



ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS IN CONFLICT ZONES: SAFETY GUIDELINES, SECURITY PROTOCOLS & RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES

LESSONS FROM THE AMAZON



CONSERVACIÓN
AMAZÓNICA



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**ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Amazon basin is one of the most biodiverse regions on the planet, and it plays a crucial role in global climate regulation, the provision of freshwater, and the preservation of ancient cultures. Geopolitically, the Amazon is shared by nine South American countries, and in the departments of Madre de Dios (Peru) and Pando (Bolivia), its natural and cultural wealth is reflected in vast forests, high species diversity, and the presence of Indigenous peoples who have maintained sustainable land management practices for centuries. However, this invaluable heritage faces growing pressures that threaten both the integrity of ecosystems and the safety of those who defend them.

In these territories, environmental defenders face high levels of vulnerability, marked by threats, criminalization, and violence. These risks are primarily linked to the expansion of illegal activities such as gold mining, indiscriminate logging, drug trafficking, and land trafficking, all in a context of weak institutional presence and limited state protection. The consequences directly affect Indigenous peoples, local leaders, public and private officials, grassroots organizations, and environmental NGOs, all of whom play an essential role in conserving the Amazon forest and defending collective territorial rights.

The NGO consortium behind this document proposes a comprehensive, binational strategy to reduce risks and strengthen the protection of forest defenders. The strategy is structured around six strategic lines: strengthening institutions, ensuring effective protection of defenders, promoting sustainable economic alternatives, recognizing territorial rights, raising public awareness, and fostering cross-border cooperation. These lines are complemented by a cross-cutting component on monitoring and follow-up, conceived as a key tool to guarantee the effectiveness and sustainability of actions.

In addition, the strategy emphasizes the preparation of Danish personnel deployed to environmental conflict zones and the need for clear responses to crisis scenarios such as kidnapping, violence, or repatriation. This guidance is intended to be general and adaptable, ensuring that both local and international staff are better protected.

Although rooted in the Amazonian context of Madre de Dios and Pando, the strategy is relevant for NGOs and civil society actors working in environmental conflict zones worldwide. The recommendations for Indigenous peoples, local leaders, park rangers, environmental journalists, public officials, grassroots organizations, and environmental NGOs are generic in nature and should be understood as a framework for reflection. Organizations, including Danish NGOs and their partners, may use them as a basis for internal discussions and as a starting point for developing or adapting context-specific safety protocols.

Environmental conflict zones are areas where disputes arise over the use, control, or protection of natural resources - often involving communities, governments, private companies, criminal networks, and civil society. Such conflicts are found not only in the Amazon Basin, but also in the Congo Basin and in areas surrounding large-scale extractive projects worldwide.

In conclusion, protecting environmental defenders is not only an obligation of states, but also an essential prerequisite for environmental sustainability, social justice, and respect for human rights in the Amazon. The recommendations are directed at the governments of Peru and Bolivia, civil society, and the international cooperation community, with the aim of consolidating a safe and legitimate environment for those who defend the forests and territories of the Amazon.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

Introducción

04

Background

05

Scope

06

Methodology

08

Regional Context of the Case Studies:

- Madre de Dios, Peru
- Pando, Bolivia

13

SECTION 1

Safety Guidelines & Security Protocols

- Individuals, organizations and institutions working in environmental high-risk areas
- Danish NGO's operating in environmental conflict zones

25

SECTION 2

Strategic Recommendations For Risk Mitigation

- Individuals, organizations and institutions working in environmental high-risk areas
- Danish NGO's operating in environmental conflict zones
 - Strategy No. 1: Training and Awareness
 - Strategy No. 2: Emergency Response
 - Strategy No. 3: Institutional Strengthening
 - Strategy No. 4: Risk Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Strategy No. 5: Legal Framework and Policy Advocacy
 - Strategy No. 6: Crisis Response

58

Conclusions & Recommendations

60

References



INTRODUCTION

The Amazon is one of the most biodiverse and strategically important ecosystems on the planet. Spanning nine countries (Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana), it represents the largest continuous tropical forest in the world. Its forests harbor more than 10% of Earth's terrestrial biodiversity, contain one of the planet's largest freshwater reserves, and play a crucial role in both regional and global climate regulation. The Amazon also sustains the lives of millions of people and is the ancestral territory of numerous Indigenous peoples, whose cultures and practices have contributed to the conservation of vast forest areas.

The Peruvian Amazon covers around 60% of the national territory across thirteen regions, including Madre de Dios - known as the country's "capital of biodiversity." The Bolivian Amazon covers around 43% of the national territory, with the department of Pando notable for retaining more than 90% of forest cover. Both areas are strategically important for conservation, yet they are increasingly threatened by the exploitation of natural resources.

The main threats include illegal and informal gold mining, indiscriminate logging, drug trafficking, and land trafficking. These activities drive deforestation, mercury contamination, and biodiversity loss, while fueling transnational criminal networks with significant power to corrupt and exert social influence. These dynamics are compounded by weak state presence, limited law enforcement, and insufficient control infrastructure - creating a critical scenario of vulnerability.

In this context, defending the Amazon forest in Madre de Dios and Pando has become a high-risk task. Indigenous peoples, local leaders, park rangers, environmental journalists, public officials, grassroots organizations, and environmental NGO workers all play a vital role in protecting the forest and collective territorial rights. Yet they face direct threats, criminalization, harassment, violence, and even assassinations. The lack

of effective guarantees not only endangers their personal safety but also undermines the capacity of institutions and society to respond to environmental crimes, safeguard ecosystems, and uphold the human rights of local communities.

Against this backdrop, **both the safety guidelines, security protocols and risk mitigation strategies** emerge as both a practical tool for these regions and a relevant framework for NGOs and civil society actors working in environmental conflict zones worldwide.

The document **“Environmental Defenders in Conflict Zones: Safety Guidelines, Security Protocols & Risk-Mitigation Strategies”** is based on evidence-driven diagnostics and organized into two complementary components - intended for either inspiration or direct implementation:

1. Safety guidelines for individuals working in public institutions or local organizations engaged in conservation and environmental defense in high-risk areas.
2. Security protocol recommendations for Danish NGOs operating in environmental conflict zones.

In addition, the document presents strategic recommendations for risk mitigation, structured around six interrelated strategic lines:

- Training and awareness-raising to strengthen knowledge of rights and security.
- Security protocols and emergency response, including evacuation, temporary relocation, and comprehensive assistance.
- Institutional strengthening to reinforce legal frameworks and state protection capacities.
- Risk monitoring and early-warning systems to detect threats and trigger rapid responses.
- Policy advocacy to highlight defenders' risks and generate political will for change.
- Crisis response management to ensure immediate, coordinated action in cases of aggression.

These strategic lines are supported by a cross-cutting monitoring and evaluation framework, designed to ensure sustainability and continuous improvement of all actions implemented.

In sum, protecting those who defend the forest is not only an ethical and legal imperative, but also a fundamental condition for safeguarding Amazonian biodiversity, advancing social justice, and ensuring a sustainable future for the region's communities.

While locally grounded in Madre de Dios and Pando, this strategy also provides a transferable framework for prevention, protection, institutional strengthening, and political advocacy that can inspire NGOs and environmental defenders in conflict zones across the globe.

DEFINITION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT ZONES

Environmental conflict zones are areas where disputes and tensions arise over the use, control, or protection of natural resources and ecosystems. These conflicts often occur in regions rich in forests, minerals, water, or land, and typically involve different actors such as:

- **Local and Indigenous communities** defending their territories and livelihoods
- **Private companies** (e.g., logging, mining, agriculture, or infrastructure projects) seeking to exploit resources
- **Governments** balancing development goals with environmental and social responsibilities
- **Criminal networks** involved in illegal logging, mining, or wildlife trade
- **Civil society and NGOs** advocating for conservation, human rights, and sustainable development

In such zones, the environment itself is at the center of the conflict, but the disputes often overlap with social, political, and economic dimensions, including land rights, human rights violations, and sometimes violence against environmental defenders.

Examples include:

- **The Amazon Basin** (conflicts over deforestation, Indigenous rights, and illegal mining/logging)
- **The Congo Basin** (logging, poaching, and land-use conflicts)
- Areas around large **extractive projects** (oil, gas, or mining) where communities resist environmental destruction



BACKGROUND

The document “Environmental Defenders in Conflict Zones: Safety Guidelines, Security Protocols & Risk-Mitigation Strategies” (hereafter, the Document) is the result of a consortium initiative led by four Danish NGOs:

- **Aktion Amazonas (AKAM)**
- **Dansk International Bosætningservice (DIB)**
- **Diálogos**
- **Saving Rivers and Lakes**
-

- all of which operate in environmental conflict zones across South America.

The aim of the consortium has been to develop generic safety recommendations for forest defenders working in high-risk contexts, based on comprehensive research into the nature of security threats in the Amazon - one of the most exposed and contested natural regions in the world when it comes to environmental conflicts.

To this end, the consortium engaged Conservación Amazónica (ACCA), a Peruvian non-profit organization with extensive experience in conservation, sustainable forest management, and environmental governance, to lead the research component in collaboration with ACEAA (Asociación para la Conservación de la Amazonía Andino-Amazónica), a Bolivian environmental NGO.

The research focused on the departments of Madre de Dios (Peru) and Pando (Bolivia), two Amazonian regions that exemplify the tensions between conservation efforts and illegal extractive activities such as gold mining, logging, land trafficking, and coca cultivation. The findings have served as the foundation for developing a set of practical recommendations that address the safety and security of a wide range of actors: local environmental defenders, Indigenous leaders, public officials, civil society organizations, international NGO staff, and their partners.

The Document has been developed through close collaboration between ACCA and the Danish consortium, ensuring that the recommendations are both evidence-based and broadly applicable. While grounded in the Amazonian context, the strategy is designed to be relevant for environmental conflict zones worldwide, providing a flexible framework that other organizations can adapt to their specific realities.

SCOPE

In both Madre de Dios and Pando, informal and illegal activities - such as illegal gold mining, indiscriminate logging, land trafficking, and coca cultivation - are present. In both departments, individuals, organizations, and public entities engaged in forest conservation face threats to their security.

In Madre de Dios, the perceived level of risk is higher than in Pando. However, in Pando, although the current situation is somewhat safer, there is growing concern that scenarios similar to those in Peru could be replicated. Against this backdrop, the tools and strategies currently in place to ensure safety are widely regarded as insufficient in both contexts.

This insufficiency stems from the lack of technological, human, and financial resources, as well as the weak presence of the state - particularly in remote rural areas that are difficult to access - highlighting significant gaps in inter-institutional coordination to combat illicit activities. Within this context, Indigenous peoples, public and private sector workers, and civil society organizations play a crucial role in forest conservation through awareness-raising, collective pressure, and the promotion of sustainable economic alternatives, such as the use of Amazonian fruits like Brazil nuts and açai (the latter being more developed in Bolivia).

However, the challenges observed in Madre de Dios and Pando are not unique. They reflect the broader reality of environmental conflict zones worldwide, where disputes over land and natural resources overlap with social, political, and economic tensions. In such settings, environmental defenders face heightened risks of threats, harassment, and violence, while the lack of robust state protection mechanisms leaves them vulnerable. This makes the lessons learned from the Amazon highly relevant for NGOs, civil society actors, and local communities operating in other high-risk regions such as the Congo Basin or areas surrounding large-scale extractive projects.

By broadening its focus beyond local dynamics, the Document seeks to provide generic safety recommendations that can serve as a foundation for organizations and communities in different geographies to develop context-specific protocols. In this sense, Madre de Dios and Pando serve as case studies that illustrate global patterns of environmental conflict, making the findings and recommendations applicable far beyond the Amazon.

METHODOLOGY

Both the safety guidelines & security protocol recommendations and the more in-depth strategic recommendations on risk mitigation targeting frontline defenders are grounded in comprehensive research conducted in the Amazon, with a focus on the concrete challenges faced in the rainforest regions of Pando (Bolivia) and Madre de Dios (Peru).

The research used a qualitative approach, complemented by desk review and analysis of secondary sources, with the objective of identifying and describing the risks faced by people involved in forest protection in these two regions. The analysis covered the period 2018–2024, prioritizing current and contextualized information, and resulted in two regional diagnostics that served as inputs for the development of the safety guidelines, security protocols, and risk mitigation recommendations.

The research process was carried out in three main phases:

1. Document review -

- covering national and international regulations on environmental defender protection, academic and grey literature, government statistics, and data from official and civil society sources.

2. Semi-structured interviews

- with key actors from Madre de Dios and Pando, selected based on relevance, expertise, and interest, conducted both in person and virtually.

3. Coverage and representativeness

- ensuring participation from all relevant sectors: Indigenous Peoples, rural communities, civil society organizations, public and private sectors, and international cooperation.

Although the study succeeded in gathering relevant and diverse information, the process faced certain limitations. In some cases, interviewees choose not to formally report the threats they have received, which leads to underreporting in official statistics. Likewise, the geographic dispersion of communities and security conditions in certain areas made it difficult to access some territories, limiting the number of in-person interviews. Similarly, mistrust of authorities and fear of reprisals restricted the depth of some testimonies. These conditions, while not preventing the development of the diagnostic, are factors that must be considered when interpreting the results.

Finally, the applied methodology allowed for the integration of legal, contextual, and testimonial analyses, forming the basis of a set of recommendations grounded in the identification of threats and risks present in the study regions, as well as in the effectiveness of existing protection mechanisms.



REGIONAL CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDIES

The regions of **Madre de Dios (Peru)** and **Pando (Bolivia)** form a cross-border area of major ecological, cultural, and geopolitical importance in the southern Amazon. Both are characterized by extraordinary biodiversity and the presence of Indigenous peoples and rural communities whose livelihoods are closely tied to the forest. At the same time, they share social and economic dynamics shaped by the coexistence of sustainable productive activities - such as Brazil nut harvesting - with illegal and informal economies linked to gold mining, logging, and drug trafficking. This complex interaction makes Madre de Dios and Pando strategic territories for understanding the intertwined challenges of conservation, governance, and security in the Amazon.



Madre de Dios (Peru)

Among Peruvian departments with the largest forest areas - despite significant losses - are Loreto, Ucayali, and Madre de Dios (Geobosques, Ministry of Environment). Madre de Dios stands out as one of the most biodiverse territories worldwide, hosting unique species, ecosystems, and resources. In fact, through Law No. 26311, Madre de Dios was declared the “Capital of Peru’s Biodiversity.” It is home to several protected natural areas, including Manu National Park, Bahuaja-Sonene National Park, Alto Purús National Park, Tambopata National Reserve, and Purús Communal Reserve.

Despite its immense natural and cultural wealth, including Indigenous peoples both in contact and in isolation, Madre de Dios is facing a socio-environmental crisis marked by the expansion of illegal economies, weak state governance, and increasing violence against those working to protect the Amazonian forest. In this context, environmental

defenders - a term that here includes Indigenous leaders, forest rangers, environmental specialists, journalists, and public and private officials - are exposed to threats, harassment, and even killings due to their role in resisting illegal activities such as gold mining, indiscriminate logging, land trafficking, and drug trade.

While Peru has signed international commitments and has a strong normative framework on environment and human rights, implementation in frontier regions like Madre de Dios remains limited. The Constitution of Peru (1993) recognizes the right to a healthy and balanced environment. Sectoral laws regulate forest exploitation, natural protected areas, and the protection of human rights defenders. The country has also ratified key international instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the American Convention on Human Rights. Yet the gap between laws and enforcement is evident. Existing mechanisms - such as the Intersectoral Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (2021) and sectoral protocols for environmental defenders - are insufficient against the scale of threats and the geographic dispersion of communities.

The socio-environmental context of Madre de Dios is dominated by alluvial gold mining, largely illegal or informal, which is the region's main economic activity. This practice not only drives deforestation but also contaminates rivers and soil with mercury, gravely harming local health and food security.

Peruvian state interventions, such as Operation "Mercury 2019," temporarily reduced illegal mining in hotspots like La Pampa, cutting deforestation by more than 90% in the first months. However, lack of continuity allowed illegal mining to relocate and rebound. This illustrates that one-off interventions are unsustainable without structural measures providing viable economic alternatives and permanent control mechanisms - otherwise increasing risks for those defending the Amazon.

Illegal logging compounds the problem.



According to Mongabay (2019),

about 30% of timber circulating in the Peruvian market comes from illegal or untraceable sources.

This reflects the difficulty of regulating forestry in remote areas with limited state presence, such as Madre de Dios. Land trafficking and agricultural frontier expansion add further conflicts, including within Indigenous territories and even inside protected areas. Drug trafficking, meanwhile, has expanded by leveraging cross-border connections with Brazil and Bolivia, consolidating criminal networks that employ violence, extortion, and human trafficking. These dynamics not only threaten ecosystems but also worsen insecurity and violence against whistleblowers.

Amid these pressures, Indigenous peoples remain crucial defenders of the forest. Madre de Dios is home to the Harakbut, Yine, Matsigenka, Ese Eja, Shipibo-Konibo, and others, as well as groups in isolation such as the Mashco

Piro. These people face dual vulnerabilities: constant pressures on their territories - often without land titles or adequate health, education, and security - and existential threats to isolated groups due to incursions. This underscores the urgency of recognizing and guaranteeing Indigenous territorial rights as a central conservation and protection strategy.

Institutional weakness deepens the crisis. Decentralization has not translated into stronger control capacities for regional governments, while rural and frontier areas remain underserved. Corruption and poor coordination further enable illegal economies and erode public trust. National and regional security plans have historically prioritized common crimes (robbery, homicide) while placing environmental crimes second. Although recent instruments such as the National Plan to Combat Environmental Crimes aim to address this, progress remains incipient and insufficient.

Between 2019 and 2022, Madre de Dios accounted for around 17% of all recorded threats against human rights defenders in Peru. Between 2020 and 2024 alone, 80 attacks were documented, including murders, threats, and cases of criminalization. In 2024, the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (MINJUSDH) reported 110 high-risk situations affecting 143 people. While many threats come from illegal actors, they also originate from seemingly legitimate businesses. Many cases go unreported due to fear of reprisals, leading to significant under-registration and limiting institutional response. When cases are reported, the lack of legal defense often prevents access to justice

and further endanger complainants' lives. The most affected are Indigenous leaders, forest concession representatives, park rangers, and civil society activists denouncing illegal activities. Most of the victims are Indigenous people, underlining how environmental crime disproportionately endangers those who defend nature.

In sum, Madre de Dios embodies the Amazon's contradictions: immense biodiversity and cultural richness confronted with organized crime, institutional weakness, and social vulnerability. While Peru's commitments and laws provide a foundation, they fall short without sustained territorial action. Protecting environmental defenders requires not only immediate security measures but also long-term policies that reduce structural gaps, strengthen institutions, and promote sustainable alternatives. Recognizing and safeguarding defenders is essential to ensure both forest conservation and human rights.





Pando (Bolivia)

The Bolivian department of Pando is rich in biological and cultural diversity, with extensive tropical forests and Indigenous peoples such as the Ese Ejja, Pacahuara, Tacana, and Machineri, alongside intercultural communities directly dependent on the forest. While not the most insecure region for defenders in Bolivia, nor yet at the same levels of violence as Madre de Dios, Pando faces a growing socio-environmental crisis marked by expanding extractive economies, weak state institutions, and rising threats and aggressions against environmental defenders.

Bolivia has progressive environmental legislation, including the Law of the Rights of Mother Earth (Law No. 71, 2010), the creation of the Mother Earth Ombudsman, and ratification of the Escazú Agreement in 2019. Yet in practice, no effective protection mechanisms have been implemented, despite repeated international

recommendations. The absence of operational protocols and specialized institutions leaves Indigenous leaders, rangers, journalists, researchers, and public officials highly vulnerable to threats, criminalization, and even physical attacks.

Defenders' risks are compounded by three main territorial pressures: gold mining, agricultural expansion, and drug trafficking. In 2022, Bolivia lost 245,177 hectares of primary forest to deforestation (12.4% of Amazonian loss), second only to Brazil (72.8%) (MAAP, 2024). An additional 106,922 hectares were affected by wildfires the same year (MAAP, 2024).

Gold mining, largely led by registered cooperatives, often operates without valid environmental licenses and in partnership with foreign companies of questionable reputation (Instituto Igarapé & Insight Crime, 2024). Between 2010 and 2021, Bolivia's gold production

jumped from 6.3 to 42 tons, while 240 tons were exported - much of it of illegal origin (Ojo Público, 2024). In 2022, Bolivia reported exporting 52 tons of gold despite only 4.5 tons being officially registered (Villegas, 2024).

Agricultural expansion has also driven massive deforestation. Between 1985 and 2021, Bolivia's agricultural land grew by 291%, from 2.8 to 10.8 million hectares (Mongabay, 2023). Policies linking land tenure to "productive use" have incentivized both legal and illegal deforestation, even inside protected areas (Instituto Igarapé & Insight Crime, 2024).

Though not the primary driver of deforestation, narcotrafficking is gaining ground in the Bolivian Amazon. In Pando, coca commercialization rose 21% in 2021 alone (UNODC, 2023). This has spurred clandestine airstrips and processing centers in remote areas, including Indigenous territories and protected zones (Instituto Igarapé & Insight Crime, 2024).

These illicit economies consolidate territorial and political power networks that severely restrict state oversight and undermine the safety of whistleblowers. Institutional weakness is also evident in poor intersectoral coordination and the absence of frontier-specific policies. While Bolivia has ratified key international agreements, implementation - such as of the Escazú Agreement - remains minimal. Corruption and economic/criminal interests generate impunity in most cases of violence and harassment against defenders, discouraging complaints and leading to widespread under-reporting.

Indigenous peoples and local communities face a double vulnerability: they suffer the environmental impacts of deforestation, fires, and pollution while also enduring relentless pressures on their territories, often without full land tenure security. The resulting forest loss threatens not only their cultural survival but also their food security and collective rights.

In conclusion, Pando is experiencing a worsening crisis where accelerated deforestation, illegal gold mining, narcotrafficking, agricultural expansion, and weak institutions converge. The lack of effective protection mechanisms and the dominance of illegal economies create a structural risk scenario. While violence levels remain below those of Madre de Dios, the unchecked advance of these pressures could quickly escalate to similar conditions without urgent action. Civil society organizations and international cooperation therefore play a key role in accompanying communities, generating alternative protection mechanisms, strengthening local capacities, and advocating for policies that ensure both Amazon conservation and human rights in Pando.





SECTION 1

SAFETY GUIDELINES & SECURITY PROTOCOLS

This section presents two complementary sets of safety guidelines and security protocols. The first addresses security measures for individuals working in public institutions or local organizations engaged in environmental conservation and defense in high-risk areas. The second provides security protocol recommendations for Danish NGOs operating in environmental conflict zones.

General Objective

To provide recommendations, procedures, and coordination mechanisms for individuals who, due to their work in defending and conserving the environment, are permanently exposed to risks. While rooted in the Amazonian context, these recommendations are broadly relevant to NGOs and their partners working in environmental conflict zones worldwide.

Specific Objectives



Provide security recommendations for individuals working in high-risk areas affected by illicit activities within their territories.



Promote recognition and protection of individuals engaged in environmental conservation in regions marked by conflict, who may face threats as a result of their work.



Establish clear procedures to be followed in the event of threats against those defending and conserving the environment.

It is recommended that all actors be informed of both local and international protocols, and that a briefing on their content forms an integral part of safety and contingency training.

Definitions

- **Attacks:** Acts that harm the physical or psychological integrity, dignity, sexual freedom, property, or reputation of human rights defenders. This includes threats, harassment, intimidation, or stalking suffered as a result of their work.
- **Defense of the Environment:** Any peaceful activity, without resorting to violence, aimed at protecting forests, rivers, biodiversity, and ecosystem - whether in South America, Africa, Asia, or elsewhere.
- **Protective Action:** A coordinated response to mitigate risk and safeguard the rights to life, integrity, freedom, and security of the worker, as well as any other rights relevant to defenders of the Amazon.
- **Serious and Imminent Risk:** The existence of threats or attacks likely to recur, which could seriously endanger the life, physical integrity, or personal freedom of the defender, or otherwise compromise their ability to exercise their role as a human rights defender.
- **Risk:** The result of threats and vulnerabilities experienced by Amazon defenders. To determine its magnitude, both the probability of an attack and its potential impact - whether at the individual or collective level - must be analyzed.

INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS WORKING IN ENVIRONMENTAL HIGH-RISK AREAS

Recommendations to safeguard security

It is essential for all individuals - especially those who frequently move between locations for their work - to assess and understand the security situation in their area, as well as the illegal activities that may be taking place there. In Madre de Dios (Peru) and Pando (Bolivia), for example, illegal gold mining and drug trafficking are prevalent, resulting in low levels of security.

The following measures are recommended:

- Maintain an updated directory of co-workers, particularly supervisors and immediate colleagues.
- Keep contact information for security entities such as the National Police, local watch groups, or security posts in case of emergencies.
- If renting housing, have the landlord's contact details and an alternative emergency contact. Choose to live in the safest possible area, ideally near commercial centers, police stations, or security posts, with reliable internet and connectivity.
- Identify nearby health services (hospitals, clinics, health centers, fire stations) and their contact details.
- Establish multiple commuting routes and vary schedules to avoid predictable routines. Consider remote, hybrid, or flexible work arrangements when possible.
- Use secure transportation services or a trusted driver for travel.
- Identify more than one route to your residence. If you suspect being followed, change direction, alert a colleague, and report immediately to the nearest police station.
- Avoid going alone to restaurants or entertainment venues; go accompanied by trusted individuals.
- Define a safe meeting point in advance with colleagues, family, or friends in case of emergency.
- Do not share location, daily activities, or travel plans on social media. Keep accounts private.
- Participate in basic first aid and self-protection training.
- Build local support networks with neighbors or community members to establish early warning and mutual assistance systems.
- Regularly check security conditions at your home and workplace, ensuring locks, lighting, and access controls are adequate.

Procedure for responding to a threat

Step 1: Assess credibility and risk level

The first step is to determine whether the threat is credible and whether the risk level is **low, medium, or high**, based on local experiences:

- **Low risk:** A vague or implausible threat from an unknown person not linked to illicit activity.
- **Medium risk:** A threat from individuals connected to illicit activities in your area, demonstrating knowledge of your work.
- **High risk:** A threat accompanied by physical violence, attempted assault, or credible signs of imminent harm.

For medium or high-risk threats, take the following actions:



- File a report at the nearest police station.



- Inform your supervisor or most trusted colleague and request organizational support.



- Monitor your surroundings for surveillance near your home, workplace, or field sites. Watch for unknown vehicles (especially those occupied by multiple men), suspicious motorcycles, or taxis with unusual routes.



- Avoid using public transportation (such as motor-taxis). If driving, avoid nighttime travel and scan your surroundings before entering or leaving a location. Use neighbors or security cameras for additional protection.



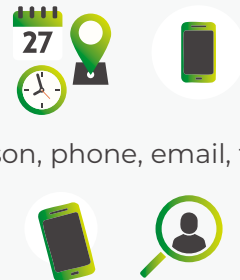
- Evaluate whether relocation outside the city - or even the country - is necessary.

Step 2: Document the threat

Even if risk is assessed as low, always document:

Send an email to your immediate supervisor including:

- Date, time, and location of the incident.
- Description of possible perpetrators.
- The channel through which the threat was received (in person, phone, email, text, written note, etc.).
- A verbatim record of the threat.
- Any recordings, photos, or screenshots available.



Documentation may be essential if filing a complaint with the police, the public prosecutor, or, in Peru, the Intersectoral Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders.

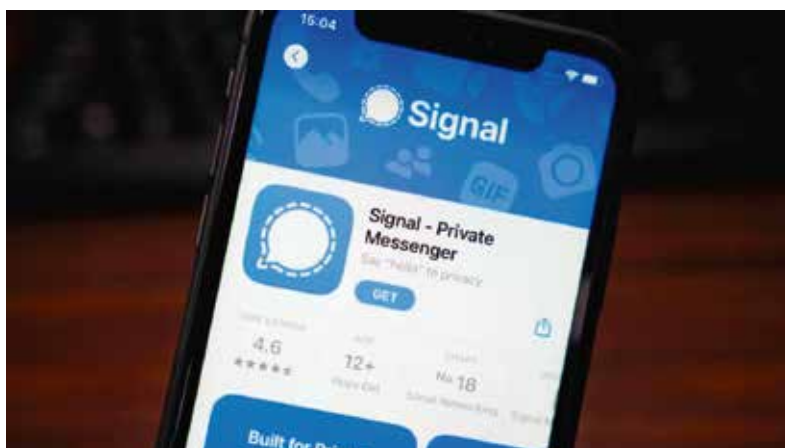
Step 3: Seek psychological support

Organizations should maintain a database of mental health professionals experienced in trauma, threats, violence, kidnapping, or sexual assault. Every defender should recognize that threats can harm not only themselves but also family and colleagues. Psychological support strengthens emotional resilience, enabling individuals to continue daily life and work with necessary precautions and stability.

Step 4: Protect communications

Once a threat has been received, communication channels may be compromised. Recommended measures include:

- Temporarily suspend social media accounts to prevent access to personal or family information. In medium or high-risk cases, direct relatives should do the same.
- Use encrypted communications with colleagues and family. **Signal** (for messaging) and ProtonMail (for email) are recommended.
- Avoid carrying sensitive personal, family, or work-related information while traveling.





DANISH NGO'S OPERATING IN ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT ZONES

PREPARATION OF DANISH PERSONNEL

Before deployment, staff and volunteers must complete qualified travel preparation, including risk assessment and situational awareness training relevant to the specific context.

Adherence to local protocols

All Danish staff must be fully briefed on, and comply with, the local security procedures in place. These typically include guidance on handling encounters with illegal miners/loggers, robbery or assault, vehicle accidents, acute illness, or medical emergencies. Local security procedures are binding and must be followed at all times.

Code of Conduct

Staff must commit to a code of conduct emphasizing professionalism, respect for local communities and partners, cultural sensitivity, and strict compliance with safety protocols. Any behavior that could compromise personal safety, team security, or the safety of local partners is strictly prohibited.

Mandatory declarations

- **Travel Declaration (Rejseerklæring):** To be completed before departure, including travel dates, flight information (international and domestic), accommodation details, and contact information of partners to be visited. The travel program must be attached as an annex. The declaration must be signed by either the Executive Director of Aktion Amazonas (for PRI-related travel) or the Head of Finance & Programmes (for M&E and supervision visits).
- **Next-of-Kin Declaration (Pårørendeerklæring):** Listing the names and contact details of three close relatives whom Aktion Amazonas may contact in case of problems, illness, or accidents during the assignment.

Insurance & medical preparation:

- The Danish NGO holds full responsibility for the safety of deployed staff/volunteers and must secure comprehensive travel insurance, including evacuation and repatriation. Coverage must be confirmed for validity in countries under orange or red advisory status.
- Staff must complete all required vaccinations, health checks, and, where possible, first aid training prior to deployment, in accordance with destination-specific requirements.

Chain of command

clear chain of command must be established before departure to ensure reporting and decision-making lines are unambiguous in emergencies.

Travel programme tracking

A travel programme must be shared with the NGO to ensure they know the staff member's location throughout the assignment. Any changes must be communicated immediately to the designated lead.

Additional preparations:



- Review the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' travel advisories (green, yellow, orange, red).
- Use external security assessments (e.g., SOS International).
- Conduct an internal assessment of whether the trip is strictly necessary.
- Download the Rejseklar app and register on the Danskerliste.
- Register as a traveler with the local embassy.
- Save emergency contacts for the Danish embassy and the Global Emergency Centre.



CRISIS SCENARIOS

In high-risk environments such as the Amazon, organizations must be prepared to respond to worst-case situations with clarity and precision. Crisis scenarios may involve kidnapping, hostage-taking, violent attacks, or fatalities abroad - incidents that demand immediate activation of established procedures, coordination with relevant authorities, and strict adherence to security protocols.

The following guidance outlines both immediate actions and institutional responsibilities for different actors, including colleagues on-site, relatives in Denmark, Danish authorities, and NGOs. It also clarifies what support can and cannot be provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and embassies, as well as the responsibilities borne directly by NGOs operating in conflict zones.

These procedures are not exhaustive but provide a practical framework for rapid response in situations of extreme risk, ensuring that all parties act in a coordinated, informed, and responsible manner.



KIDNAPPING OR HOSTAGE SITUATIONS

Kidnapping or hostage-taking abroad constitutes one of the most critical security incidents an organization may face. Such cases must be treated with the utmost urgency and in strict accordance with established crisis management procedures. Immediate activation of the chain of command and coordination with relevant local and international authorities is mandatory.

Immediate actions (for colleagues on-site)

- Do not attempt a rescue.
- Inform local authorities and the Danish embassy/consulate immediately.
- Notify Danish NGO HQ and follow the established chain of command.

Immediate actions (for relatives or employer in Denmark)

- Contact the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Global Emergency Centre (Globale Vagtcenter), available 24/7 or the Danish representation abroad (<https://um.dk/om-os/kontakt/find-os-i-verden>)
- In case of confirmed or suspected hostage-taking, you will be connected to a staff member specialized in handling such cases.
- A dedicated case officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be assigned to support you throughout the process and serve as the single point of contact with Danish authorities.

Confidentiality and media

Hostage situations are typically characterized by the fact that the more public attention they receive, the higher the ransom demand becomes. Therefore, you are strongly advised not to contact the press or media.



FRAUD OR DECEPTION CASES

In some cases, alleged kidnappings may turn out to be fraud. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs can help assess the situation and clarify the facts.

What the ministry of foreign affairs and Danish embassies can assist with

- Provide advice and assistance to relatives or employers throughout the detention period.
- Coordinate contact with other relevant Danish authorities.
- In some cases, engage in dialogue with authorities in the country where the person is detained.

- Provide guidance on communication and media relations.
- Refer to local lawyers in the country of detention.
- Issue a new passport or travel document if required.
- In certain circumstances, receive the released person upon arrival and assist with family contact.

What the ministry of foreign affairs and Danish embassies cannot do

- Negotiate the release of hostages or pay ransom.
- Cover expenses for transport or legal assistance, either in Denmark or abroad.
- Provide legal advice on local laws in the country where the person is held.

NGO responsibilities

When the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot act (e.g. negotiation of release, ransom payments, or covering legal/transport costs), the NGO bears responsibility for ensuring staff safety and support. This includes:

- **Kidnap & ransom (k&r) insurance:** NGOs operating in high-risk areas should secure specialized K&R insurance, covering ransom, professional negotiators, evacuation, and aftercare.
- **Pre-arranged legal support:** Maintain a list of trusted local lawyers (screened via partners, other NGOs, or international networks).
- **Professional negotiation:** NGOs should avoid improvised contact with kidnappers. Instead:
 - Engage insurance providers' crisis response teams (if insured).
 - Use professional third-party negotiators (often arranged via insurers or security firms).
- **Staff awareness:** All deployed staff and volunteers must be briefed on NGO policy regarding ransom, negotiations, and communication protocols before travel.



REPATRIATION OF DECEASED STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS

In the tragic event of a fatality abroad, the organization is responsible for ensuring the dignified and timely repatriation of the deceased. All actions must follow established procedures, including immediate notification of next of kin, coordination with local authorities, and activation of the organization's insurance and repatriation protocols:

Contact authorities immediately

- Local police/hospital.
- Embassy/consulate, who will guide on legal procedures and documentation.

Secure official documents

- Local death certificate.
- Consular death certificate (where required).
- Medical certificate of cause of death.
- Embalming certificate (required for transport).
- Permit for export of remains (from local authorities).
- Passport of the deceased (to be cancelled).

Coordinate with funeral homes

- Local funeral home: preparation, embalming, sealing, export paperwork.
- Funeral home in home country: reception, local registration, family arrangements.

Transport options

- Air transport as cargo (standard).
- Accompanied transport (some airlines allow this).
- Cremation abroad with ashes repatriated (simpler, lower cost).

Costs

- Some insurance policies cover repatriation - check immediately.

On arrival in home country

- Receiving funeral home collects remains.
- Local registration with consular and local certificates.



Practical advice:

Always begin with the embassy/consulate; they are the fastest point of coordination.



SECTION 2

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RISK MITIGATION

This section sets out strategic recommendations to reduce the risks faced by people involved in forest conservation. Its purpose is to define strategic lines of action that can serve as a practical roadmap for risk reduction. The proposals are grounded in international commitments undertaken by Peru and Bolivia, aligned with current legal frameworks, and supported by evidence gathered through fieldwork.

The recommendations outline guidelines to:

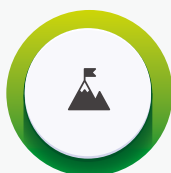
- Consolidate State presence in forest territories.
- Ensure effective protection mechanisms for communities, environmental leaders, and staff from public, private, and non-governmental organizations.
- Promote a development model that harmonizes natural resource management with the defense of the human rights of those working to conserve the Amazon.

Although these recommendations originate from South American contexts, they are broadly applicable to other regions facing similar challenges. They should therefore be understood as general in nature — serving as a framework and basis for reflection - which NGOs and their partners can adapt to their specific realities.



Vision

Ensure that environmental defenders have the tools, knowledge, and support necessary to carry out their work safely, protecting their physical, emotional, and legal well-being against risks linked to illicit activities.



Mision

Provide comprehensive recommendations for strategies and guidelines that guarantee the safety and well-being of environmental defenders in conflict contexts through risk awareness, preventive training, emergency preparedness, and assistance in the event of incidents.



General Objective

Develop and disseminate a strategy-based set of recommendations to reduce risks faced by local environmental defenders by strengthening their tools and knowledge to operate safely in high-risk contexts marked by violence, illegal resource extraction, and weak regulatory frameworks.

Specific Objectives

- **Enhance safety and protection** of environmental defenders through capacity-building on the risks they face daily, including violence, human rights violations, harassment, and environmental crimes.
- **Strengthen practical skills** in first aid, evacuation, crisis management, and legal protection among local employees, organizational staff deployed in conflict zones, and local communities.
- **Develop a practical security guide** for environmental defenders in conflict-prone areas, outlining preventive strategies to minimize exposure to risks.
- **Design and promote context-sensitive protection protocols** that incorporate intercultural, territorial, and gender perspectives for employees, staff, and communities operating in high-risk situations.
- **Establish clear emergency response guidelines** for situations such as kidnappings, unlawful detentions, or violent attacks, ensuring that responses do not endanger the safety of staff or local communities.
- **Promote support networks** among local organizations, authorities, NGOs, and government institutions to share information on risks and best practices in security.
- **Facilitate coordinated implementation** of protection measures and strengthen collective responses to incidents of violence or threats, improving the overall effectiveness of security actions in environmental conflict zones.

Strategic Lines of Action

The strategic lines of action constitute a guiding framework, setting out concrete priorities in response to risks identified in Madre de Dios (Peru) and Pando (Bolivia). At the same time, they are formulated as generic recommendations for NGOs and environmental defenders operating in conflict-affected regions worldwide. **Each line of action addresses problems identified through research in the two South American rainforest regions** (see chapter “Regional Context of the Case Studies”), but is designed to promote comprehensive, sustainable, and coordinated interventions in any high-risk context.

STRATEGY NO. 1: TRAINING AND AWARENESS-RAISING

This strategic line of action seeks to empower environmental defenders - especially Indigenous communities - to face threats, protect their rights, and promote their comprehensive safety by strengthening their knowledge, skills, and resources. It addresses the lack of information, training, and adequate support that increases their vulnerability to aggression, criminalization, and harassment. Through education processes, training, and access to practical and legal tools, this strategy aims to strengthen leadership and expand the capacity to respond to risks. It will be implemented through **nine lines of action**:

Line of action no. 1:

Training workshops on environmental and human rights for Indigenous communities, and on mechanisms for reporting threats

Because Indigenous communities are often the most exposed to rights violations and the least informed about available protection mechanisms, this action promotes basic legal literacy in pre-identified communities, with emphasis on procedures for effectively reporting threats and aggressions. This helps close gaps in access to justice and strengthens informed participation of Amazonian defenders.

General guidelines:

- **Gender-sensitive, participatory, intercultural approach:** Workshops must be built with the active participation of Indigenous leaders, women, and youth, incorporating their knowledge, cultural practices, and mother tongues. The methodology should respect and value the community worldview and avoid external impositions to ensure cultural relevance. Measures must also be established to facilitate women's participation, considering domestic and caregiving responsibilities that often limit their presence.
- **Language and accessibility:** Materials and facilitation must be delivered in the predominant Indigenous language of the community, accompanied by translation into Spanish if necessary. Pedagogical resources should use simple language, practical examples, and visual aids. Facilitators should preferably be accompanied by a community translator.
- **Active and practice-oriented methodology:** Implement participatory dynamics such as real case studies, dramatizations, simulations of reporting, risk analysis, and collective problem-solving, guided by facilitators. This allows complex concepts to be understood more clearly, applied, and meaningfully by participants.

- **Minimum essential content:**

- Principles and rights recognized in national and international standards (ILO Convention 169, UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Escazú Agreement).
- National environmental legal framework.
- Common types of threats and aggressions against defenders.
- Procedures and steps for filing administrative or criminal complaints.
- Identification of competent authorities and their responsibilities.
- Available protection resources and measures.

- **Duration and frequency:** Each workshop should last 6–8 hours to cover theory and practice. Training should be continuous, with at least two or three follow-up workshops to reinforce capacities and evaluate progress.
- **Materials and pedagogical resources:** Guides, booklets, infographics, and short videos adapted to the local context should be produced and left with the community for future consultation.
- **Evaluation and results measurement (KPIs):** Pre- and post-workshop surveys or evaluation activities should be applied to measure knowledge acquired. KPIs include number of participants, percentage of women and youth trained, level of understanding of reporting mechanisms, and number of effective complaints filed in the follow-up stage.
- **Linkage with support networks:** Workshops should connect communities with defender networks, NGOs, lawyers, and human rights organizations that can provide support in reporting and risk cases.
- **Post-training follow-up:** Establish a mechanism for continuous communication with participants or community focal points, using phone calls or SMS (in areas with limited internet coverage) to resolve doubts, provide support in reporting, and reinforce learning.

Line of action no. 2:

Training on the specific rights of environmental defenders

This line of action seeks to reduce gaps in access to clear information about the rights recognized in national laws and international treaties, in order to strengthen community knowledge of those rights, legitimize their work before public authorities and private actors, and promote the effective use of existing protection mechanisms.

General guidelines:

- **Human rights-based and comprehensive protection approach:** Training should focus on the defense and exercise of rights recognized for environmental defenders, highlighting their legitimate role and the State's obligation to protect them, in line with international standards such as the Escazú Agreement and the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.
- **Adaptation to local context and cultural diversity:** Content must be contextualized to territorial realities, considering the socio-environmental situation, the presence of threats, and the cultural and linguistic particularities of participating communities and organizations.
- **Essential content:**
 - Rights recognized in national legislation on environment, human rights, and Indigenous Peoples.
 - Relevant international instruments (Escazú Agreement, ILO Convention 169, International Human Rights Covenants, among others).
 - Public obligations toward environmental defenders and accountability mechanisms, in both Peru and Bolivia.
 - Procedural rights and guarantees against criminalization or arbitrary detention.
 - Existing protection routes and mechanisms (public and non-public).
- **Participatory and practical methodology:** Use group dynamics, real case analysis, role-playing hearings or interviews with authorities, and simulation exercises so participants can practice applying their rights in real or simulated scenarios.
- **Inclusion and differentiated approach:** Ensure active participation of women, youth, community leaders, and local organizations to address the threats and violations that affect each group differently.
- **Resources and teaching materials:** Develop and deliver guides, booklets, and audiovisual materials in Spanish and Indigenous languages, using clear and visually accessible language, practical examples, and references to support organizations.
- **Duration and frequency:** Organize thematic sessions over different days, lasting at least half a day each. A minimum of two sessions per group is recommended to ensure knowledge assimilation and practice.

- **Evaluation and KPIs:** Include indicators such as number of defenders trained, percentage of participants who can correctly identify their rights and protection routes, number of legal consultations generated after training, and follow-up on cases where knowledge was applied.

Line of action no. 3:

Training in personal and organizational security

This action seeks to train forest defenders in the use of secure communication tools, risk monitoring, and early warning systems to strengthen individual and collective security through concrete tools adapted to the realities of Madre de Dios and Pando. This is crucial, as threats and attacks against defenders have become more systematic, requiring technical prevention capacities.

General guidelines:

- **Comprehensive security approach:** Security must be addressed across three complementary dimensions - physical, digital, and psychosocial - so that participants acquire tools to prevent and respond to threats in each area.
- **Territorial contextualization:** Content must be adapted to the specific conditions of each region or organization, considering factors such as geographic isolation, presence of illegal economies, identified risk actors, frequency of fieldwork, and limited access to authorities.
- **Essential content:**
 - Basic self-protection principles in the field.
 - Secure communication protocols (encrypted messaging, password management, handling sensitive information).
 - Tools and techniques for risk monitoring (pattern observation, threat identification).
 - Early warning systems and community support networks.
 - Evacuation and temporary relocation procedures.
 - Security protocols for meetings, travel, and fieldwork.
 - Collective protection strategies for organizations and communities.
- **Participatory and practical methodology:** Conduct practical exercises such as drills, real scenario analyses, case studies, and training with security equipment and applications. Include emergency response practices and simulated evacuations.
- **Inclusion and differentiated approach:** Incorporate specific measures for women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples, recognizing that each group faces distinct risks and requires tailored strategies (e.g., proximity to illicit activity hubs like the mining corridor in Madre de Dios).

- **Resources and materials:** Provide manuals, illustrated protocols, and technical guides in Spanish and Indigenous languages, with clear diagrams and applicable examples for rural and urban contexts.
- **Stepped training:** Divide training into progressive modules that advance from basic concepts to specialized techniques, allowing sufficient time for practice and feedback.
- **Indicators and evaluation (KPIs):** Measure training impact using indicators such as number of defenders and organizations trained, percentage of participants adopting learned security measures, response times in threat drills, and number of incidents reported through early warning systems.

Line of action no. 4:

Emergency drills and training in self-protection and peaceful conflict resolution

This action strengthens skills to react to risk situations, reduce exposure to danger, and lower the probability of suffering aggression through practical exercises that promote coordinated and peaceful responses.

General guidelines:

- **Context-adapted approach:** Drills must reflect the most probable threats in each territory (e.g., incursions by illegal actors, armed harassment, direct threats, forced eviction, arbitrary detention), as well as resource and communication limitations in remote areas.
- **Key content:**
 - Procedures for evacuation and safe relocation.
 - Community signals and codes to alert risks.
 - Basic self-protection techniques during travel, meetings, or field activities.
 - Strategies to reduce risk exposure (safe routes, strategic schedules).
 - Mediation and peaceful negotiation methods when facing hostile actors.
 - Crisis management and rapid group decision-making.
- **Practical and participatory methodology:** Carry out realistic drills that reproduce local risk scenarios. Include role-playing exercises to practice responses to verbal, physical, or intimidating threats. Conduct post-drill analysis workshops to evaluate strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Inclusion and differentiated approach:** Ensure women, youth, and Indigenous community members actively participate in designing and conducting drills, incorporating their perspectives and roles in community protection dynamics.

- **Inter-institutional coordination:** Involve local authorities, civil defense brigades, human rights organizations, and defender networks to ensure drills are linked with external protection mechanisms.
- **Resources and logistics:** Provide basic materials and equipment (safe route maps, first aid kits, radios, emergency contact lists) and ensure participants know how to use them correctly.
- **Evaluation and continuous improvement (KPIs):** Measure drill effectiveness through indicators such as average evacuation time, percentage of participants following protocols correctly, reduction of critical errors in successive simulations, and number of incidents reported and managed peacefully.



Line of action no. 5:

Leadership and organizational management training for communities and Indigenous organizations, with a focus on women

This action strengthens safe and inclusive leadership capacities within communities by promoting the active participation of women and youth in defending their territories. It seeks to ensure the continuity and sustainability of environmental monitoring and protection processes.

General guidelines:

- **Inclusive, gender-sensitive approach:** Training must recognize the specific barriers women and youth face (discrimination, domestic workload, gender-based violence) and create safe, accessible spaces for their participation.
- **Key content:**
 - Principles of community leadership with intercultural and gender perspectives.
 - Organizational management techniques, resource administration, and collective decision-making.
 - Strategies for effective participation in environmental governance and dialogue spaces.
 - Tools for preventing and managing internal conflicts.
 - Strategic communication to highlight community demands and achievements.
 - Integration of security and well-being protocols into leadership roles.
- **Practical and participatory methodology:**
 - Interactive workshops with situational leadership exercises.
 - Role-playing for negotiation and external representation.
 - Case studies of women leaders and successful territorial defense organizations.
 - Work in mixed groups and women-only groups to build trust and openness.
- **Inclusion of local knowledge:** Value and strengthen traditional leadership practices, combining them with updated tools for management and civic participation.

- **Linkage with networks and allies:** Promote connections with Indigenous women's networks, civil society organizations, and public entities to broaden support for community leaders.
- **Resources and logistics:** Provide materials in Indigenous languages and accessible formats, and facilitate transport, meals, and childcare to ensure women's attendance. Lack of such support often prevents their participation, limiting knowledge transfer and active involvement.
- **Evaluation and follow-up (KPIs):** Measure training impact through indicators such as increased percentage of women in community leadership roles; number of women and youth engaged in territorial defense processes; application of learned management tools; and participants' sense of safety and confidence in leadership.
- **Integration with other lines of action:** Align leadership training with security, rights, and response protocol training to ensure leaders have comprehensive protection tools.

Line of action no. 6:

Training in the use of technology for protection

This line of action promotes the strategic use of digital tools such as security applications, georeferenced monitoring, and recording of aggressions or attacks against individuals or organizations. These technologies allow for quicker responses and increase the visibility of cases at national and international levels.

General guidelines:

- **Selection of appropriate tools:** Identify applications and devices that work in areas with low connectivity, with simple interfaces and availability in Indigenous languages if necessary. Prioritize tools that enable georeferencing, secure messaging, and protected storage of sensitive data.
- **Key content:**
 - Use of mobile security and early warning apps.
 - Satellite and georeferenced monitoring systems to record illegal activities and threats.
 - Protocols for safe recording of aggressions or attacks, with emphasis on protecting identity and digital chain of custody.
 - Secure communication tools (encryption, VPNs, protected messaging). In remote Amazonian areas, where connectivity is limited, SMS must be considered a valid emergency option.
 - Basic cybersecurity management and prevention of digital attacks.

- **Practical and context-adapted methodology:** Conduct field demonstrations and practical exercises with selected devices and applications. Include simulations of activating alerts and sending real-time reports. Use small group trainings to provide personalized support.
- **Intercultural and accessible approach:** Provide training materials in Spanish and Indigenous languages, as needed; include visual guides and video tutorials to facilitate learning; and integrate community-based monitoring practices with technology.
- **Linkages with networks and protection systems:** Connect technological protection tools with defender networks, NGOs, authorities, and international organizations to ensure coordinated responses. Establish clear escalation routes for alerts from local to national and international levels.
- **Resources and logistics:** Ensure access to devices, connectivity, and technical support for continued use, as well as maintenance and updating protocols for equipment and software.
- **Evaluation and follow-up (KPIs):** Track impact through indicators such as number of people trained and using technologies, number of incidents reported and documented with tools, average response time to alerts, and participants perceived safety levels.
- **Data protection and digital security:** Guarantee confidentiality of information and protection of reporter identities, using anonymity and secure evidence storage practices.

Line of action no. 7:

Public awareness on the role of environmental defenders

This action disseminates information to highlight the essential role of environmental defenders, aiming to counter stigmatization, promote social respect for their work, and generate a supportive environment for their activities.

General guidelines:

- **Approach and narrative:** Use a positive framing that highlights defenders' contributions to environmental conservation, community well-being, and collective rights. Showcase life stories and achievements of people and organizations working to protect the Amazon in Madre de Dios and Pando. Emphasize cultural and gender diversity, and avoid narratives that re-victimize or unnecessarily expose those at risk.
- **Target audiences:** Sensitization efforts should reach the general public in both urban and rural areas, local, regional, and national media, as well as schools, unions, and community organizations. In rural areas, community radio remains vital due to limited internet access. Engagement with key private sector actors and public authorities is also essential.

- **Channels and dissemination tools:** Produce audiovisual, radio, and graphic materials adapted to local contexts and Indigenous languages when necessary. Use social media and digital platforms strategically to amplify messages. Partner with community media, local radio, and regional press to broaden reach. Integrate messages into cultural events, fairs, festivals, and other community spaces.
- **Awareness methodology:** Activities may include thematic campaigns tied to key dates (e.g., International Day of Human Rights Defenders, Earth Day), as well as forums, film screenings, talks, and participatory workshops. Create spaces for dialogue between defenders, communities, authorities, and journalists to strengthen understanding and cooperation.
- **Intercultural and accessible approach:** Ensure content is culturally appropriate, translated into Indigenous languages, and visually comprehensible for audiences with varied literacy levels. Incorporate community worldviews and values for greater effectiveness.
- **Linkages with networks and allies:** Coordinate awareness activities with defender networks, NGOs, schools, and local media for greater impact. Connect campaigns with advocacy and protection initiatives to directly support defender safety and recognition.
- **Evaluation and follow-up (KPIs):** Measure reach and impact through indicators such as number of people reached, increase in positive media coverage, shifts in public perception (via surveys), and the number of new allies engaged in support activities.
- **Protection and security:** All awareness activities must be designed with prior security analysis to avoid increasing risks for defenders. Establish clear protocols for using images, testimonies, and personal data, always prioritizing participant safety.national and international levels.
- **Resources and logistics:** Ensure access to devices, connectivity, and technical support for continued use, as well as maintenance and updating protocols for equipment and software.
- **Evaluation and follow-up (KPIs):** Track impact through indicators such as number of people trained and using technologies, number of incidents reported and documented with tools, average response time to alerts, and participants perceived safety levels.
- **Data protection and digital security:** Guarantee confidentiality of information and protection of reporter identities, using anonymity and secure evidence storage practices.

Line of action no. 8:

Training on the Escazú Agreement

This line of action develops and distributes materials in multiple languages on the content and scope of the Escazú Agreement, and delivers training sessions for defenders, workers, authorities, and civil society. This regional instrument is prioritized as a normative framework for demanding the protection of human rights in environmental matters. The ratification by Bolivia and the need to push for approval in Peru are emphasized.

General guidelines:

- **Approach and content:** Training must cover the Agreement's principles, rights, and obligations, with emphasis on Article 9 on protection of environmental defenders. Practical implications, accountability mechanisms, and governance opportunities must be explained. The contrast between Bolivia (ratified) and Peru (pending ratification) should be contextualized.
- **Target audiences:** Indigenous and rural environmental defenders, community leaders, local and regional authorities, civil society representatives, justice operators, and local communicators.
- **Training methodology:** Combine theoretical sessions with practical case analysis, simulations of using the Agreement in real contexts, and exercises applying complaint mechanisms. The methodology should be participatory, fostering experience sharing and collaborative learning.
- **Materials and support tools:** Produce guides, infographics, videos, and radio content in local languages and accessible formats. Use digital platforms to share resources and support post-training follow-up.
- **Intercultural and gender-sensitive approach:** Respect Indigenous worldviews, languages, and organizational forms, while addressing specific needs and challenges of women defenders.
- **Linkages and alliances:** Coordinate with defender networks, schools, NGOs, state bodies, and media outlets to strengthen outreach and dissemination of the Agreement's key messages.
- **Evaluation and follow-up (KPIs):** Measure impact through number of people trained, level of understanding achieved, effective application of the Agreement in cases, and strengthened advocacy for implementation or ratification.
- **Protection and security:** Ensure training participation does not increase defenders' risks by applying protective measures and data confidentiality protocols.

Line of action no. 9:

Legal and psychosocial assistance for defenders at risk

This line of action provides support by interdisciplinary teams of lawyers and psychologists to comprehensively address aggressions suffered by defenders. The support strengthens resilience, enabling them to continue their work under greater emotional and legal security.

General guidelines:

- **Approach and content:** Assistance must include legal representation in judicial and administrative processes, support in filing complaints, and case follow-up until resolution. Psychosocial support should address post-traumatic stress, prevent emotional burnout, and strengthen coping skills, with attention to cultural and gender dimensions.
- **Target audiences:** Environmental defenders at imminent risk or who have suffered threats, harassment, physical assaults, or criminalization. Includes community leaders, grassroots members, NGO representatives, and local communicators engaged in environmental protection.
- **Service methodology:** Interdisciplinary model combining legal advice and psychological support, both in-person and remotely depending on territorial access. Flexible approaches must allow for individual, family, or group support.
- **Resources and support tools:** Services should include emergency legal/psychological protocols, complaint templates, legal self-protection guides, directories of competent institutions, and human rights/environmental education materials. Referral networks to specialized services are also essential.
- **Intercultural and gender-sensitive approach:** Interventions must adapt to community worldviews, languages, and cultural values, and address specific forms of violence faced by women defenders.
- **Linkages and alliances:** Coordinate with defender networks, public institutions, mental health organizations, and cooperation agencies to expand coverage and ensure long-term assistance.
- **Evaluation and follow-up (KPIs):** Track indicators such as number of defenders assisted, cases resolved, satisfaction levels, improved perceptions of safety, and reductions in stress or anxiety symptoms.



STRATEGY NO. 2: EMERGENCY RESPONSE

This strategic line strengthens individual, community, and organizational capacities to prevent, respond to, and recover from high-risk situations. It focuses on establishing clear security protocols, rapid response mechanisms, and coordinated actions to protect defenders, particularly in contexts marked by violence, illegal economies, and weak state presence. It will be implemented through **five lines of action**:

Line of action no. 1:

Development of community security protocols

This action supports communities and organizations in creating their own tailored security protocols that reflect local realities and risks. Protocols serve as practical guides for daily activities and emergency situations.

General guidelines:

- **Participatory design:** Protocols should be co-created with Indigenous leaders, women, youth, and community authorities to ensure ownership and applicability.
- **Content:** Risk identification, preventive measures, safe travel routes, community alert systems, emergency contacts, safe gathering points, and procedures for external coordination.
- **Cultural adaptation:** Ensure protocols incorporate local practices, Indigenous knowledge, and mother tongues.
- **Dissemination:** Produce illustrated versions for low-literacy audiences and provide laminated copies for daily use.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of protocols developed and adopted; % of community members trained in their use; frequency of drills to test protocols.

Line of action no. 2:

Establishment of early warning and rapid response systems

This action sets up systems to detect threats in time and coordinate rapid responses with communities, NGOs, and relevant authorities.

General guidelines:

- **Community-based monitoring:** Train local focal points to identify warning signs and activate alerts.
- **Technology integration:** Use radios, SMS, and secure apps adapted to low-connectivity areas.

- **Escalation protocols:** Establish clear procedures for escalating alerts from local to regional and national levels.
- **Alliances:** Build linkages with defender networks, police, ombudsman offices, and NGOs for timely intervention.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Average response time to alerts; number of incidents responded to; number of communities connected to the system.

Line of action no. 3:

Emergency response and evacuation plans

This action strengthens capacity to respond to imminent risks through structured evacuation plans and relocation strategies.

General guidelines:

- **Risk-based planning:** Identify safe routes, transport means, and temporary shelters.
- **Coordination:** Plans must be coordinated by local authorities, human rights organizations, and health services.
- **Training:** Conduct regular evacuation drills to test plans and build confidence.
- **Special considerations:** Ensure inclusion of children, elderly, and people with disabilities in all evacuation plans.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of communities with operational evacuation plans; reduction in evacuation time during drills; successful execution of relocations in real incidents.

Line of action no. 3:

Emergency response and evacuation plans

This action strengthens capacity to respond to imminent risks through structured evacuation plans and relocation strategies.

General guidelines:

- **Risk-based planning:** Identify safe routes, transport means, and temporary shelters.
- **Coordination:** Plans must be coordinated by local authorities, human rights organizations, and health services.
- **Training:** Conduct regular evacuation drills to test plans and build confidence.
- **Special considerations:** Ensure inclusion of children, elderly, and people with disabilities in all evacuation plans.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of communities with operational evacuation plans; reduction in evacuation time during drills; successful execution of relocations in real incidents.

Line of action no. 4:

Specialized security training for NGOs and local organizations

This action targets staff of NGOs, grassroots organizations, and Indigenous federations operating in environmental conflict zones, strengthening their internal security practices and ability to protect personnel.

General guidelines:

- **Content:** Institutional security policies, field safety protocols, digital security, legal preparedness, and crisis communication.
- **Methodology:** Tailored training combining workshops, simulations, and peer-learning among organizations.
- **Institutionalization:** Support organizations in formalizing internal security manuals and compliance procedures.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of staff trained; % of organizations with internal security policies; level of compliance with minimum safety standards.

Line of action no. 5:

Emergency support fund for defenders at risk

This action establishes a financial mechanism to cover urgent needs in situations of imminent danger, such as temporary relocation, medical assistance, or legal defense

General guidelines:

- **Scope of use:** Emergency transportation, safe shelter, communication equipment, medical costs, legal representation.
- **Management:** Fund administered transparently by a trusted NGO or coalition with clear accountability mechanisms.
- **Accessibility:** Fast disbursement procedures with minimal bureaucracy to ensure timely support.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of defenders assisted; response time for fund disbursement; satisfaction level of beneficiaries.



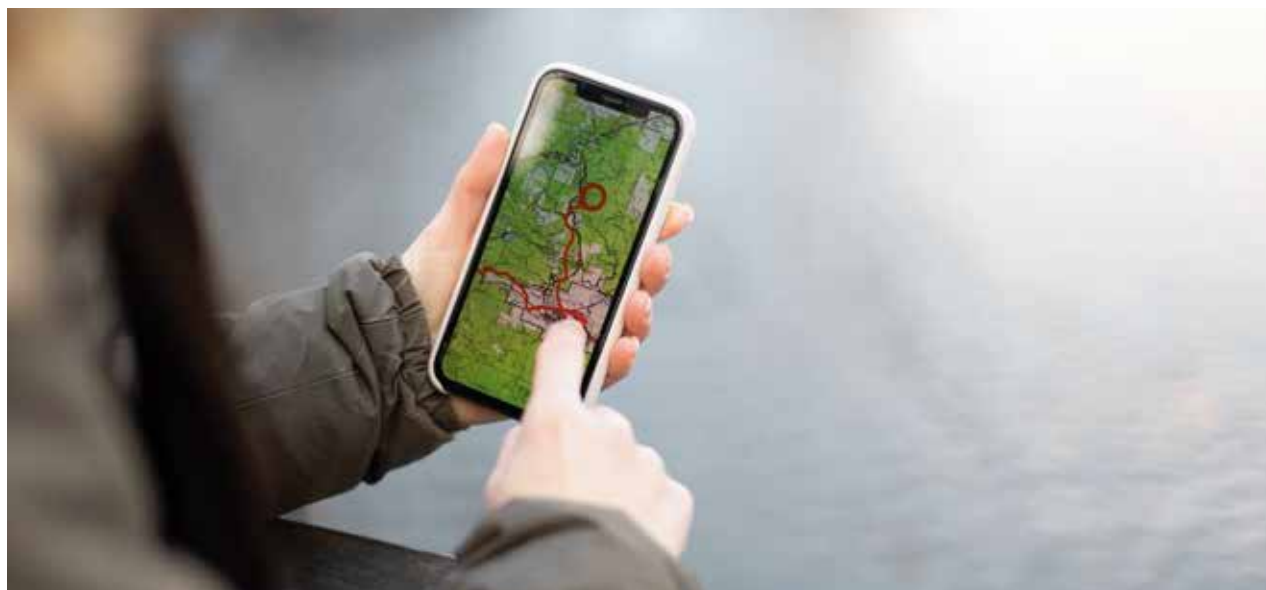
STRATEGY NO. 3: INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

This strategy focuses on building the organizational, legal, and technical capacities of local institutions, Indigenous organizations, and NGOs so they can sustain long-term protection efforts. Stronger institutions are essential to coordinate collective action, advocate for defenders' rights, and maintain resilience against external pressures. It will be implemented through **five lines of action**:

Line of action no. 1:

Strengthening Indigenous and community organizations

This action seeks to reinforce the governance structures and operational capacity of grassroots organizations that play a frontline role in environmental defense.



General guidelines:

- **Capacity-building:** Training in administration, financial management, strategic planning, and community engagement.
- **Representation:** Strengthen the ability of Indigenous organizations to participate in decision-making spaces at local, regional, and national levels.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Support systems for reporting and internal monitoring.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of organizations with strengthened governance structures; % increase in participation in policy spaces; adoption of accountability mechanisms.

Line of action no. 2:

Legal empowerment of defenders and organizations

This action strengthens legal knowledge and support structures to ensure defenders and organizations can effectively use national and international mechanisms for protection.

General guidelines:

- **Training:** Provide training on environmental law, Indigenous rights, and human rights mechanisms.
- **Legal networks:** Build alliances with pro bono lawyers, universities, and NGOs specializing in legal defense.
- **Documentation:** Strengthen organizations' ability to gather, preserve, and present legal evidence of threats or violations.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of defenders receiving legal support; number of cases successfully filed; % of participants demonstrating improved legal knowledge.

Line of action no. 3:

Institutional security and risk management policies

This action promotes the adoption of internal security and risk management frameworks within local NGOs and community organizations.

General guidelines:

- **Policy development:** Support organizations to draft and adopt formal security manuals and risk management protocols.
- **Digital protection:** Introduce digital security standards for managing sensitive data and communications.
- **Crisis protocols:** Establish chain-of-command procedures and staff responsibilities in case of emergencies.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** % of organizations with updated risk management plans; number of staff trained in institutional security policies; frequency of internal compliance checks.

Line of action no. 4:

Multi-Stakeholder platforms for coordination

This action promotes collaborative spaces where defenders, NGOs, government agencies, and international actors can share information and coordinate protective actions.

General guidelines:

- **Dialogue spaces:** Create regular forums or roundtables for joint problem-solving and coordination.
- **Information sharing:** Develop secure channels to share early warnings and best practices.
- **Joint advocacy:** Promote unified positions on key policy reforms and urgent protection measures.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of coordination platforms established; frequency of meetings held; concrete joint actions or policy outcomes achieved.

Line of action no. 5:

Institutional sustainability and resource mobilization

This action strengthens the long-term sustainability of organizations engaged in defender protection, reducing dependency on short-term or external funding.

General guidelines:

- **Resource strategies:** Support organizations in developing fundraising and resource mobilization strategies.
- **Diversification:** Encourage diversification of funding sources, including national, international, and private sector allies.
- **Capacity for reporting:** Build skills in project design, monitoring, and donor compliance.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of organizations implementing resource strategies; % increase in financial sustainability; reduction in funding gaps.

STRATEGY NO. 4: RISK MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This strategy establishes mechanisms to continuously monitor threats and evaluate the effectiveness of protection measures. By generating reliable data and evidence, organizations and communities can better anticipate risks, adapt their strategies, and hold authorities accountable for ensuring defender protection. It will be implemented through **five lines of action**:

Line of action no. 1:

Community-based risk monitoring systems

This action empowers communities to systematically identify, document, and analyze threats they face.

General guidelines:

- **Participatory mapping:** Use participatory tools to identify risk hotspots (illegal mining camps, logging routes, etc.).
- **Data collection:** Train community monitors in safe data gathering and reporting practices.
- **Technology use:** Introduce tools like GPS, drones, or mobile apps adapted to low-connectivity contexts.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of communities with active monitoring systems; % of threats documented with evidence; number of alerts generated from community monitoring.



Line of action no. 2:

Risk indicators and early warning dashboards

This action focuses on developing standardized indicators and tools to monitor risks at regional and organizational levels.

General guidelines:

- **Indicator design:** Define measurable indicators on violence, intimidation, illegal activity, and institutional response.
- **Dashboards:** Develop visual dashboards accessible to community leaders, NGOs, and allies.
- **Integration:** Connect dashboards to national or regional early warning systems.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of organizations using risk indicators; frequency of dashboard updates; cases where dashboards informed timely protective action.

Line of action no. 3:

Regular risk assessments and updates

This action ensures that organizations and communities regularly evaluate risks and update protection strategies accordingly.

General guidelines:

- **Periodic assessments:** Conduct quarterly or semi-annual risk assessments in targeted territories.
- **Scenario analysis:** Include conflict scenarios and potential escalations in assessments.
- **Adaptive planning:** Use findings to adjust security protocols and advocacy strategies.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of risk assessments conducted; % of updated security protocols; evidence of adapted strategies based on assessments.



Line of action no. 4:

Independent monitoring and accountability

This action promotes external oversight and accountability mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of state and organizational protection measures.

General guidelines:

- **Third-party evaluations:** Encourage independent organizations or academic institutions to review protection systems.
- **Public reporting:** Produce periodic reports on risk trends and institutional responses.
- **Accountability forums:** Establish spaces where authorities respond to findings from monitoring.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of independent reports produced; degree of state response to recommendations; changes in public policies informed by monitoring.

Line of action no. 5:

Knowledge sharing and learning platforms

This action fosters the exchange of experiences, lessons learned, and best practices across regions and organizations.

General guidelines:

- **Peer-to-peer learning:** Facilitate exchanges between communities in Madre de Dios, Pando, and other forest regions.
- **Knowledge products:** Produce manuals, case studies, and videos summarizing effective risk mitigation practices.
- **Regional networks:** Connect monitoring initiatives with broader regional or global defender networks.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of exchanges or learning events held; number of knowledge products produced; uptake of best practices in other territories.



STRATEGY NO. 5: LEGAL FRAMEWORK & POLICY ADVOCACY

This strategy seeks to strengthen legal protections and advocacy efforts to reduce risks faced by environmental defenders in Madre de Dios (Peru) and Pando (Bolivia). By reinforcing existing legal frameworks, promoting policy reforms, and ensuring accountability, defenders and organizations gain stronger institutional support and improved mechanisms for protection. It will be implemented through **six lines of action**:



Line of action no. 1:

Strengthening national legal frameworks

This action promotes the alignment of national laws with international standards on environmental and human rights defenders.

General guidelines:

- **Review and harmonization:** Identify legal gaps in Peru and Bolivia regarding protection of defenders.
- **International standards:** Advocate for incorporation of instruments like the Escazú Agreement, ILO Convention 169, and the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.
- **Institutional obligations:** Demand stronger commitments from public institutions to prevent, investigate, and sanction aggressions.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of legal reforms proposed; adoption of international standards into national law; increase in state-led protection measures.

Line of action no. 2:

Ratification and implementation of the Escazú Agreement

The Escazú Agreement is a key instrument for environmental democracy in Latin America. While Bolivia has ratified it, Peru has not.

General guidelines:

- **Advocacy in Peru:** Campaign for ratification through alliances with civil society and indigenous organizations.
- **Implementation in Bolivia:** Monitor compliance with obligations under the Escazú Agreement.
- **Awareness campaigns:** Inform communities and authorities about rights guaranteed by Escazú, especially Article 9 on defender protection.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Ratification progress in Peru; compliance reports in Bolivia; number of awareness events on Escazú.

Line of action no. 3:

Strategic litigation and legal defense

This action seeks to use legal mechanisms to defend defenders, challenge impunity, and set precedents.

General guidelines:

- **Case selection:** Prioritize emblematic cases of attacks, threats, or criminalization for strategic litigation.
- **Legal accompaniment:** Provide defenders with pro bono legal support during administrative or judicial processes.
- **Impact litigation:** Use national and international courts to generate precedents that strengthen protections.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of cases litigated; success rate in court; precedents established; reduction in impunity rates.

Line of action no. 4:

Policy advocacy and multi-stakeholder platforms

This action ensures sustained engagement with authorities and allies to influence policies that protect defenders.

General guidelines:

- **Dialogue spaces:** Establish or strengthen platforms between civil society, indigenous organizations, state institutions, and international actors.
- **Policy proposals:** Draft concrete recommendations on protection measures, land titling, and law enforcement.
- **Multi-level advocacy:** Engage local, regional, national, and international actors for broader impact.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of policy meetings held; adoption of advocacy proposals by authorities; funding allocated to defender protection.

Line of action no. 5:

Accountability and anti-impunity mechanisms

This action reinforces the obligation of states to investigate, prosecute, and sanction attacks against defenders.

General guidelines:

- **Case monitoring:** Track progress of cases involving threats or violence against defenders.
- **Public pressure:** Publish monitoring reports to increase visibility and pressure for accountability.
- **Alliances:** Work with human rights organizations, journalists, and international bodies to denounce impunity.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of cases monitored; number of sanctions applied; decrease in unresolved cases; level of international visibility.

Line of action no. 6:

Protection policies for women and youth defenders

This action emphasizes differentiated measures to protect groups at higher risk.

General guidelines:

- **Gender-sensitive measures:** Ensure laws and policies address the specific risks faced by women defenders, including gender-based violence.
- **Youth focus:** Include young defenders in advocacy and policy platforms to strengthen intergenerational protection.
- **Policy mainstreaming:** Promote inclusion of gender and youth considerations in all national protection mechanisms.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of gender/youth-sensitive policies adopted; participation of women and youth in advocacy spaces; reduction of cases of gender-specific violence.



STRATEGY NO. 6: CRISIS RESPONSE

This strategy provides concrete guidance for responding to high-risk incidents such as kidnappings, unlawful detentions, violent attacks, or large-scale intimidation. It aims to minimize harm, ensure rapid mobilization of support networks, and enable defenders and organizations to recover capacity after crises. It will be implemented through **six lines of action**:



Line of action no. 1:

Emergency response protocols

Establishing clear, practical procedures for defenders, communities, and organizations to follow during crises.

General guidelines:

- **Scenario planning:** Define protocols for different crises (kidnapping, armed attack, unlawful detention, forced eviction).
- **Chain of command:** Identify roles and responsibilities at community, organizational, and state levels.
- **Communication plans:** Ensure secure, redundant communication channels during crises.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of protocols developed and disseminated; % of organizations/communities with crisis plans; time to activate emergency protocols.

Line of action no. 2:

Rapid response networks

Strengthening alliances for immediate mobilization when defenders are under attack.

General guidelines:

- **National and regional networks:** Connect local organizations with national human rights institutions and international NGOs.
- **Activation criteria:** Define triggers for rapid mobilization (e.g., credible threats, arrests, violent incidents).
- **Emergency funds:** Secure funding for urgent relocation, legal defense, or medical support.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of cases supported by rapid response networks; response time; availability and use of emergency funds.

Line of action no. 3:

Emergency relocation and safe houses

Providing defenders at imminent risk with safe spaces to protect life and integrity.

General guidelines:

- **Safe housing:** Establish safe houses in urban centers or allied territories.
- **Cross-border relocation:** Create protocols for temporary international relocation when needed.
- **Confidentiality:** Protect the identities and locations of relocated defenders.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of defenders relocated safely; availability of safe houses; duration and effectiveness of relocations.

Line of action no. 4:

Psychological first aid and trauma support

Ensuring defenders have access to urgent psychosocial care after crisis incidents.

General guidelines:

- **Psychological first aid:** Train local actors to provide immediate emotional stabilization.
- **Referral pathways:** Connect defenders to professional mental health services.
- **Collective healing:** Incorporate culturally relevant and community-based healing practices.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of defenders receiving psychosocial support; improvement in well-being indicators; integration of cultural healing practices.

Line of action no. 5:

Post-crisis recovery and continuity planning

Helping defenders and organizations resume work after crises while reducing vulnerability to future attacks.

General guidelines:

- **After-action reviews:** Conduct assessments of what worked and what failed during crisis response.
- **Continuity plans:** Develop organizational strategies to ensure activities resume safely.
- **Institutional learning:** Share lessons learned across networks to strengthen future preparedness.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of after-action reviews conducted; % of organizations with continuity plans; incorporation of lessons into updated protocols.

Line of action no. 6:

International advocacy during crises

Using crises to spotlight defender vulnerability and push for stronger protections.

General guidelines:

- **Emergency alerts:** Issue urgent communications to international human rights bodies and diplomatic missions.
- **Media engagement:** Ensure responsible coverage that raises awareness without increasing risk.
- **Diplomatic pressure:** Mobilize international allies to pressure states for immediate protective action.
- **Evaluation (KPIs):** Number of crisis alerts issued; international responses mobilized; concrete state actions triggered by advocacy.

CONCLUSIONS & SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

1. The situation in **Madre de Dios** reflects a profound tension between its immense biological and cultural wealth and the pressure exerted by illegal economies such as gold mining, indiscriminate logging, and land trafficking. Weak state presence, combined with corruption and the lack of sustainable economic alternatives, has increased the vulnerability of Indigenous communities, environmental defenders, and territorial governance itself. This mirrors dynamics in many environmental conflict zones worldwide, where resource-rich regions are simultaneously sites of ecological value and high socio-political risk. Overcoming this scenario requires effective protection mechanisms, stronger environmental institutions, and sustainable development opportunities that reduce dependence on illicit activities.
2. The department of **Pando** faces similar challenges of deforestation, illegal resource exploitation, and weak institutions, though with its own dynamics tied to agricultural frontier expansion and pressure on Indigenous territories. While gold mining has less impact than in Madre de Dios, illegal logging and drug trafficking pose growing risks to conservation and local security. Such dynamics are not unique to Bolivia but reflect global patterns where agriculture, logging, and extractive industries increase pressure on Indigenous territories. For Pando, the key lies in strengthening territorial governance, guaranteeing Indigenous collective rights, and promoting sustainable development models that make use of Amazonian biodiversity without depleting it.
3. Protecting environmental defenders in Madre de Dios (Peru) and Pando (Bolivia) requires a comprehensive strategy combining organizational strengthening, political advocacy, and ongoing monitoring. Threats come not only from illegal actors or organized crime but also from structural weaknesses such as incomplete regulatory frameworks, weak state institutions, and limited political and social recognition of environmental defense. These challenges are common across conflict zones globally, where poor governance and lack of political will heighten risks. Indigenous women and local leaders face particular severity, experiencing multiple forms of violence and exclusion.
4. Building internal and external capacities of local and Indigenous organizations is key to managing risks. This includes developing solid structures, sustainable leadership, and networks of coordination. Strengthening must include the participatory design and implementation of context-specific security protocols that address not only physical safety but also emotional, legal, and operational well-being. This lesson is highly transferable to NGOs and community groups worldwide working in fragile or high-risk environments.

5. An effective strategy cannot focus solely on prevention. It must also integrate rapid response mechanisms such as accessible reporting channels, immediate response teams, legal and psychosocial support lines, and clear protocols for kidnappings, detentions, or other critical threats. Such mechanisms are universally relevant and should be incorporated into the security frameworks of NGOs operating in conflict zones worldwide.
6. Systematic monitoring of threats and vulnerabilities is essential. The creation of specific indicators allows for evaluation of progress and adjustment of protection measures. Incorporating monitoring technologies and collaborative platforms improves the ability to anticipate risks, especially in remote or hard-to-reach territories where communication is limited. This type of risk tracking is critical not only in the Amazon but also in other regions facing overlapping environmental, social, and political pressures.
7. Advocacy in public policy and legal frameworks is indispensable to address the structural causes of violence. Promoting legal reforms, demanding compliance with the Escazú Agreement, and ensuring effective accountability mechanisms from the state are urgent steps to create an enabling environment that respects and protects environmental defenders and collective territorial rights. Comparable advocacy is required globally to strengthen international and national mechanisms that protect human rights defenders in environmental conflict zones.

Recommendations

1. Strategies must include mechanisms that guarantee continuity beyond short-term projects or crisis situations. This requires strengthening local capacities for self-management, promoting sustained financing from diverse sources (public, private, and international cooperation), and institutionalizing protection measures in permanent public policies. Globally, NGOs and their partners should prioritize resilience and continuity, ensuring protection does not depend solely on project cycles but becomes embedded in institutional and community practice.
2. Continuous improvement must be promoted through participatory monitoring and regular evaluation processes that not only measure results but also identify lessons, emerging challenges, and new opportunities. This process should integrate participatory methodologies that include the voices of defenders - especially women and youth - and allow actions to adapt to changing territorial contexts. Collective learning strengthens adaptability and effectiveness of protection. This principle of iterative learning and adaptation applies across conflict zones, where risks evolve quickly and require constant adjustment of protocols and practices.
3. In the face of growing violence and criminalization against those who defend their territories, a joint, rapid, and coherent response is needed. It is essential to consolidate an agenda that prioritizes the protection of environmental defenders as a fundamental human right and as an indispensable condition for environmental sustainability and democracy - anchored in a rights-based, intercultural, and gender-equitable approach. This call is not limited to Peru and Bolivia but resonates globally: safeguarding environmental defenders is a prerequisite for realizing human rights, achieving sustainable development, advancing climate justice, and protecting ecosystems worldwide.

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