



NOMOGAIA

Annual Report 2021



Our mission

- Mission: NomoGaia is a nonprofit research and policy organization dedicated to clarifying the role of business in the advancement of human rights, fostering greater human rights awareness among corporations, and securing greater protection of rights for people who are touched by increasingly globalized industries.

From our Team

- In the second year of the global Covid-19 pandemic, NomoGaia cautiously and safely resumed fieldwork. With researchers in the US, Colombia, Turkey and India, we conducted face-to-face and remote interviews with rightsholders across four continents, triangulating the reporting in over 2,500 complaints against multinational companies and brands.
- We had plenty of work to do from our desks as well. In high-level meetings with US government, development banks and civil society organizations to reshape government positions regarding Human Rights Defenders. Our involvement in Bonsucro's standard revision process assured that health, wage and injury protections were written into the certification. Our remote sensing work has triggered a multi-month internal investigation at the World Bank's private lending arm, the IFC, to understand how they could have invested hundreds of millions of dollars into genocidal projects in the Uyghur Region of China.
- We have so much work to do, but 2021 has set us on a clear path. We are so grateful for the support of our community.

Impact and Results



Connected Afghans to the US businesses whose employment verification letters were necessary to secure evacuation



Identified fatal flaws in banks' indigenous protections. Brought the data to people contracted to evaluate indigenous risks to drive better evaluation



Reviewed over 2,500 complaints against multinational companies and conducted >50 interviews with rightsholders to change the way grievance mechanisms are designed



Helped shape US government positions regarding Human Rights Defenders, guiding US demands on the development banks we finance



Fought and won to include health, wage and injury protections for sugarcane workers in the Bonsucro sugar production standard



Found widespread presence of US and western investment contributing to Uyghur genocide. Facilitated discussions on major policy changes to reshape supply chains away from atrocity



Preventing reprisals against Human Rights Defenders

Worldwide, the brave individuals who speak out for their communities and advocate for their rights are silenced through threats, intimidation, attacks on their character, violence, and in worst cases assassinations. Development Financial Institutions fund the projects that drives these reprisals. This year, in meetings, reports and presentations, we shaped new key guidance documents that will prevent lenders from financing clients who threaten and attack community advocates.



GOVERNMENT

Attacks on human rights defenders (HRDs) undermine US commitments to free speech and civic space. We joined with colleagues to bring Dept of Treasury, State, USAID, and EPA up to speed on threats HRDs face. Our inputs helped drive US demands on banks. Our recommendations are now policy.



FINANCE INSTITUTIONS

The World Bank Group and Inter-American Development Bank have standards for environmental and social investment. These aren't just ideas -- they're the guidelines bankers are expected to use when making loan decisions. In 2021 we helped shape these around safety for human rights defenders and indigenous peoples.



NGO COLLABORATION

Our NGO partners carried our research farther than we could on our own. Freedom House, Global Witness and the Frontline Defenders, as well as CIEL, Coalition for Human Rights in Development & others elevated the voices of rightsholders who generously shared their stories.

Pinpointing business roles in rights-respectful withdrawal from war

- The US departure from Afghanistan left our allies vulnerable to Taliban reprisal. America had promised people we would support them for supporting us. But in two decades of war, US companies that had hired Afghans merged, folded, or changed ownership. Afghans needing employers to vouch for their character couldn't find contacts. Tracking down past employers was near-impossible for Afghans, but NomoGaia was well suited for the task.

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**HR LETTERS
SECURED &
SUBMITTED**

Using research methods to track down CEOs we secured letters from 3 US and global companies to refer families for refugee & visa processing

5

**COUNTRIES NOW
HOSTING THESE
AFGHAN FAMILIES**

Only one Family escaped Afghanistan. They are scattered across 3 additional countries trying to reach the US now

5

**FAMILIES IN PROCESS FOR
REFUGEE, VISA OR TRAVEL
SUPPORT**

We continue to support 5 families seeking to flee Afghanistan and/or reach the US, maintaining ties with employers, getting updates from US Government & tapping networks of advocates

"Everyone has the right to an effective remedy"

- ARTICLE 8 - UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- We take it as a given that human rights abuses should be remedied. But when a right has been violated, how can it be righted? With a payment? An apology? If a worker is fired for unionizing, is it enough to just win back her job? With backpay? Or is the wrong not remedied until unionization is possible and she and her colleagues can collectively bargain? **No one ever asked the rightsholders what they thought of remedies.** With the exception of one system, no one even followed up to ask whether the resolution in fact resolved the problem. These systems have proliferated without any evidence that they worked. Our data exposed their failings, making it possible to develop new ones that don't just field grievances but provide remedies.



**5
researchers**

OUR RESEARCH TEAM SPEAKS A HALF-DOZEN LANGUAGE AND LIVES ON 4 CONTINENTS CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS AND ANALYSIS

**> 2,500
complaints**

WE READ EVERY COMPLAINT MADE TO ANY MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVE IN THE PAST 20 YEARS, CODING OUTCOMES BASED ON RIGHTSHOLDER STATEMENTS

**> 50
interviews**

WITH COMPLAINANTS AROUND THE GLOBE. THE LARGEST DATA SET EVER FOR THESE NON-COURT REMEDY MECHANISMS

**6
systems**

PALM OIL, SUGAR, GARMENTS (3 SYSTEMS) AND FORESTRY HAVE PUBLIC COMPLAINT LOGS TO REVIEW



Indigenous Peoples

In the US, many of us were blind to Native American activism until the Standing Rock Sioux resisted the Dakota Access Pipeline. Worldwide, though, Indigenous Peoples have been rebuilding cultural knowledge and reasserting ancestral rights. Their humanity is incontestable and important. A diversity of cultures enriches our global community and, it is increasingly clear, is vital to combatting climate change. In 2021 we focused our in-depth knowledge of corporate human rights impacts to focus specifically on Indigenous People's rights, finding yawning gaps between standards and practice, and working to close them. Indigenous Peoples are, under international law, entitled to retain control over their ancestral lands. They can only be removed with their "Free, Prior and Informed Consent" (FPIC). Safeguarding FPIC means rescoping corporate power and moving beyond legal permitting processes instituted by the governments that historically oppressed Indigenous Peoples.

- Our "Missing Peoples" report is the first quantification of IFC's weak application of its Indigenous Peoples protections
- Our report "IFC and the Uyghur Genocide" forced recognition of Uyghurs as Indigenous Peoples
- An e-learning with Equitable Origin produced clear guidance for banks on how to implement their Indigenous protections through an FPIC 360 tool
- Through colleagues, our findings have been converted into guidance for European bilateral banks and the Inter-American Development Bank
- We fought (and won) to keep FPIC in Bonsucro standards
- In academia, we're drafting a book chapter on FPIC for "Teaching Business and Human Rights"

Terror Capitalism: Xinjiang

In the vast Gobi Desert lands which China annexed in 1948, the "East Turkic" Uyghurs seeking to retain sovereignty were dubbed 'terrorists' while China industrialized and colonized the region.

"Green transition" investments by western banks, billed as climate change solutions, rely on unpaid Uyghur labor, untapped coal reserves, and a metalloid called polysilicon, to produce solar panels for world markets. In response to our report on IFC's investments in the sector and region, our keynote speech to the European Investment Bank, & the work of partners. banks and industry actors are now reviewing and withdrawing from investments in the region.



A Uyghur man pictured in front of an IFC-funded solar farm. Refusal to work in government-assigned jobs is considered a sign of "extremism" punishable by imprisonment

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businesses & associated entities in the UK solar industry invited our guidance on how to avoid complicity.

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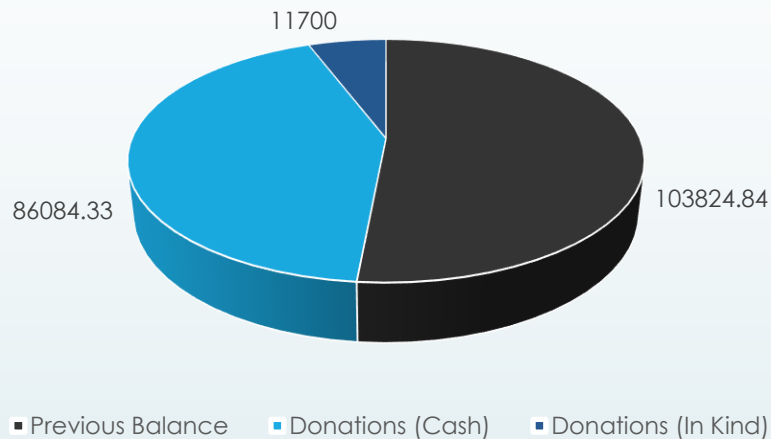
multilateral banks are now reviewing their portfolios in Xinjiang under IFC coordination, directly as a result of our research and the research of our colleagues

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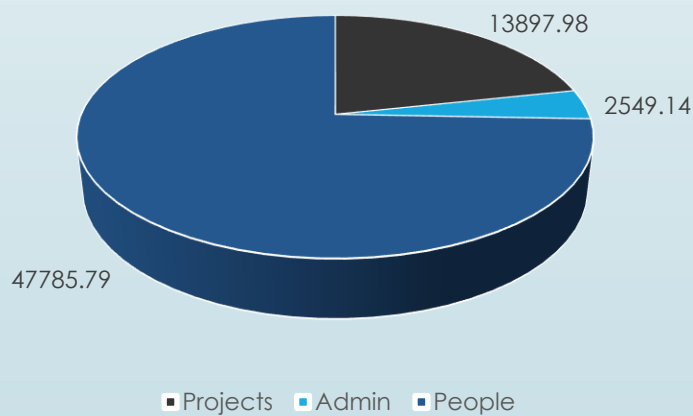
divestments by IFC from the region occurred immediately after we alerted the bank to problems. An internal investigation is ongoing

Financials

REVENUES



EXPENDITURES





What's next



- Beyond the IFC, there are other links between the US and the abuses in the Xinjiang Uyghur Region and US supply chains. We will be pursuing links between these crimes against humanity and the mandatory human rights due diligence that western companies are increasingly mandated to carry out
- The interviews and case profiles we reviewed in 2020 and 2021 will form the basis for evidence-based recommendations to the UN and to global business for developing and implementing Grievance Mechanisms. Keep an eye out for new reporting on our website and in the academic literature
- Our Bankright tool for screening contextual human rights risks to scope for heightened due diligence will be refreshed in 2022



Thank you!

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P 3 photo: CSA Guatemala Interview, Source: Margarita Parejo for NomoGaia
P 6 photo: Margarita interviewing an FLA complainant, Guatemala
P 11 photo: Uyghur woman drying peppers, Xinjiang, Source [Miyake Jun](#) 11 Oct 2011