RAINFOREST ACTION NETWORK
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ECUADOR DECLARES TWO SENSITIVE RAINFOREST PARKS OFF LIMITS TO OIL DRILLING

ENVIRONMENTAL VICTORY IN THE AMAZON: NEARLY 3-MILLION ACRES TO BE PROTECTED

“By protecting the rainforests of the Cuyabeno-Imuya and Yasuni national parks, Ecuador is investing in its long-term economic and social well-being. Rather sacrificed for the short-term profit of a few multinational oil companies, these rich ecosystems will continue to provide for Ecuador as a whole and the local indigenous peoples in perpetuity. This important move will need to be followed by the protection of all threatened Amazonian lands and the increased investments in the country’s many renewable energy options.”

Shannon Wright, Clean Energy Campaign

Rainforest activists in Ecuador and the United States shared a taste of victory today after Ecuador’s president Jamil Mahuad issued a decree blocking planned and future oil exploration, mining, logging and colonization in the Cuyabeno-Imuya and Yasuni national parks. Together, the parks total 2.7 million acres, an area twice the size of the state of Delaware.

“If the Cuyabeno-Imuya and Yasuni national parks are indeed protected from commercial and colonial development,” added RAN’s Shannon Wright, “Ecuador will establish itself as the regional leader in protecting the Amazon basin.”

The two parks, located near each other, are near Ecuador’s borders with Peru and Colombia. They contain a vast system of environmentally sensitive rivers and lakes, and provide a home for some of the world’s most endangered plants and animals. The two parks are the ancestral homeland of some 10,000 indigenous peoples, including the Huaorani, many of whom who have steadfastly resisted outside contact. This degree also protects the homelands of the nomadic Tagaeri and Taromenare peoples from any future oil development.

The parks will remain open to ecotourism

Rainforest Action Network calls for an end to new fossil fuel exploration, beginning with projects slated for fragile ecosystems, wherever the local community objects, and in areas where isolated, traditional indigenous people live. Also, RAN’s campaign calls on the international community-particularly financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund-to recognize the ecological debt owned by the North to the South, and to directly support renewable energy technologies in developing countries, such as Ecuador.