



TAMUCODE

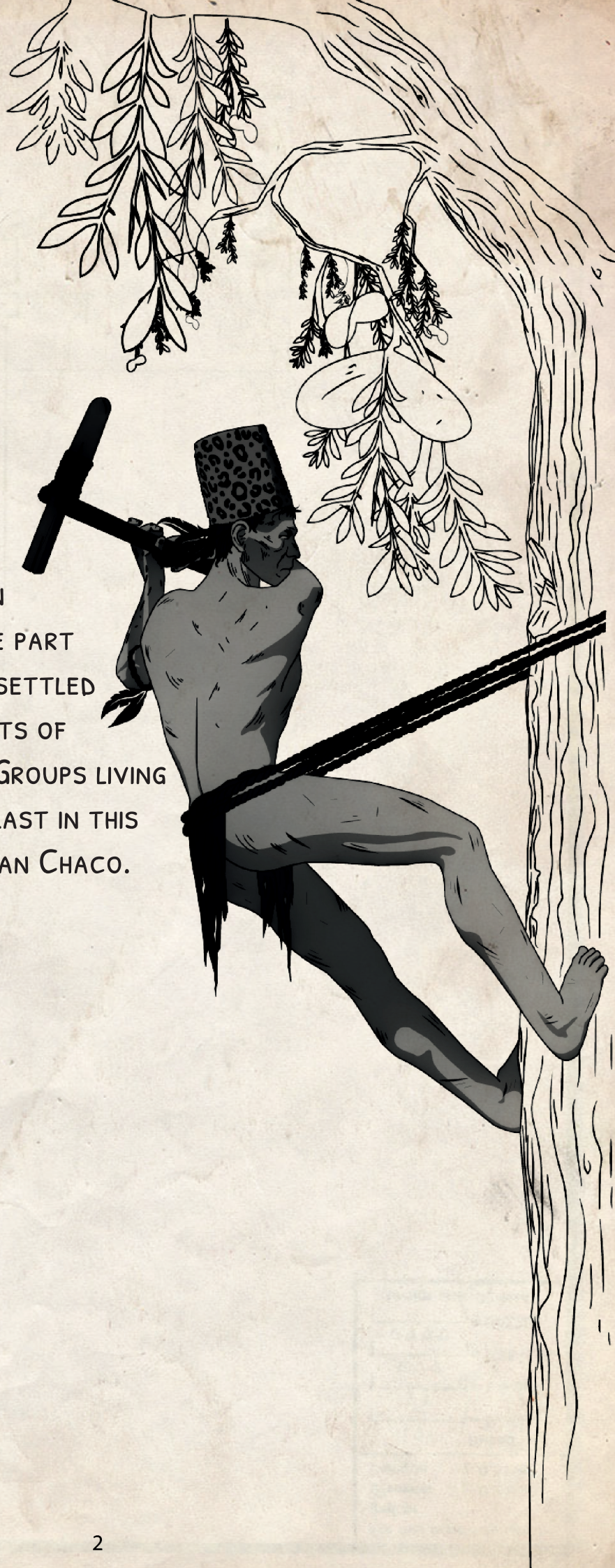
Chronicles of a Genocide

HOW THE AYOREO OF THE PARAGUAYAN CHACO ARE TRYING TO SAVE
THEIR LAST RELATIVES LIVING IN ISOLATION

ILLUSTRATION: DARYEL RODRÍGUEZ

Script: Norma Flores Allende

THE AYOREO ARE ONE OF THE LAST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO HAVE BEEN CONTACTED IN PARAGUAY. A LARGE PART OF THE POPULATION WAS FORCIBLY SETTLED IN COMMUNITIES IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF BOQUERÓN AND ALTO PARAGUAY. GROUPS LIVING IN ISOLATION STILL SURVIVE — THE LAST IN THIS SITUATION IN THE GREATER AMERICAN CHACO.

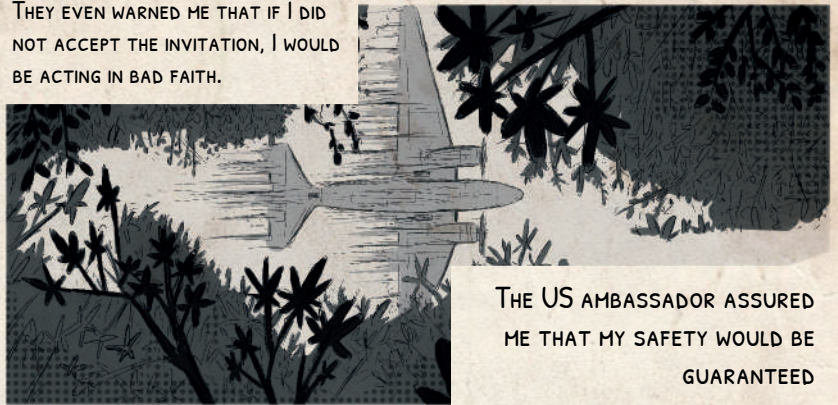


FARO MORO, 1977



THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND PARAGUAY TOLD ME THAT I SHOULD GO TO PARAGUAY TO VERIFY FOR MYSELF THAT THE SITUATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES WAS NOT SO BAD.

THEY EVEN WARNED ME THAT IF I DID NOT ACCEPT THE INVITATION, I WOULD BE ACTING IN BAD FAITH.

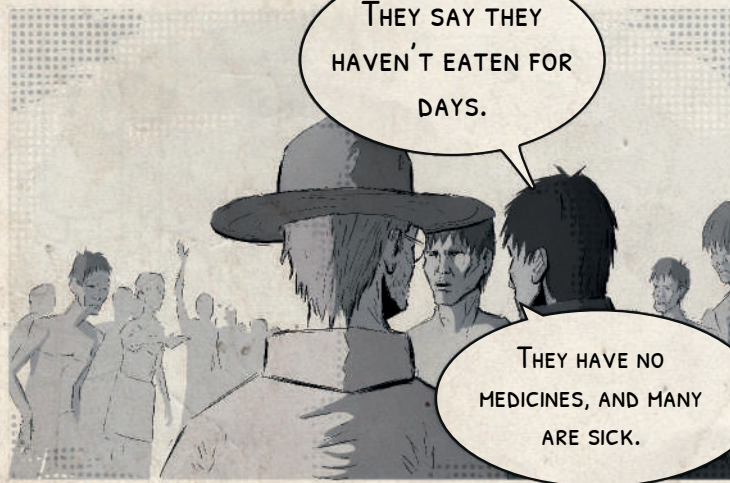


THE US AMBASSADOR ASSURED ME THAT MY SAFETY WOULD BE GUARANTEED

SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT GIVEN THAT SEVERAL FOREIGNERS WHO HAD GONE TO THAT COUNTRY TO VERIFY THE REAL LIVING CONDITIONS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HAD BEEN DEPORTED, TORTURED, OR ARRESTED.

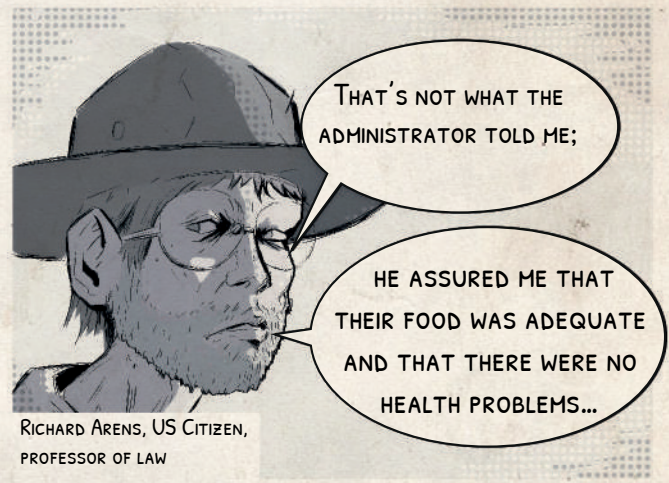


I HAD NO IDEA WHAT I WOULD FIND IN THE PARAGUAYAN CHACO. NOTHING PREPARED ME FOR THE WORST STORY I WOULD HEAR IN MY ENTIRE LIFE.



THEY SAY THEY HAVEN'T EATEN FOR DAYS.

THEY HAVE NO MEDICINES, AND MANY ARE SICK.



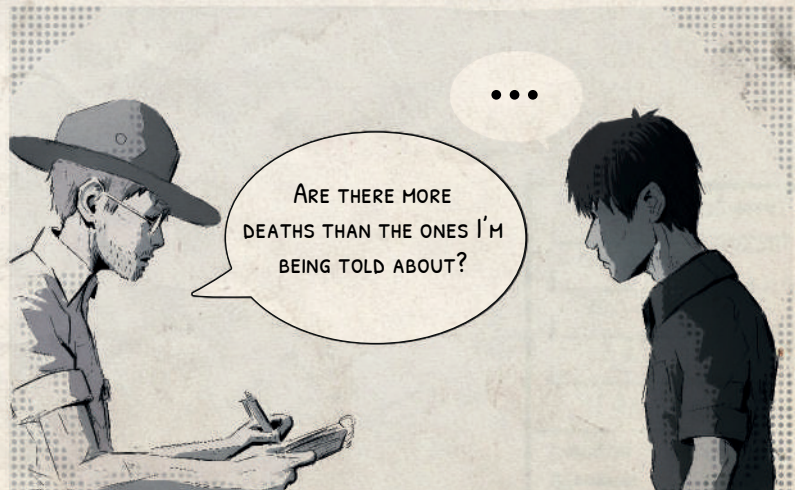
THAT'S NOT WHAT THE ADMINISTRATOR TOLD ME;

HE ASSURED ME THAT THEIR FOOD WAS ADEQUATE AND THAT THERE WERE NO HEALTH PROBLEMS...

RICHARD ARENS, US CITIZEN, PROFESSOR OF LAW



AN AYOREO MAN TOLD ME ABOUT TWO DEATHS —ONE THAT HAPPENED THE DAY BEFORE WE ARRIVED AND ANOTHER WEEKS EARLIER. BASED ON THE TESTIMONIES, BOTH ENDURED A SLOW AGONY FOR WEEKS WITHOUT ANY MEDICAL ATTENTION.




...
ARE THERE MORE DEATHS THAN THE ONES I'M BEING TOLD ABOUT?

FARO MORO WAS THE NAME OF THE SETTLEMENT OF THE NEW TRIBES MISSION WHERE AYOREO PEOPLE CAPTURED IN THE FOREST WERE GATHERED. THERE, THEY WERE FORCED TO ABANDON THEIR CULTURE AND WAY OF LIFE IN ORDER TO ADOPT OTHER BELIEFS UNTIL THE END OF THE 1970s.

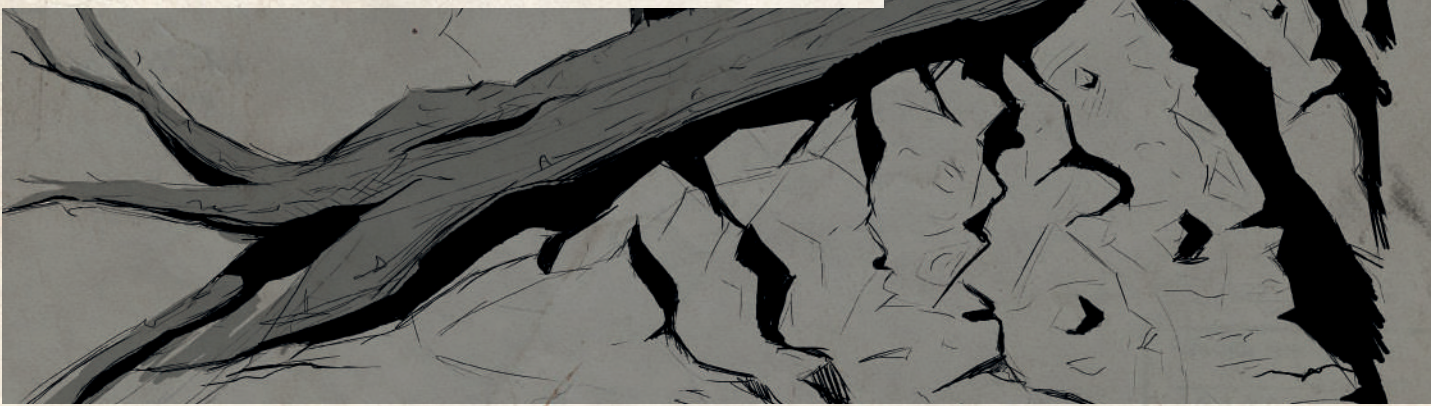


OVER TIME, THE LAND AT FARO MORO PASSED THROUGH SEVERAL FOREIGN OWNERS. TODAY IT IS A RANCH OWNED BY BRITISH INVESTORS AND LEASED TO A PARAGUAYAN COMPANY WHICH, SINCE 2024, HAS BEEN DEFORESTING THE AREA — AN ACTIVITY THAT AFFECTS NEARBY AYOREO COMMUNITIES AND SOME OF THE LAST AYOREO GROUPS LIVING IN ISOLATION WHO STILL INHABIT THE REGION.



THAT AREA BELONGS TO AYOREO TERRITORY AND HAS BEEN SINCE KNOWN TIME IMMEMORIAL BY THE NAME TAMUCODE.

AYOREO LEADERS AND COMMUNITIES HAVE BEEN DENOUNCING THIS SITUATION SINCE 2024.



IGOMEJEI DOSAPE: I AM IGOMEJEI DOSAPE FROM CAMPO LORO, AND I AM PRESIDENT OF THE UNION OF AYOREO NATIVES OF PARAGUAY. WE ARE HERE, IN THE CITY OF ASUNCIÓN, BECAUSE THE FARO MORO COMPANY IS CLEARING FOREST IN PLACES WHERE OUR CEMETERIES ARE LOCATED AND WHERE WE KNOW THERE ARE AYOREO RELATIVES LIVING IN ISOLATION.

EMERGENCY VISIT BY THE GTI PIACI (INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON PEOPLES IN ISOLATION AND INITIAL CONTACT) TO THE PARAGUAYAN CHACO IN RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS OF A SERIOUS RISK OF GENOCIDE OF AYOREO PEOPLE LIVING IN ISOLATION IN THE AREA OF THE FARO MORO RANCH.

CARLOS DIRI ETACORE, LEADER OF THE IJNAPUI COMMUNITY AND PRESIDENT OF THE GARAIGOSODE ASSOCIATION OF THE AYOREO PEOPLE (AGPA).



IT WAS BETWEEN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER OF LAST YEAR.

HE ADDRESSES SEVERAL REPRESENTATIVES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIGENOUS LEADERS FROM THE AMAZON AND THE GRAN CHACO PRESENT IN HIS COMMUNITY AND SHARES ONE OF SEVERAL CASES OF SIGHTINGS OF ISOLATED PEOPLE.



THAT WAS WHEN FARO MORO HAD JUST BEGUN CLEARING THAT FOREST.

THEY WERE LOOKING FOR REFUGE, SOMEWHERE THEY COULD LIVE PEACEFULLY.



WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS THAT THEY WANTED.

WE THOUGHT THEY MIGHT NEED WATER, BECAUSE IT WAS A TIME OF DROUGHT.



CERRO LEÓN, 1960s, BEFORE THE CAPTURE OF THE AYOREO BY WHITES

I LIVED IN THE FOREST UNTIL I WAS EIGHT OR TEN YEARS OLD; WHAT I REMEMBER MOST IS WHEN I HUNTED WITH MY FATHER. HE TAUGHT ME HOW TO ENTER THE FOREST.

YOU LOOK AT ANY TREE, AND FROM THAT YOU KNOW THE DIRECTION YOU'RE GOING; THAT'S HOW YOU CAN ENTER THE FOREST AND SAFELY RETURN.



WHEN WE SAW A PRICKLY PEAR THAT HAD BEEN EATEN BY A TORTOISE, OUR PARENTS WOULD SAY, "A TORTOISE PASSED THROUGH HERE"

THEN WE WOULD SEARCH FOR THE TORTOISE FOR A WHILE UNTIL WE FOUND IT.



WHEN MY FATHER AND I RETURNED FROM HUNTING, MY MOTHER WOULD PREPARE A LUNCH OF DOIDIE(1).



AT NIGHT A SINGER WOULD SING, BUT SOMETIMES A DAJSNAI(2) WOULD SING. DIFFERENT BIRDS SPOKE WITH THE SHAMAN: CHUNGUPEREJNA, ASOJNA, QUIRAQUIRAI, CABOTO, ARAPOTORI, UQUENEJAI, AND POITE. SOME HAVE NO POWER; OTHERS HAVE GREAT POWER.

(1) EDIBLE CARAGUATÁ BULBS. (2) A SAGE WHO COMMUNICATES, THROUGH ECSTASY, WITH VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE BEINGS.

FILE A CONSTITUTIONAL INJUNCTION AND AN EMERGENCY JUDICIAL MEASURE

against the owners of the FARO MORO ranch, in light of substantial evidence of deforestation on the property and the resulting environmental destruction in territory inhabited by Ayoreo groups living in isolation.

MORE THAN 20 TESTIMONIES OF SIGHTINGS, SIGNS, AND TRACKS BY AYOREO WERE SUBMITTED IN THE FARO MORO CASE.

SONGS

BERUI AND HIS WIFE DOJAE HEAR THE SOUND OF THE PAACA (1) AND AYOREO SONGS AT DAWN. IT CAME FROM VERY FAR AWAY, SOUNDING TOWARD THE WEST.

SIGHTING

TWO WORKERS FROM THE SAN JORGE RANCH TOLD THE AYOREO THAT THEY SAW TWO PEOPLE WHO WERE TRYING TO CROSS THE ROAD THAT GOES NORTH TOWARD THE SAN JORGE RANCH.

SIGHTING

PURASA QUEDEJNA SAW AN ISOLATED PERSON ABOUT 10 METERS FROM WHERE HE WAS COOKING ON SUNDAY NIGHT. HE DESCRIBED SEEING AN AYOREO WEARING A FEATHER HEADDRESS. HE WAS VERY FRIGHTENED. HE INFORMED HIS SON SO THAT HE COULD NOTIFY AJAOJAI.

Institutions such as the **Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADES)**, the **National Forestry Institute (Infona)**, the **Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG)**, and the **Ministry of Public Works and Communications (MOPC)** ignore the presence of Indigenous peoples when granting licenses to companies exploiting the Chaco territory.

(1) PAACA: GOURD MARACAS; RATTLES MADE FROM GOURDS FILLED WITH SEEDS.

*NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED FOR REASONS OF SECURITY.

CERRO LEÓN, 1960s. AYOREO
CAPTURED BY WHITES.



I REMEMBER MY MOTHER'S
DESPERATE SCREAM; I
REMEMBER HOW I RAN TO
SEE WHAT WAS HAPPENING
TO HER. AND THERE I SAW
THEM...



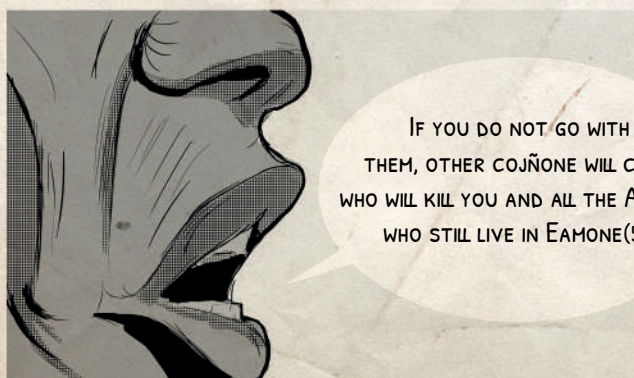
THERE WERE FOUR
COJÑONE*



I WANTED TO DEFEND MY MOTHER. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. I
WANTED TO ATTACK THEM, BUT I STOPPED MYSELF...



SUDDENLY, WE HEARD SOME WORDS
SPOKEN IN AYOREO.



IF YOU DO NOT GO WITH
THEM, OTHER COJÑONE WILL COME
WHO WILL KILL YOU AND ALL THE AYOREO
WHO STILL LIVE IN EAMONE(5).

MY FATHER AND HIS GROUP SAID THEY
WOULD GO AND SEE IF IT WAS TRUE. IN
ANY CASE, IF THINGS DID NOT TURN OUT
WELL, WE WOULD BE ABLE TO RETURN TO
THE FOREST.

(5) PLURAL OF EAMI, MEANING THE ENTIRE TERRITORY.

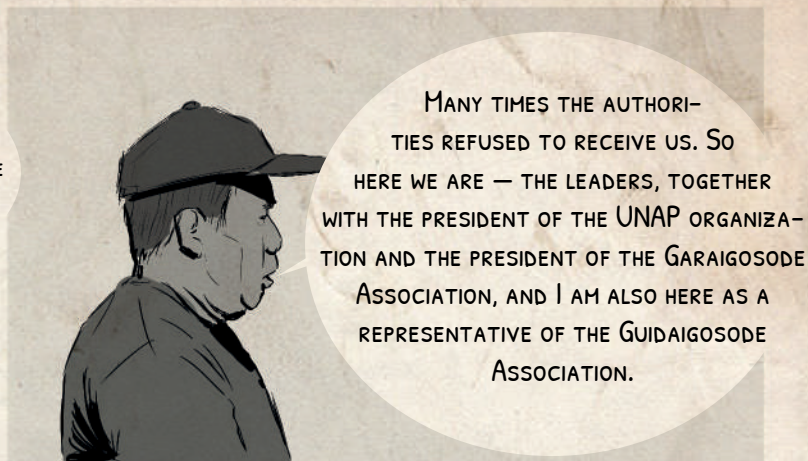
*WHITES.

ASUNCIÓN, JULY 2024.



GOOD MORNING EVERYONE. WE ARE HERE IN FRONT OF CONGRESS TO SUBMIT THE CORRESPONDING FORMAL COMPLAINT, WHICH THE AUTHORITIES IN FILADELFA HAVE PREVIOUSLY REJECTED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

GUEI BASUI PICANERA, SECRETARY OF THE GUIDAI AND DUCODEGOSODE AYOREO ASSOCIATION OF PARAGUAY (AGDAP).



MANY TIMES THE AUTHORITIES REFUSED TO RECEIVE US. SO HERE WE ARE — THE LEADERS, TOGETHER WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNAP ORGANIZATION AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE GARAIGOSODE ASSOCIATION, AND I AM ALSO HERE AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GUIDAIGOSODE ASSOCIATION.

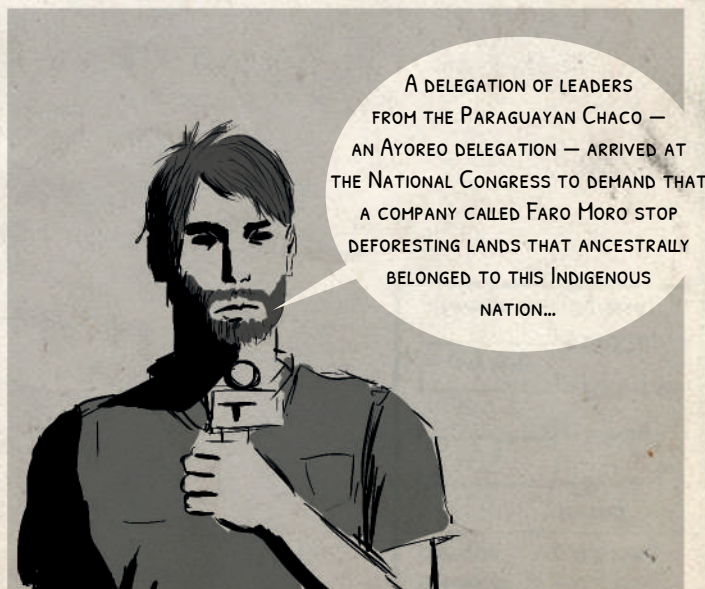
SEVERAL LEADERS, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, FROM AYOREO COMMUNITIES IN ALTO PARAGUAY AND BOQUERÓN, AS WELL AS AUTHORITIES FROM THE ORGANIZATIONS UNIÓN DE NATIVOS AYOREO DEL PARAGUAY (UNAP), ASOCIACIÓN GARAIGOSODE AYOREO DEL PARAGUAY (AGAP), AND ASOCIACIÓN GUIDAIGOSODE Y DUCODEGOSODE AYOREO DEL PARAGUAY (AGDAP), HAD TO TRAVEL TO ASUNCIÓN TO SEEK JUSTICE.



SINCE THE JUDICIAL BRANCH WAS INCAPABLE OF STOPPING A GENOCIDE IN TAMUCODE, THEY SOUGHT OUT ANOTHER BRANCH OF THE COJÑONE STATE TO DO SOMETHING — AT THE VERY LEAST, TO LISTEN TO THEM..



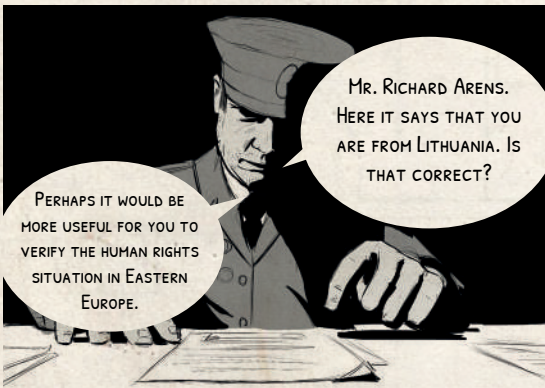
IN PARAGUAY, LEADERS OF THE AYOREO ETHNIC GROUP REPORTED THAT ISOLATED GROUPS FACE GREATER DANGER AS A RESULT OF RAPID, LARGE-SCALE DEFORESTATION...



A DELEGATION OF LEADERS FROM THE PARAGUAYAN CHACO — AN AYOREO DELEGATION — ARRIVED AT THE NATIONAL CONGRESS TO DEMAND THAT A COMPANY CALLED FARO MORO STOP DEFORESTING LANDS THAT ANCESTRALLY BELONGED TO THIS INDIGENOUS NATION...

ASUNCIÓN, 1977

I HAD TO ATTEND A TENSE MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE PARAGUAYAN GOVERNMENT, SCHEDULED BY THE US EMBASSY.



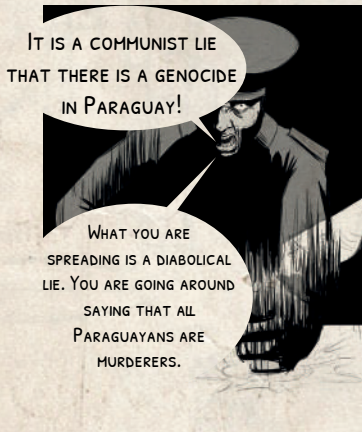
Mr. RICHARD ARENS. HERE IT SAYS THAT YOU ARE FROM LITHUANIA. IS THAT CORRECT?

PERHAPS IT WOULD BE MORE USEFUL FOR YOU TO VERIFY THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN EASTERN EUROPE.



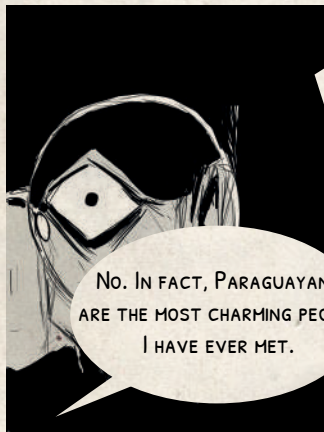
ALTHOUGH I WAS BORN IN LITHUANIA, I AM AN US CITIZEN, AND THE EMBASSY IS EXPECTING MY ARRIVAL SHORTLY.

THIS VERY AFTERNOON I INTEND TO DEPART FOR THE UNITED STATES, WHERE I LIVE.

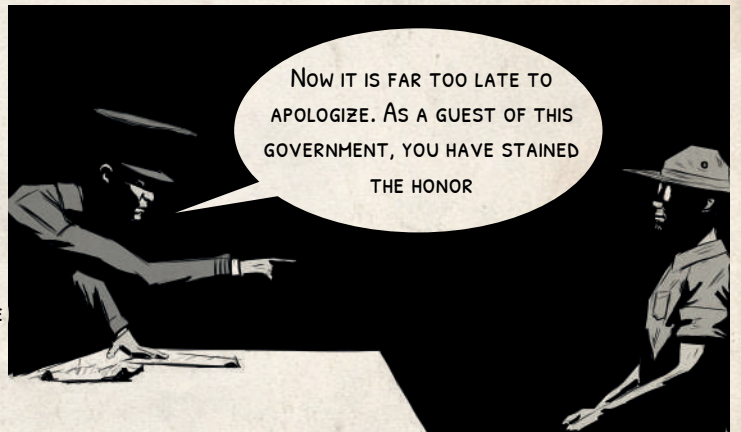


IT IS A COMMUNIST LIE THAT THERE IS A GENOCIDE IN PARAGUAY!

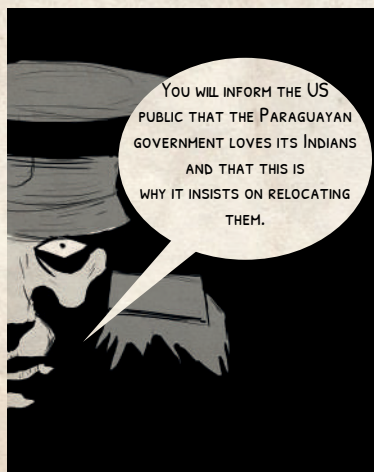
WHAT YOU ARE SPREADING IS A DIABOLICAL LIE. YOU ARE GOING AROUND SAYING THAT ALL PARAGUAYANS ARE MURDERERS.



NO. IN FACT, PARAGUAYANS ARE THE MOST CHARMING PEOPLE I HAVE MET.



NOW IT IS FAR TOO LATE TO APOLOGIZE. AS A GUEST OF THIS GOVERNMENT, YOU HAVE STAINED THE HONOR



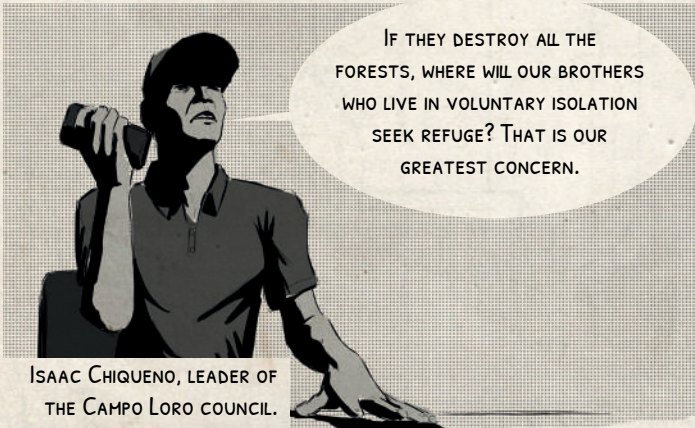
YOU WILL INFORM THE US PUBLIC THAT THE PARAGUAYAN GOVERNMENT LOVES ITS INDIANS AND THAT THIS IS WHY IT INSISTS ON RELOCATING THEM.



IF THE PURPOSE OF MY TRIP TO PARAGUAY WAS TO PERSUADE ME THAT INDIGENOUS LIVING CONDITIONS HAD IMPROVED THROUGH A POLICY OF GREATER BENEVOLENCE TOWARD THEM, IT FAILED.



AFTER SEVERAL ATTEMPTS BY LEADERS — BOTH MEN AND WOMEN — AND AFTER DENOUNCING THE SITUATION TO THE MEDIA, THEY WERE FINALLY SUMMONED TO A MEETING AT CONGRESS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS INDI, INFONA, MADES, AND THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC.



IF THEY DESTROY ALL THE FORESTS, WHERE WILL OUR BROTHERS WHO LIVE IN VOLUNTARY ISOLATION SEEK REFUGE? THAT IS OUR GREATEST CONCERN.

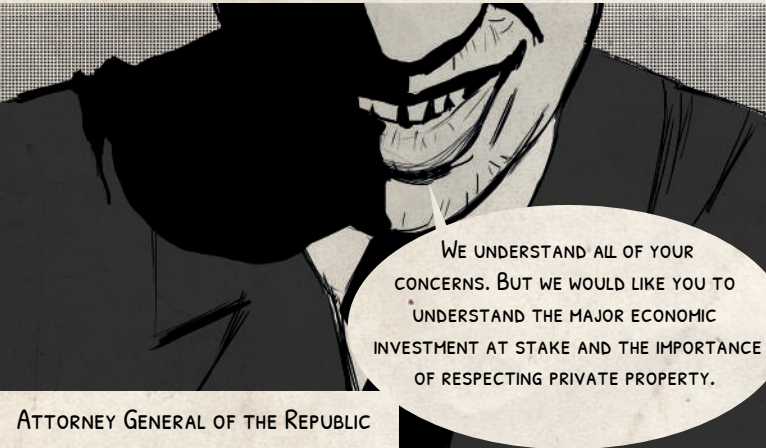
ISAAC CHIQUENO, LEADER OF THE CAMPO LORO COUNCIL.



THERE IS FAR TOO MUCH DEFORESTATION. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT ISOLATED PEOPLES, BUT WE ALSO FEAR FOR OUR OWN SAFETY, BECAUSE THOSE PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER WE ARE AYOREO OR PARAGUAYANS, AND WE TOO ARE AT RISK IN THE EVENT OF A CONFRONTATION.

THE FOREST IS OUR MOTHER. AS I ALWAYS SAY, WE HAVE EVERYTHING THERE: ANIMALS, FOOD, HONEY. WE NEED THEM TO STOP THE CLEARING.

CARLOS DIRI ETACORE.



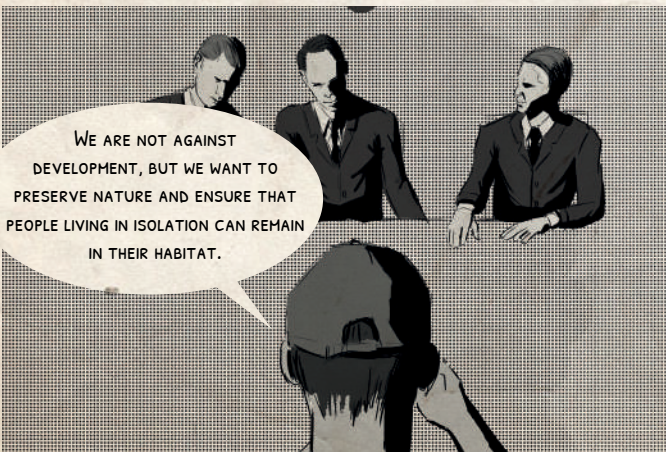
WE UNDERSTAND ALL OF YOUR CONCERNS. BUT WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE MAJOR ECONOMIC INVESTMENT AT STAKE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPECTING PRIVATE PROPERTY.

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC



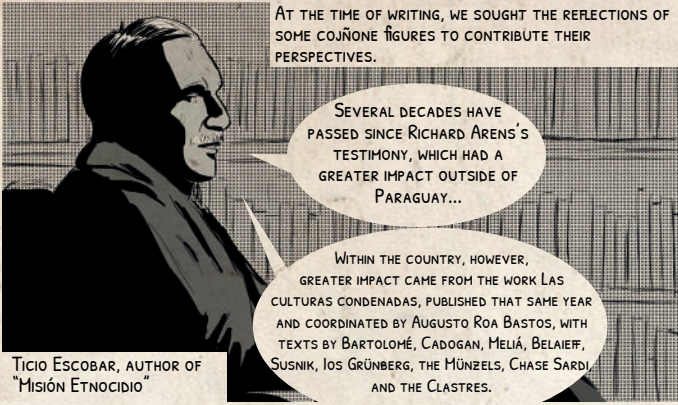
BUT IT IS HUMAN LIVES THAT ARE IN DANGER!

MARILINA MARICHAL, LAWYER FOR THE AYOREO.



WE ARE NOT AGAINST DEVELOPMENT, BUT WE WANT TO PRESERVE NATURE AND ENSURE THAT PEOPLE LIVING IN ISOLATION CAN REMAIN IN THEIR HABITAT.

AFTER SEVERAL HOURS OF EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE AYOREO AND THE PARAGUAYAN AUTHORITIES, THERE WAS A PROMISE OF A DIALOGUE TABLE CONVENED BY INDI — WHICH, AS OF THE PUBLICATION OF THIS COMIC, HAS STILL NOT TAKEN PLACE, DESPITE THE MATTER BEING OF EXTREME URGENCY DUE TO THE HIGH RISK OF GENOCIDE.



AT THE TIME OF WRITING, WE SOUGHT THE REFLECTIONS OF SOME COJÑONE FIGURES TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR PERSPECTIVES.

SEVERAL DECADES HAVE PASSED SINCE RICHARD ARENS'S TESTIMONY, WHICH HAD A GREATER IMPACT OUTSIDE OF PARAGUAY...

WITHIN THE COUNTRY, HOWEVER, GREATER IMPACT CAME FROM THE WORK LAS CULTURAS CONDENADAS, PUBLISHED THAT SAME YEAR AND COORDINATED BY AUGUSTO ROA BASTOS, WITH TEXTS BY BARTOLOMÉ, CADOGAN, MELIÁ, BELAIEF, SUSNIK, LOS GRÜNBERG, THE MÜNZELS, CHASE SARDI, AND THE CLASTRES.

TICIO ESCOBAR, AUTHOR OF "MISIÓN ETNOCIDIO"



ESCOBAR WROTE IN 1988: "IF THE FORESTS SHRINK, IF PECCARIES OR TORTOISES BECOME SCARCE, IF MEN STOP HUNTING AND WOMEN STOP GATHERING, WHAT HAPPENS TO THE MYTHS THAT GROUND THEIR NOMADIC LIFE; WHAT HAPPENS TO THE CEREMONIES THAT ORDER AND EXPLAIN THE UNIVERSE, GIVE MEANING TO HUMAN ACTION, AND CONNECT IT TO ALL OTHER BEINGS IN A SINGLE PROJECT?"

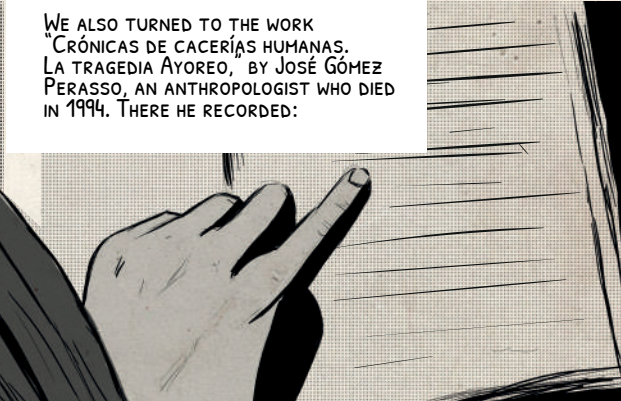


BENNO GLAUSER REMINDS US THAT THERE IS A MULTIPLICITY OF WORLDS THAT COEXIST WITH OURS, EACH WITH ITS OWN DIVERSITY AND UNIQUE WAY OF SEEING THE TOTALITY OF EXISTENCE. THIS IS WHAT THE EXISTENCE OF AYOREO PEOPLE LIVING IN ISOLATION TELLS US, AND WHY WE MUST NOT CONTACT THEM..

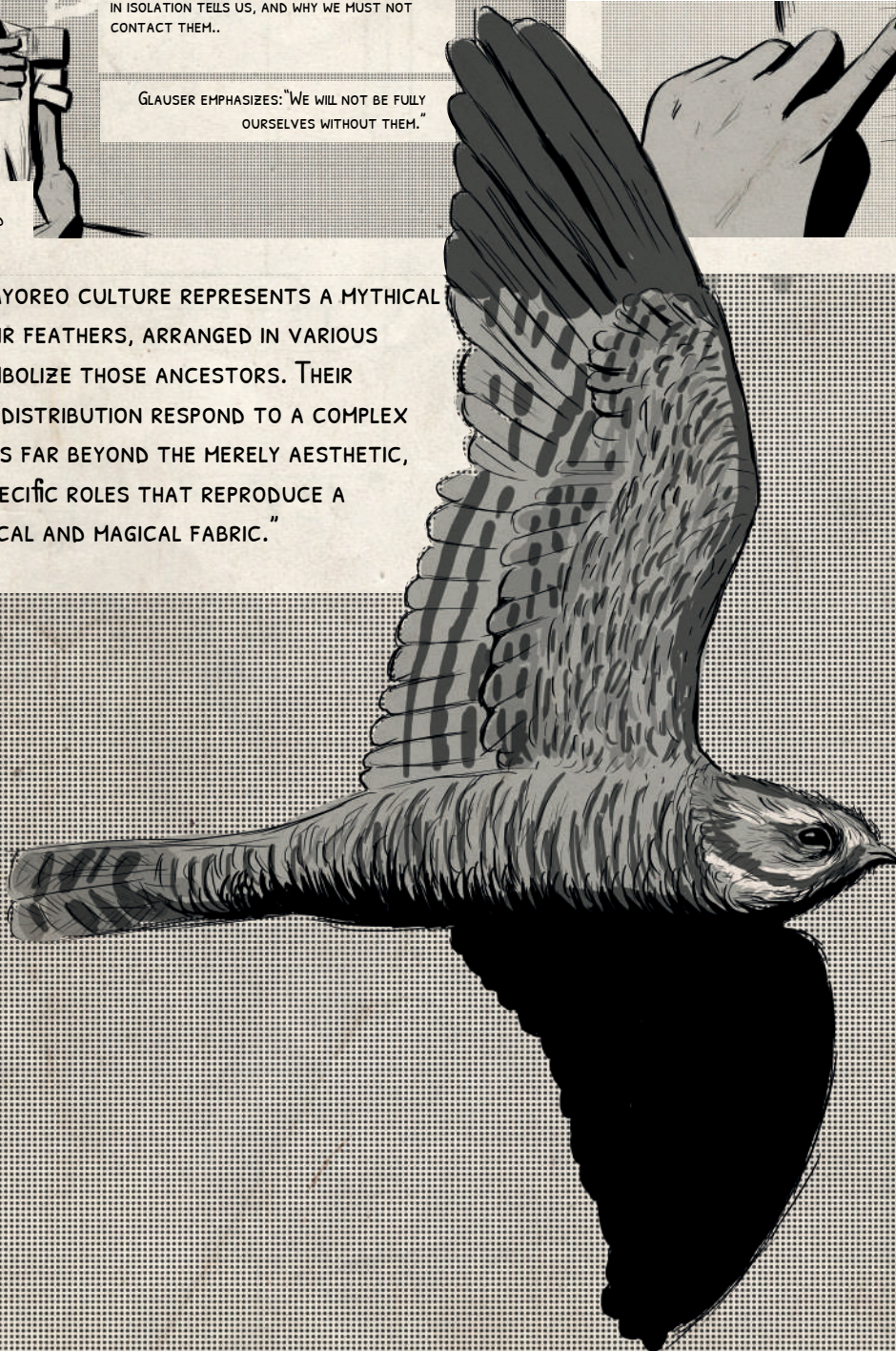
GLAUSER EMPHASIZES: "WE WILL NOT BE FULLY OURSELVES WITHOUT THEM."

BENNO GLAUSER, AUTHOR OF TRAILS FROM A WORLD BEYOND

WE ALSO TURNED TO THE WORK "CRÓNICAS DE CACERÍAS HUMANAS. LA TRAGEDIA AYOREO," BY JOSÉ GÓMEZ PERASSO, AN ANTHROPOLOGIST WHO DIED IN 1994. THERE HE RECORDED:



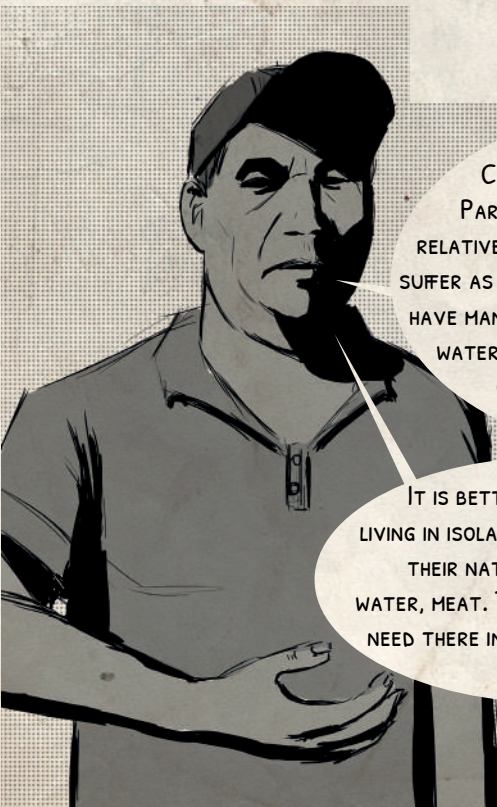
"EACH BIRD IN AYOREO CULTURE REPRESENTS A MYTHICAL ANCESTOR; THEIR FEATHERS, ARRANGED IN VARIOUS ARTIFACTS, SYMBOLIZE THOSE ANCESTORS. THEIR SELECTION AND DISTRIBUTION RESPOND TO A COMPLEX CODE THAT GOES FAR BEYOND THE MERELY AESTHETIC, RELATING TO SPECIFIC ROLES THAT REPRODUCE A COMPLEX MYTHICAL AND MAGICAL FABRIC."



MEANWHILE, THE AYOREO PEOPLE CONTINUE TO RESIST.
WOMEN PERSEVERE IN PRESERVING THEIR
CULTURE AND TRADITIONS.



MEN CONTINUE TO DEFEND
THEIR RELATIVES LIVING IN ISOLATION.



I AM AQUINO PICANERAI FROM
CAMPO LORO. IT WOULD BE GOOD IF THE
PARAGUAYAN GOVERNMENT RESPECTED OUR
RELATIVES LIVING IN ISOLATION SO THAT THEY DO NOT
SUFFER AS WE DO. WE WHO LIVE WITHIN WESTERN SOCIETY
HAVE MANY PROBLEMS: LACK OF HEALTH CARE, LACK OF
WATER, LACK OF WORK, LACK OF FOOD — AND NO
ONE WANTS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY
FOR THAT.

IT IS BETTER TO PROTECT THOSE
LIVING IN ISOLATION SO THEY CAN MAINTAIN
THEIR NATURAL LIFE, THEIR FOOD,
WATER, MEAT. THEY HAVE EVERYTHING THEY
NEED THERE IN THE FOREST, AT NO COST.
WE DO NOT.



WE, FROM COJÑONE SOCIETY, CAN
NO LONGER CONTINUE TO IGNORE
THESE WORDS AND THESE
TESTIMONIES.



WE MUST ACCOMPANY THE AYOREO PEOPLE IN THESE STRUGGLES FOR THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS AND, ABOVE ALL, RESPECT THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION OF GROUPS LIVING IN ISOLATION — WHICH MEANS NOT CONTACTING THEM OR SEEKING THEM OUT — AND LEAVING THEIR FORESTS IN PEACE.

THE END.



THIS COMIC WAS PRODUCED THANKS TO THE SUPPORT OF FUNDACIÓN ITAÚ, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FIRST ROA BASTOS FEST.

SOURCES:

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HABLAMOS PORQUE NOS ESCUCHAN – SIETE HISTORIAS DE VIDA AYOREO, INICIATIVA AMOTOCODIE, 2018
EL CASO AYOREO, IWGIA REPORT, PARAGUAY. UNIÓN DE NATIVOS AYOREO DEL PARAGUAY, INICIATIVA AMOTOCODIE, INTERNATIONAL WORK GROUP FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS, 2009
CRÓNICAS DE CACERÍAS HUMANAS. LA TRAGEDIA AYOREO, BY JOSÉ GÓMEZ PERASSO

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SPANISH CORRECTION: ARACELY FRANCO

AYOREO TRANSLATION: OSCAR BOABI POSOROJA