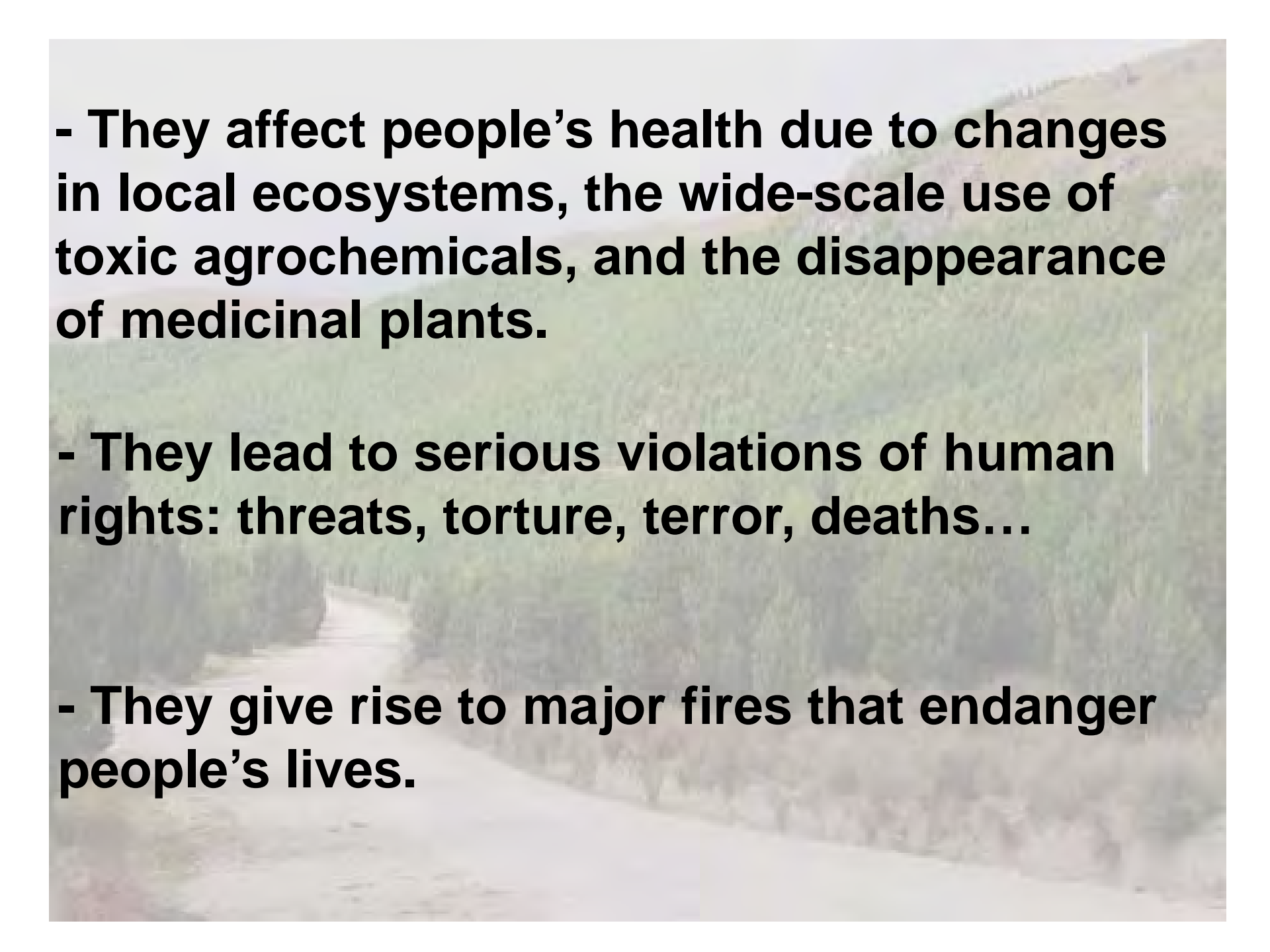


- They destroy local vegetation, leading to the disappearance of animals that depend on it.

- Women suffer impacts that affect them specifically.

- They create very few jobs, with poor working conditions, usually through outsourcing.





- They affect people's health due to changes in local ecosystems, the wide-scale use of toxic agrochemicals, and the disappearance of medicinal plants.

- They lead to serious violations of human rights: threats, torture, terror, deaths...

- They give rise to major fires that endanger people's lives.

What local people around the world have to say about tree plantations:



Occupation of territory...



Occupation of territory...

They occupy huge areas of land that could be used for food production by families like us who are waiting for agrarian reform. *Brazil*

They drove out all of the people who lived in the areas that were going to be planted and tore down the houses and even the schools. *Argentina*

The logging companies are bad: they come in, cut down the best trees, take the wood and leave. The plantation companies are worse: they come in, cut down the best trees, take the wood, burn the rest, plant their own trees, and stay! *Malaysia*

Destruction of forests...



Destruction of forests...

Before we could live a decent life with what we got from the forest, but the company cut it down to plant its rubber trees. *Cameroon*

It's terrible how they are cutting down our forest. Destroyed forever. How are we going to survive if the forest is gone? *Indonesia*

The rivers are drying up; the trees, nature, are all dying off; the animals are fleeing; they destroy everything with what they are planting. There's nothing here but eucalyptus. *Ecuador*

Impacts on water...



Impacts on water...

The rivers have dried up where the plantations are. I remember places where people could swim when I was a little girl, but now they're dry. *Swaziland*

I have lived here my whole life and there was never any shortage of water until they set up all these plantations. *Uruguay*

The water started to dry up and the people saw that they couldn't grow rice anymore. One by one they sold their lands and left. *Thailand*

Impacts on biodiversity...



Impacts on biodiversity...

They logged all the trees we used to have, they channelled and dried out the swamps. The animals have no food to eat, the birds are leaving because there's no more fruit. *Colombia*

The company cut down everything, now there are no trees, no animals, no vegetables. There used to be forests and lots of wild animals. We could gather vegetables, medicines, resins, roots, fish, fruit.

Cambodia

Impacts on biodiversity...



Impacts on biodiversity...

Before you could hunt around here, and there were other animals in the forests, but now there's nothing. The rivers used to be full, and you could catch fish there. *Ecuador*

The natural forest was very important for us. We gathered mushrooms, bamboo shoots, insects and herbs for food. There was water, and there were animals and birds. Eucalyptus plantations gave us no benefits, there was nothing to eat. *Thailand*

Differentiated impacts on women...



Differentiated impacts on women...

With the plantations, we women felt threatened. We couldn't go to the fields to tend our crops alone, and we had to keep our daughters locked up. They couldn't go anywhere and they shrivelled up like plants that don't get any sun. *Ecuador*

When the forest was replaced with the eucalyptus plantation we lost food: fruit, fish, wild animals for hunting. It also dried up the rivers and streams, which used to be places where women would meet and share their knowledge. *Brazil*

Differentiated impacts on women...





Differentiated impacts on women...

Water has become scarce since they planted the eucalyptus trees. We used to dig very small wells to water the crops. Now we have to dig deeper and we have to fetch water from far away for domestic consumption and for our cattle, chickens and goats. This makes women's work even harder. *South Africa*

I used to go to the forest alone or with my daughter. Now I'm afraid of meeting people from the company, and I only go if I can go with other people. *Cambodia*

Work on the plantations...



Work on the plantations...

After they mechanized harvesting they laid off thousands of people . Each machine takes the place of 14 workers. *Brazil*

Most of us workers are hired by sub-contractors, which means low salaries, job insecurity and no social benefits and makes it difficult for us to organize trade unions. *South Africa*

On the rubber plantations they treat us like slaves. We work 12 hours, every day of the year, including holidays. We carry loads of more than 60 kilograms on our backs and we only get paid half if we don't meet our assigned quota. *Liberia*

Impacts on health...

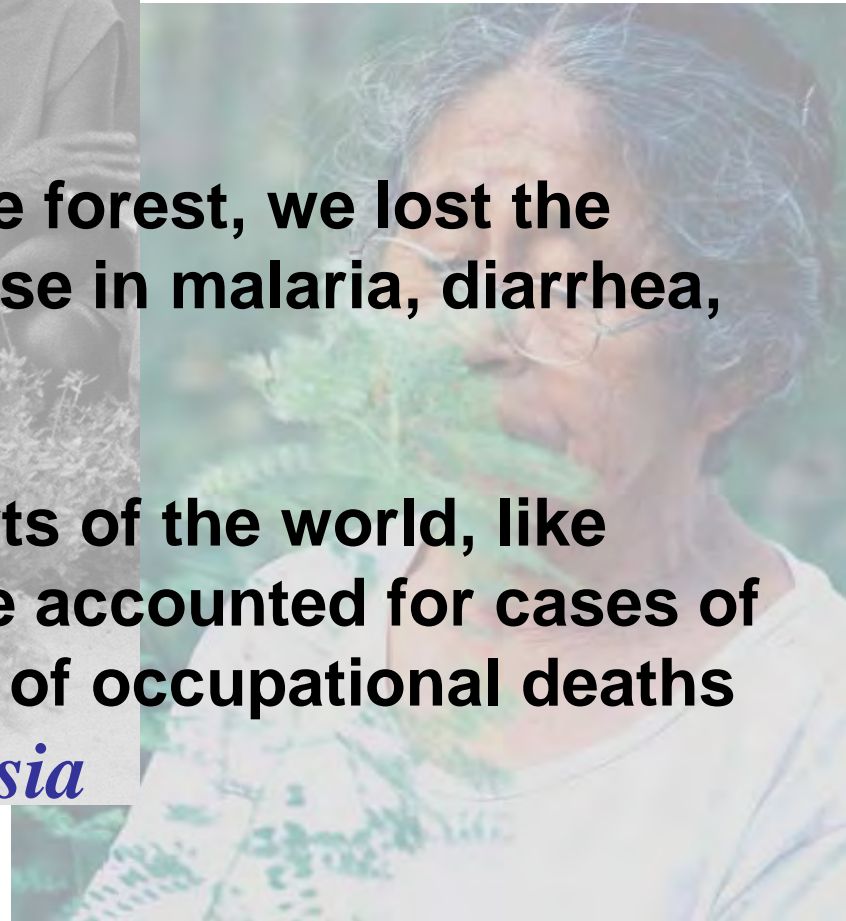


Impacts on health...

There are always stomach problems and eye problems, some of us can't see anymore. The pine pollen creates a yellow foam on the water and it makes us sick. *Chile*

With the plantations we lost the forest, we lost the herbs, and there was an increase in malaria, diarrhea, parasites. *Cameroon*

Pesticides banned in many parts of the world, like Paraquat and Endosulfan, have accounted for cases of acute poisoning and a number of occupational deaths on oil palm plantations. *Malaysia*



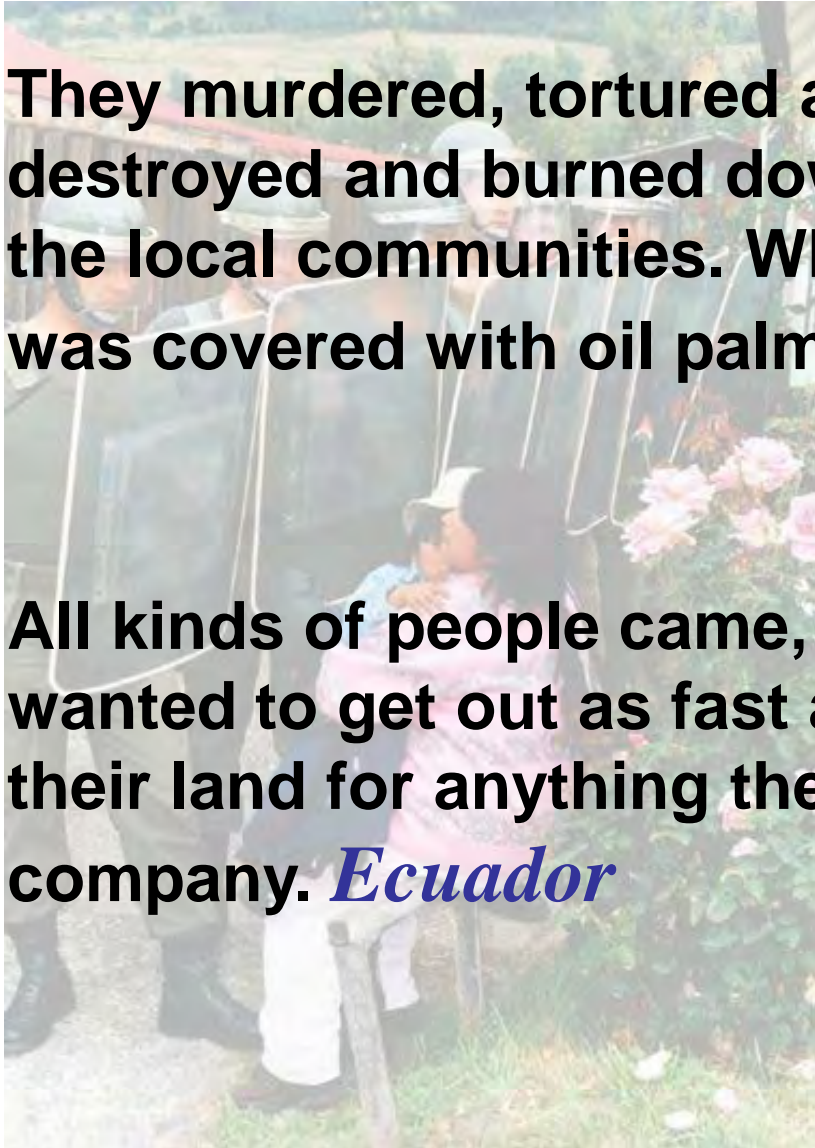
Plantations and human rights...



Plantations and human rights...

They murdered, tortured and disappeared people, they destroyed and burned down houses, they drove out all the local communities. When we returned, everything was covered with oil palms. *Colombia*

All kinds of people came, rapists, killers. Some people wanted to get out as fast as they could, so they sold their land for anything they could get to the plantation company. *Ecuador*



Plantations and human rights...



Plantations and human rights...

The Chilean state has placed itself at the service of forestry companies, and while the police repress, torture and kill, the judicial system criminalizes the Mapuche people's struggle. *Chile*

Life on the oil palm plantation is slavery. They pay us very low salaries, the work is hard, we suffer respiratory illnesses, blindness, tuberculosis and deaths, and it is impossible to form unions. *Cameroon*

Fires...



Fires...

This year more than 15,000 hectares of plantations burned down. Three people died and 30 were injured. In last year's fires over 20 people died. *South Africa*

Dry, cracked land and fires are constant features of areas where there are plantations. *Venezuela*



Fires...



Fires...

On the pine plantations everything dried up and fires started breaking out. Once there was a fire and a woman who was alone tried to put it out with branches, but she was engulfed by the flames and killed.

Ecuador

For the companies, fire is the cheapest means of clearing the land to plant oil palms. *Indonesia*

Because of all of this, tree monocultures have been described by people in different countries as:



Because of all of this, tree monocultures have been described by people in different countries as:

- **selfish trees**
- **planted soldiers**
- **green deserts**
- **green cancer**
- **dead forests that kill everything**



And now there are new threats
emerging:



And now there are new threats emerging:

- **transgenic trees**
- **cellulosic ethanol**
- **carbon sinks**
- **agrofuels**



**This is why, on the
International Day
Against Tree Monocultures,
we demand:**

