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Up to 80% of Peruvian Nahua tribe poisoned by mercury

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by **NATALIA KOPER** (/businessses/team/natalia-koper)

The survival of inhabitants of the Peruvian Amazon is at risk. The vast majority of the Nahua tribe presents symptoms of mercury poisoning.

One child has already died due to mercury

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80% of the indigenous Nahua tribe, who live in

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the Peruvian Amazon, in jeopardy. The circumstances as to why the majority of the community presents symptoms of intoxication caused by the substance remain unclear.

Its high levels in the area may be related to the **expansion of the Camisea gas project** (<http://www.forestpeoples.org/tags/expansion-camisea-gas-project-peruvian-amazon>), one of the largest energy projects in the country. Since recent contact with the Nahua people, who live in voluntary isolation, has been made, they have been suffering severe health problems such as respiratory infections, anaemia and acute kidney insufficiency, amongst others.



(/app/uploads/peru-amazon-goldstein.jpg)

The Camisea gas project in the Peruvian Amazon © Adam Goldstein/Amazon Watch

Discovered in the 1980s in the heart of the Amazon rainforest in southeastern Peru, the natural gas field adjacent to an Indigenous reserve was expected to turn the country into

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How many of these have yo



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the king of natural gas. A **2008 report** (<http://www.hydrocarbons-technology.com/projects/camisea/>) suggests that gas extraction could earn it 230 million dollars annually and 90 million dollars in income tax revenue.

Last month the Interethnic Association of Peruvian Rainforest Development (**AIDSESP** (<http://www.aidesep.org.pe>)), one of the leading human rights organisations in the Amazon, submitted a **petition** (<http://www.aidesep.org.pe/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/carta-caso-morona1.pdf>) to the Ministry of Culture. It asked it to publish the governmental study conducted in March 2015 that assesses the level of mercury in the area and analyze the type of mercury affecting the community in order for it to receive adequate treatment.

Indigenous people living in voluntary isolation (<http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/indigenous/docs/pdf/Report-Indigenous-Peoples-Voluntary-Isolation.pdf>)

are defined under international law as native peoples who don't engage in relations with non-indigenous groups, whereas the term indigenous peoples "in initial contact" is used to describe those communities that have sporadic exchanges with the non-native population. It is estimated that there are approximately two hundred communities inhabited by around

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10,000 individuals living in voluntary isolation in the Americas
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