

# Neo-Colonialism in 2009

In the middle of March, I made a minor notice of some events at Madagascar: The US [& EU] has halted all non-humanitarian aid to Madagascar after the army forced out the elected president and installed the opposition leader in his place [1]. For clarification I added: The Army refused to fire on the citizens. Instead they told the President – backed by the USA – to resign; an undemocratic development, the United States and European union claimed. By coincidence I understood the dramatic background later, perhaps to be considered a new dimension of neo-colonialism and its referring an example of media censorship.

## Madagascar, the tropical Island

According to Wikipedia, Madagascar is the fourth-largest island in the world, and is home to 5% of the world's plant and animal species, of which more than 80% are endemic to Madagascar. It became a French colony in 1896, regaining independence in 1959 (12 years before, some 90,000 people were killed in an uprising). 20 million inhabitants live on the Island, and poverty levels remain high.

By coincidence, I noticed an environmental programme in TV, which mentioned that large part of the tropical rainforest was being destroyed to make way for an agricultural development. Without the forest, the land was eroding fast, with deep craters developing, the floods were coloured reddish brown from the sand, and several rare animals and plants were threatened by extinction.

The reason for this regrettable event was astonishing: South-Korean *Daewoo Ltd.* had leased half of the agricultural area of the island for 99 years and planned to plant maize and palms for palm-oil for their own population [2]. Since January, at least 170 islanders were killed, before the military withdrew its support to the old president and installed the 34-year-old mayor of the capital, Andry Rajoelina, as his successor. He then cancelled the sale of land to the Koreans – and the order of a presidential jet for 60 mill. US-\$ [3].

The screaming from the US and European Union seems ill-founded and their blockade of this poor, developing country, is indeed unjustified and cruel. If you do not want revolutions, there are certain crimes that are better avoided.

May 16, 2009

On June 4, BBC reported, that a Madagascar court has sentenced former [president] Marc Ravalomanana in absentia to 4 years in jail for alleged abuse of office ... for buying a presidential jet (the 60 million \$ playtoy mentioned above) [4]. A week later, BBC talked about a military intervention, which, however, both the UN and France rejected. Madagascar was internationally isolated after its corrupt president was ousted

## The Peruvian experience

In the beginning of June, Amazonas Indians in Peru (in the part of the country lying East of the Andes) demonstrated violently against plans to destroy their country with drills for gas and oil exploration [5] – what is exactly at stake is difficult to experience, but it is obviously not a small item. At least, oil and mineral rights were taken from the native people without fair compensation by the state. A bilateral free trade agreement between USA and Peru will, as is the case concerning Madagascar, prevent our mainstream media from reporting the truth about the conflict's background. Probably, the unrest has

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1 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7956436.stm>

2 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2008/11/081121\\_skorea\\_madagascar.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2008/11/081121_skorea_madagascar.shtml)

3 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7952628.stm>

4 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8080940.stm>

5 <http://www.dailykos.com/storyonly/2009/6/6/739600/-Indians-Shot-from-Helicopters-for-Peru-Free-Trade-Oil>

claimed more than a hundred victims (including police), and the leader of the uprising, representing 56 tribes, has now sought refuge in Nicaragua [6].

June 11, 2009

## Lifting the lid of Pandora's box

In a recent article of Guardian [7], the neo-colonialism is given world-wide attention. It is listed by countries in the article, here I try to list it by themes, in which the indigenous people are harmed:

- **Environmental damage related to oil-drills:** Peru (*see above*), Ecuador, Brazil, Columbia, Paraguay, Canada, USA (Alaska) and Nigeria
- **Environmental damage related to pipelines:** Georgia
- **Environmental damage related to mining:** USA (Arizona), Australia, India, Canada, Niger and Botswana, Congo, Indonesia (West Papua) and Philippines
- **Environmental damage related to agriculture:** Madagascar (*see above*), Brazil, Indonesia and Kenya
- **Environmental damage related to hydroelectrical power:** China, Iraq and Guatemala,
- **Settlements** "*as if nobody were living there*": Israel/Palestine, and in history particular serious in USA, Canada, Australia and Argentina.

I realise that this is only a start. May you (as I) enjoy living in A peaceful area of the World

June 15, 2009

On March 10, 2010, the Guardian [8] reported: Ethiopia is one of the hungriest countries in the world with >13 million people needing food aid, but paradoxically the government is offering at least 3m hectares of its most fertile land to rich countries and some of the world's most wealthy individuals to export food for their own populations ... China has signed a contract with the Democratic Republic of Congo to grow 2.8m hectares of palm oil for biofuels.

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6 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/the-jungle-massacre-perus-tribal-chief-flees-country-1702172.html>

7 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/jun/12/mining-oil-resources-land-flashpoints>

8 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/mar/07/food-water-africa-land-grab>