TREE PLANTATIONS AND MAPUCHE RESISTANCE

Report from the GJEP Delegation on Territorial Dispossession, Militarization, and Advances in Forest Transgenics in Chile and Wallmapu

NOVEMBER 2026



GJEP
Global Justice Ecology Project



◁ *During an interview, the Mapuche Lonko (ancestral leader) of Kilape Lopez shows the international GJEP delegation a photo of young men from the community arrested for territorial claims shortly before the delegation's 2024 visit. The young men were photographed during a ceremony on a previous GJEP delegation to the community in 2019. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)*

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△ *Family members of Mapuche political prisoners are interviewed by the GJEP delegation outside of the Temuco prison, during a protest and press conference. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)*

1

Presentation of the Report and the Global Justice Ecology Project Delegation to Chile and Wallmapu

October 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chile is often presented as the most developed country in Latin America and one of the region's economic success stories. However, much of this "miracle" has been built upon the intensive exploitation of natural resources, with significant environmental and social costs. The country's extractive economy is driven primarily by mining, forestry, industrial agriculture, and fishing and salmon farming. At the same time, Chile continues to experience high levels of socio-economic inequality and longstanding discrimination against the Indigenous peoples who inhabit its territory.

Chile is the second-largest producer of wood pulp in Latin America. The country contains approximately 3.2 million hectares of industrial pine and eucalyptus plantations and produces roughly 8 million tons of pulp annually. Chilean forestry corporations such as CMPC and Arauco are among the leading companies in the global forestry sector. Only Brazil—a country more than eleven times larger than Chile—and Brazilian companies such as Suzano surpass Chile in timber and pulp production within Latin America. The rapid expansion of industrial tree plantations has generated profound environmental and social impacts, particularly for Indigenous and rural communities.

Of the eleven Indigenous peoples officially recognized by the Chilean State, the Mapuche have the largest population, numbering nearly one million people. They are concentrated primarily in central and southern Chile, the same regions where forestry companies have established extensive operations on lands that Mapuche communities consider part of their ancestral territory.

Historically, the Mapuche were organized in autonomous territorial communities, or lof, with decentralized forms of governance and no centralized state structure. Their culture was deeply rooted in agriculture, hunting, gathering, and a close relationship with the natural world. For millennia, they lived throughout a vast territory known as Wallmapu. The Mapuche are also known for their long history of resistance and defense of their autonomy, successfully confronting the expansion of the Inca Empire, the Spanish Empire, and later the Chilean State.

During the nineteenth century, the Chilean State carried out a bloody military campaign known as the "Pacification of Araucanía" (1861–1883), which killed uncounted thousands of Mapuche people. The campaign resulted in the occupation of Mapuche territory, the seizure of ancestral lands, and the forced confinement of communities to small land reductions, or reservations. Decades later, the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, beginning in 1973, accelerated the expansion of large forestry companies into Mapuche territory through policies that promoted industrial pine and eucalyptus plantations. This process deepened Mapuche dispossession and continues to shape the conflict today.

In recent years, the Chilean State has maintained a strong military and police presence in Mapuche territory through repeated states of exception and the deployment of militarized security forces under governments of differing political orientations, including those of Sebastián Piñera, Gabriel Boric and José Antonio Kast.

This situation persists despite the fact that Chile ratified International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, which entered into force domestically on September 15, 2009, making Chile one of the last countries in South America to do so. Convention 169 is the only binding international treaty specifically protecting the rights of Indigenous and tribal peoples, and it requires ratifying states to consult Indigenous communities whenever legislative or administrative measures may affect them (Article 6)— though the Convention stops short of granting an outright veto. It also obligates states to recognize Indigenous peoples' rights to the lands they traditionally occupy, safeguards their right to the natural resources connected to those lands, and protects their cultural identity, language, and institutions from discrimination (Articles 3, 7, and 13–19).

Far right President José Antonio Kast (2026–2030) is intent on further taking over Mapuche territory to exploit the natural resources, including rare earth minerals, found there. Shortly after taking office in March 2026, he began advancing efforts to intensify repression, eliminate Indigenous legal protections, accelerate the takeover of Indigenous lands and facilitate the expansion of industrial tree plantations, and mining operations.

Much of the ancestral territory claimed by Mapuche communities is controlled by forestry corporations, large landowners, and other economic interests. At the same time, many communities face ongoing surveillance, criminalization, and political imprisonment as they act to recover ancestral lands and defend their rights.

Between October 6 and 20, 2024, an international delegation organized by Global Justice Ecology Project (GJEP) traveled throughout Wallmapu and other regions of south-central Chile. The primary objective was to document firsthand the repression faced by Mapuche communities and political prisoners, while examining the role of the forestry industry in the conflict. The delegation also investigated emerging biotechnologies in the forestry sector, including genetically engineered and gene-edited trees, and strengthened relationships with community organizations, researchers, and social movements throughout the region.

The visit took place within a broader context of militarization, territorial dispossession, and escalating tensions between Mapuche communities, the Chilean State, and extractive industries. Throughout the journey, the delegation documented the experiences of Mapuche and rural communities living on the frontlines of these conflicts.

By documenting and publishing testimonies from affected communities and political prisoners, exposing the impacts of the forestry industry, and highlighting human rights concerns, the

GJEP delegation intends to help break through the political and media barriers that often obscure these realities. The delegation was organized to amplify Mapuche voices internationally and contribute to a growing global solidarity movement capable of challenging the significant imbalance of power between local communities, corporations, and the State. To protect interviewees from possible state reprisal, Mapuche sources are identified by role or affiliation rather than by name when quoted.

The delegation focused primarily on the regions of Ñuble, Biobío, Araucanía, and Los Ríos and included a series of key meetings, interviews, and field visits.

The delegation also presented the Spanish version of the book *Portraits of Struggle (Retratos de Lucha)*, a photography collection by GJEP co-founder and delegation member Orin Langelle. The book documents global resistance movements from 1972-2023, including in Wallmapu and Chile. The book was shared with Mapuche communities as a tool for trust-building, dialogue and exchange around territorial struggles.

The GJEP delegation represented a multifaceted effort that combined documentation, advocacy, and alliance-building. It included prison visits, meetings with communities engaged in territorial recovery and resistance, documentation of environmental impacts, and collaboration with academic researchers, Indigenous leaders, and social organizations.

The itinerary reflects a deep commitment to documenting the situation in Wallmapu and examining the complexities of the forestry conflict in the region. The visit underscores both the urgency and the complexity of the challenges facing Mapuche communities and provides the foundation for the findings and analysis presented in this report.



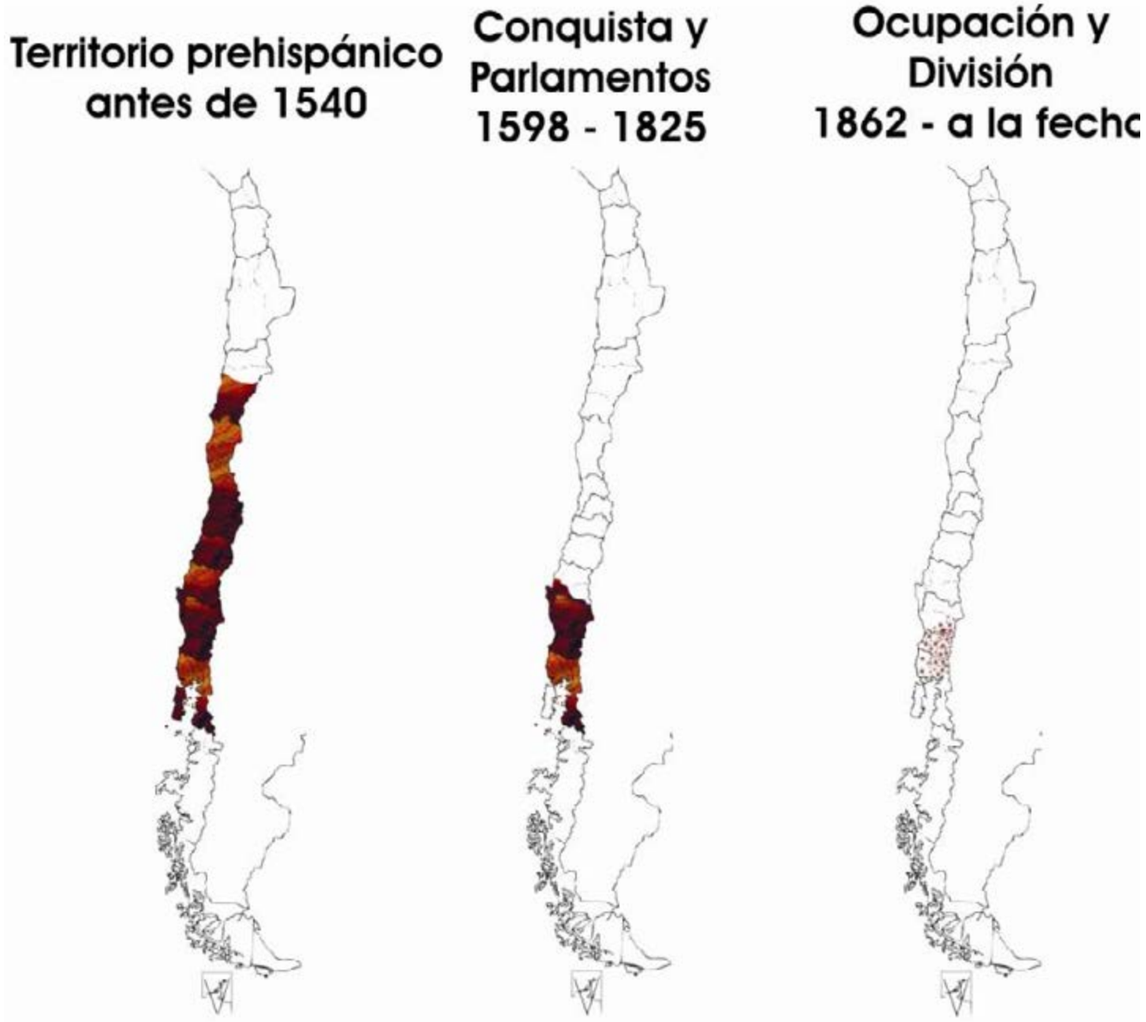
▷ *Nahuelbuta National Park is one of the last places where coastal araucarias still exist, a species in danger of extinction as a result of indiscriminate logging and conversion to tree plantations, as well as a pathogen that attacks trees already weakened by drought, climate change, and habitat fragmentation. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)*

2
Introduction and General Historical Context

2.1 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, MAPUCHE RESISTANCE, GENOCIDE, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHILEAN STATE

The Mapuche are a people composed of diverse decentralized and autonomous communities. Historically, their political structure has been characterized by the absence of a centralized State. The Mapuche people are a Nation with a defined territory called *Wallmapu*, which includes land in both Chile and Argentina.

In the 16th century, the Mapuche territory was invaded by the Spanish Empire. The Mapuche waged a tenacious resistance against the Spanish, achieving important military victories through strategic and coordinated attacks that maintained sustained pressure on Spanish settlements and forts. After centuries of war, the Spanish had to negotiate and sign peace agreements with the Mapuche, respecting their autonomy from the Biobío River south. The Mapuche people are widely recognized as the only original people to achieve military victory against the army of the Spanish Empire.



△ ***The figure above illustrates the historical reduction of Mapuche territory over time***
Source: La Reconstrucción del Lof Tradicional Mapuche como Alternativa Contrahegemónica de Organización Social y Productiva

In the 19th century, the States of Chile and Argentina gained independence from the Spanish Empire. In 1825 the new Chilean State signed the Treaty of Tapihue, which respected Mapuche autonomy and territorial rights. However, with the advancement of military technology later in the century, the Chilean State violated the Treaty of Tapihue and launched a military occupation of ***Wallmapu***. Mapuche lands were seized and given to European companies or settlers in an act of violent dispossession and "ethnic cleansing." This process is widely described by Mapuche communities as genocide, which the Chilean State has yet to formally recognize.

Since that time, Mapuche communities have continued to resist and organize to recover their ancestral territories and demand justice for historical and ongoing violations.

During the military dictatorship in Chile (1973-1989), the repression of the Mapuche people intensified significantly. The dictatorship transferred large areas of Mapuche territory to forestry companies such as CMPC, Bosques Arauco, Forestal Cautín, Forestal Masisa, among others, which are still the primary legal owners of Mapuche lands today.

2.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FOREST MODEL IN CHILE

Before the arrival of Spanish colonizers, a large part of Chile was covered by forests (with the exception of the Atacama desert in the north). For the Mapuche people, located in the south-central part of what is currently Chile, the forest was a central part of their cosmovision, providing food, medicine, and ceremonial spaces. Following the Spanish and Chilean invasion of Mapuche territories, large areas of forest were cut down for timber extraction, charcoal production, and agricultural expansion.

During the 20th century, this process intensified with the establishment of industrial monoculture plantations (pine and eucalyptus), as well as hydroelectric, mining, and other extractive projects.

Today, industrial timber plantations owned by large forestry companies are a primary driver of Mapuche displacement.

The first pine and eucalyptus species were introduced in Chile during the 19th and 20th centuries for use in mining and for commercial timber production. By the mid-20th century, pine plantations expanded rapidly in south-central Chile and *Wallmapu* as part of state-led efforts to make the country less dependent on imports, particularly in the production of paper and pulp.

In 1972, the socialist government of Salvador Allende inaugurated the Arauco pulp mill, then state-owned. This initiative was accompanied by land distribution policies benefiting indigenous and peasant communities, as well as labor protections for workers in the industry. Allende's government also established CONAF (National Forestry Corporation) which continues to oversee forest policy in Chile.

In 1973, a coup d'état ended Allende's Popular Unity government and initiated widespread and brutal repression against the working class and original peoples. State-owned forestry assets were privatized. Julio Ponce Lerou, son-in-law of dictator Augusto Pinochet, a forestry engineer, assumed leadership of CONAF. Through the privatization of forest lands, he accumulated significant wealth and later became a major figure in Chile's lithium industry.

Forestry assets were consolidated under powerful economic groups, particularly the Angelini group (CELCO-ARAUCO-COPEC) and the Matte group (MININCO-CMPC). These companies were strengthened by Pinochet's Decree 701 which provided large state subsidies for plantation expansion.

The forestry sector became dominated by a duopoly controlled by some of the wealthiest families in Chile. Large areas of Mapuche and peasant lands were seized by these forestry companies during the dictatorship. Other forestry companies with less land include Masisa, Forestal Cautín, and Forestal Hancock.

During this period, forestry companies were implicated in the repression of unionized workers, including cases of disappearance and murder.

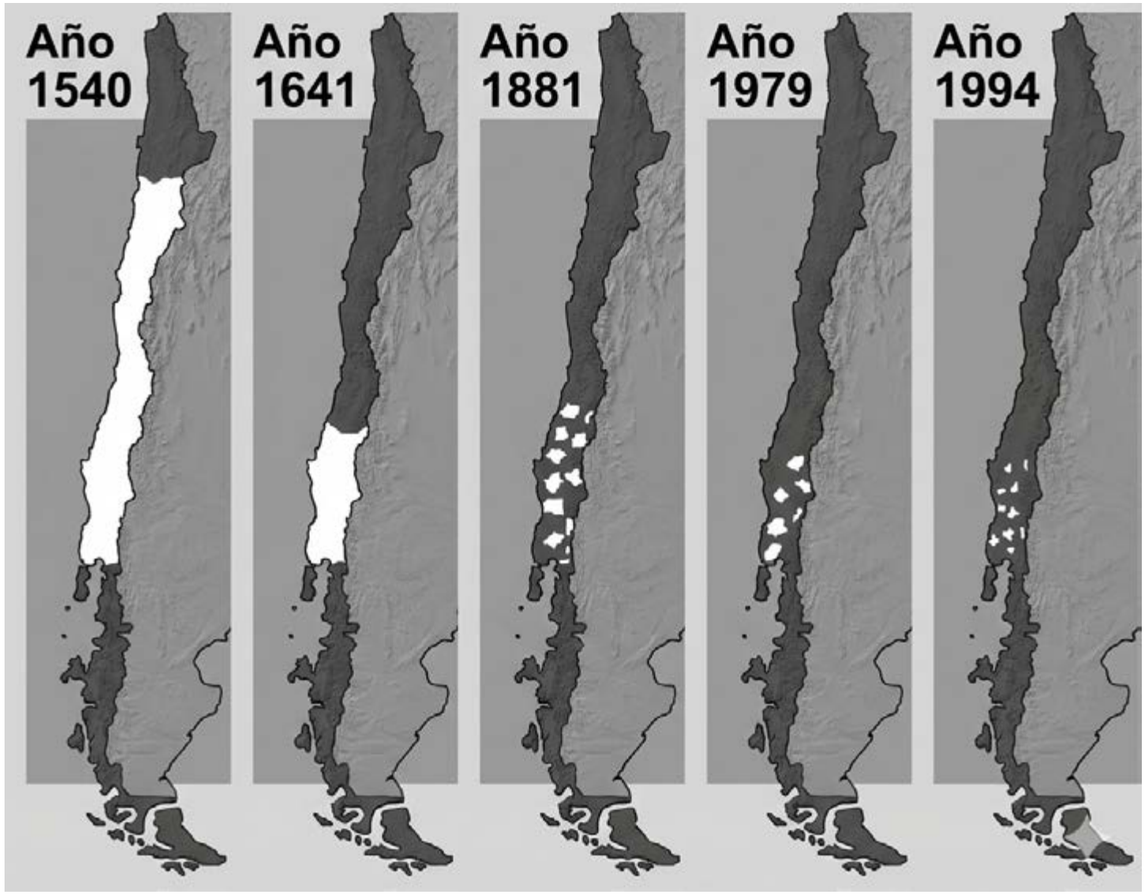
When democracy formally returned in 1990, the forestry model established under Pinochet remained intact and continued to expand under neoliberal economic policies. During the 1980s and 1990s, eucalyptus globulus plantations expanded significantly, in addition to the existing widespread radiata pine plantations.

A major environmental crisis occurred in 2004 with the mass death of black-necked swans in the Carlos Anwandter Nature Sanctuary in Valdivia. After a historic citizen mobilization and legal action, the Celulosa Valdivia plant–owned by Forestal Arauco (COPEC)–was found to be responsible for discharging toxic waste into the Cruces River, causing severe ecological damage.

In 2007, forestry worker Rodrigo Cisternas was killed by *Carabineros* (Chilean national police), during a labor protest over wages by unions of contractor companies linked to Forestal Arauco. He was shot with automatic weapons during a demonstration near the Arauco pulp mill.

At the same time, Mapuche communities were intensifying demands for land restitution, most of which remained under the control of large forestry companies. These movements were met with escalating repression by the Chilean State, which operated as private enforcers for large forestry interests. Since the 1990s, dozens of Mapuche community members have been killed by the police during protests and territorial recovery actions.

These historical processes form the foundation of current conflicts over land, sovereignty, and resource control in Wallmapu.



△ ***Image shows historical decrease in Mapuche territory***
Source: Self-elaboration based on image from the scientific article titled La tragedia de la utopía de los Mapuche de Chile: reivindicaciones territoriales en los tiempos del neoliberalismo aplicado



△ *Image shows a Mapuche person subjected to torture techniques using the "stocks" after the occupation and genocide of the Chilean State in Mapuche lands. Photo credit: B. Hermann; Archive: Juan Antonio Ríos Mapuche Museum, Cañete, Chile; in Mapuche: fotografías siglos XIX y XX: construcción y montaje de un imaginario, p. 179; Memoria Chilena.*

3
Current Situation of the Forestry Model in Chile and Wallmapu

3.1 THE FOREST MODEL IN FIGURES

According to CONAF data, tree plantations account for 4.2% of the total surface area of Chile (3.2 million hectares). In comparison, the agricultural area only represents 0.8% of the entire country (0.6 million hectares).

The regions with the largest area of plantations, in order from highest to lowest, are: Biobío (875,178.4 ha), Araucanía (652,645.7 ha), Maule (634,893.5 ha), Ñuble (380,714.9 ha), and Los Ríos (211,722.3 ha). The regions of Valparaíso, O'Higgins, and Los Lagos also have tree plantations, but smaller.

Chile has eight industrial pulp mills, all owned by Arauco-COPEC (Angelini Group) and CMPC-Mininco (Matte Group). CMPC-Mininco has two plants in Biobío, and one in Araucanía. Arauco-Copec has five pulp mills, with one factory in Biobío (Arauco), one factory in Ñuble (Nueva Aldea), two factories in Maule (Celco-Constitución, Licancel), and one factory in Valdivia (CELCO).

The Biobío region has the highest concentration of pulp plants and the largest area of plantations in Chile. Approximately 30% of the Biobío region is occupied by pine or eucalyptus plantations.

There are communes within Biobío such as Tirúa, Curanilahue, and Florida where more than half of the territory is covered by plantations. (CONAF cadaster).

According to *Chilean press* "CMPC, with a production of 4.39 million tons, was the second largest pulp producer in the world in 2023 after the Brazilian Suzano, with 10.9 million tons, while Arauco ... was third globally, with 3.8 million tons."

Chile, with more than three million hectares of plantations, surpasses countries such as Argentina and Uruguay. Only Brazil exceeds Chile with more than 11 million hectares.

According to Chilean media, the expansion of Arauco's operations in Brazil could position the company as the second largest pulp producer globally, after Suzano.

The forestry industry contributes approximately 3% of Chile's Gross Domestic Product, making it the second most important sector after mining, and accounts for roughly 7% of national exports.

3.2 GENERAL SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF TREE PLANTATIONS

The expansion of industrial tree plantations and loss of native forest in recent decades has profoundly transformed both landscapes and livelihoods in south-central Chile and Wallmapu. Communities suffer high rates of poverty, water scarcity, loss of plant and aquatic biodiversity, soil degradation, air pollution, water pollution and precarious labor conditions, These impacts are compounded by an extremely high risk of uncontrollable fires or mega-fires, which, together with climate change-fueled droughts, pose an existential threat to affected communities.

The expansion of industrial pine and eucalyptus plantations was accelerated during the Pinochet dictatorship through violent land dispossession and privatization policies such as the dictatorship's Agrarian Counter-Reform. These plantations have replaced native forests, severely altering ecosystems and water cycles, while pulp plants contaminate rivers, coastal areas and generate toxic fumes for local communities.

While the forestry industry claims that their expansion in recent decades has reduced unemployment and increased incomes, a study covering the period 1997-2015 found that the expansion of the forestry industry increases poverty and social inequality for the rural communities that live in those territories.

A 2020 study in south-central Chile found that between 1975 and 1998, 40% of native forests were replaced by pine plantations, with proximity to existing plantations increasing the likelihood of conversion. Between 1960 and 1975, the same was true for native forests near pulp plants.

The use of agrochemicals, including herbicides such as glyphosate, further contributes to environmental contamination and serious health problems.

3.3 FIRES AND TREE PLANTATIONS

The forestry plantation model–characterized by high density, uniform structure, and highly flammable species–creates conditions that significantly increase the risk and intensity of wildfires. When fires reach plantations, large amounts of homogeneous biomass can generate rapidly spreading firestorms.

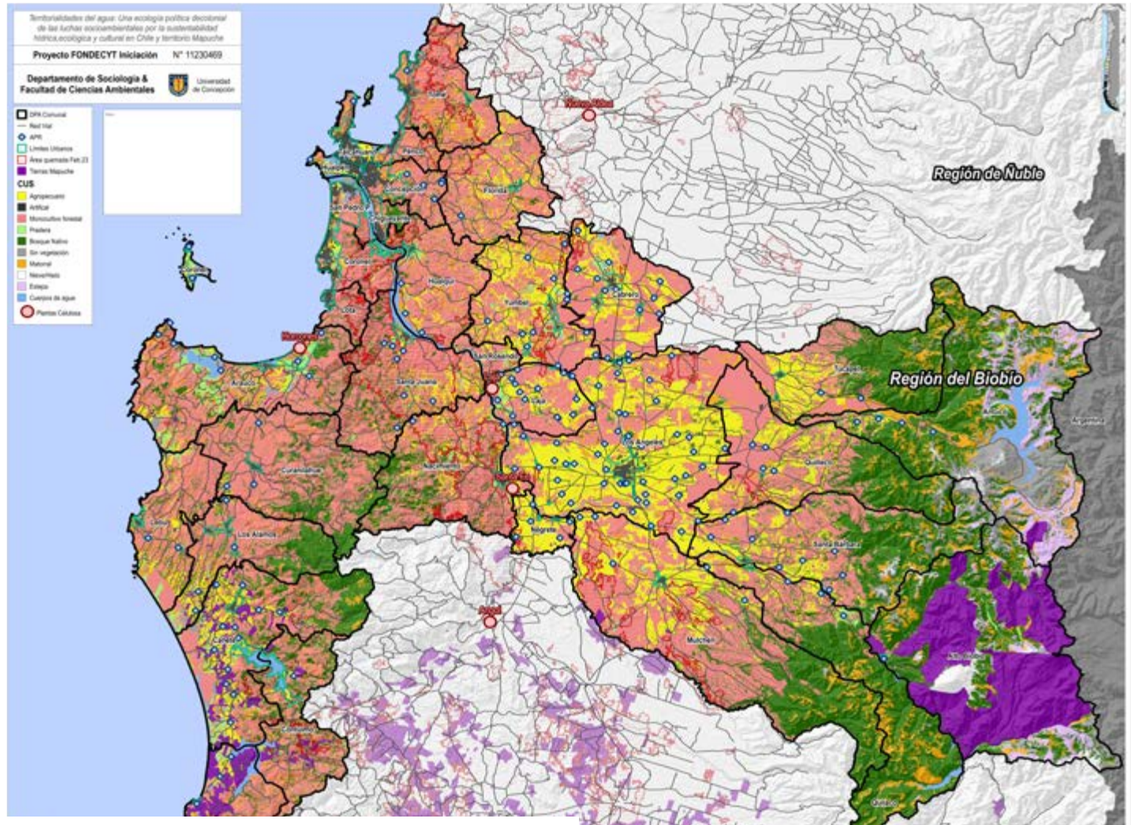
Recent studies reveal that the spatial arrangement of plantations, planted in dense rows, contribute to the rapid spread of fire. A 2018 study found that tree plantations are far more likely to spread fires than other types of vegetation, such as native forests or scrublands.

Every summer, south-central Chile is ravaged by mega-fires that destroy vast expanses of land, devastating communities and ecosystems. Major fires in 2017 and 2023, burned more than half a million hectares.

Climate change—particularly rising temperatures and prolonged droughts—has further increased fire risk. Unlike ecosystems where fire is a natural dynamic, local ecosystems in Chile have low resilience to these disturbances, as these conditions were introduced with monoculture plantations.

Despite repeated catastrophic fires, Chile lacks comprehensive legislation to address this problem. Forestry companies have constantly lobbied against stricter regulations, which they claim could harm Chile's economy.

Urban, rural, and Mapuche communities have denounced forestry companies for their role in the spread and severity of the fires. In 2024, the GJEP delegation visited the San Ramón community, where residents are pursuing legal action against forestry companies after their homes were destroyed by fires.



△ *Map shows the amount of tree monoculture in the Biobío region (in pink) Source: FONDECYT Project Territorialidades del agua: Una ecología política decolonial de las luchas socioambientales por la sustentabilidad hídrica, ecológica y cultural en Chile y Territorio Mapuche*

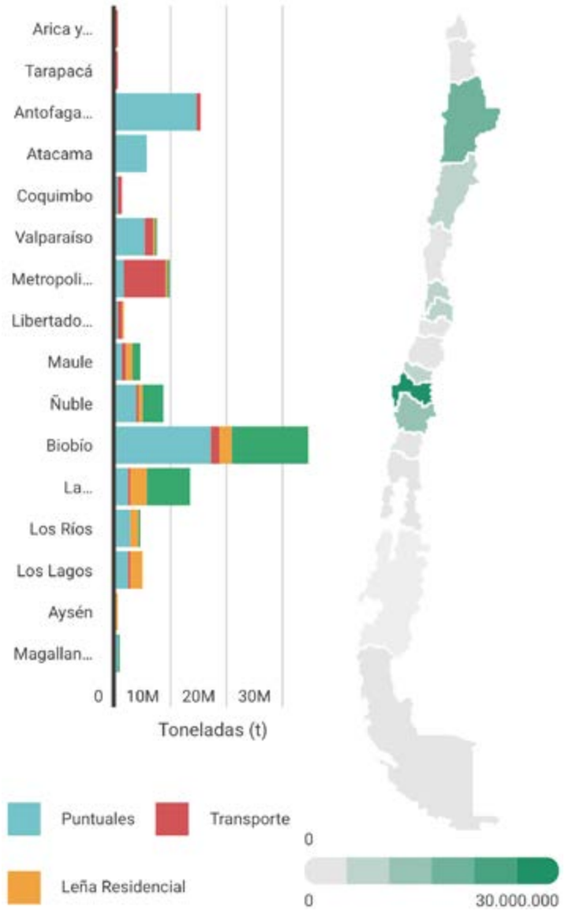
3.4 WATER CRISIS, DROUGHT, WATER SCARCITY, AND FOREST PLANTATIONS

For decades, communities living next to pine and eucalyptus plantations have denounced water scarcity linked to the high water consumption of the plantations, which cause water scarcity, exacerbating the effects of droughts in the area. As early as 2014, the media *RESUMEN.CL* had confirmed in the documentary "*Plantar Pobreza, el negocio forestal en Chile*" that large forestry companies were directly affecting the water supply in the south-central zone of Chile and generating a wide series of environmental and social impacts.

A recent study published in *Forests* confirmed that large scale expansion of plantations—from approximately 250,000 hectares in 1974 to nearly 3 million hectares in 2016—has significantly reduced water availability, affecting even large watersheds. Many communities that previously had year-round access to water now depend on water delivery by trucks, which is often insufficient for subsistence agriculture.

3.5 SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PULP AND PAPER FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Air pollution from pulp and paper plants includes emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO2), particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NOx), carbon dioxide, and carbon monoxide, and Total Reduced Sulphur (TRS) gases, especially hydrogen sulfide (H2S).



△ *The image shows that the Biobío region, which has the largest number of pulp mills and surface area planted with pine and eucalyptus, is the one that produces the most CO2 in the entire country.*
Source: Informe consolidado del RETC Ministerio de Medio Ambiente de Chile

TRS gases group together a set of compounds that are generated in the pulp production process, the most important being H2S, mercaptans (CH3SH), dimethyl sulfide (CH3SCH3), and dimethyl disulfide (CH3SSCH3). These gases have the characteristic of emitting strong and unpleasant odors that can spread over great distances. Mercaptans, for example, are organosulfur compounds that are perceptible even at very low concentrations, and that emanate from all lines of pulp and paper production.

Workers in the pulp industry are subject to low wages and poor working conditions, leading to countless strikes and protests. In 2007, a historic and brutal event took place at the Celulosa Arauco plant, when worker Rodrigo Cisternas was killed by carabineros (national police) while participating in a protest for higher wages led by unions of Forestal Arauco contractor companies. He was shot with automatic weapons.

The expansion of tree plantations and the installation of large industrial plants in the Biobío region have generated a profound socio-environmental impact on communities there.

3.6 THE HOUSING CRISIS AND TREE PLANTATIONS

Forestry regions of Chile have historically experienced high poverty rates, and poor living conditions. Land concentration in the hands of forestry companies has limited access to land for housing, particularly in towns such as Curanilahue.

Thousands of families have occupied land to build homes, but the State has persecuted these families under the recent "Usurpation Law." Large forestry companies have initiated legal actions leading to forced evictions.

According to *CONAF data* 63% of the land in Curanilahue is covered by industrial plantations.

3.7 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY AND TREE PLANTATIONS

Forestry companies often claim to be carbon neutral, however, their operations generate significant greenhouse gas emissions.

The Ministry of the Environment reports that the Biobío region–home to the largest concentration of plantations and pulp mills– records the highest CO_2 emissions in Chile. Pulp production is a major contributor to industrial emissions.

Mega-fires further exacerbate the industry's emissions. A report from the CR2 climate research center, found that in 2017 the largest quantities of greenhouse gases and CO_2 generated in Chile were the product of forest fires fueled by pine and eucalyptus plantations.

Deforestation and soil disturbance caused by plantation expansion also release large amounts of stored carbon.

3.8 CARBON CREDITS AND ARAUCO'S DECEPTIVE CLIMATE DISCOURSE

In 2020, the Chilean forestry giant Arauco announced it had become the first forestry company in the world to achieve carbon neutrality — claiming the carbon dioxide its plantations absorb balances out the emissions its operations produce. The company has repeated that claim in nearly every announcement and advertisement since, investing heavily in "green" marketing built around it. What Arauco has been far less forthcoming about is how, and by whom, that carbon-neutral status was actually verified.

An investigation by the Gibson Climate Justice Lab (GCJLab) traced the certification to Deloitte, one of the world's four largest auditing firms — and found real gaps in how it was handled. Deloitte does not list the Arauco certification among its published case studies, and its Chilean affiliate has made no public statement about it either. As GCJLab put it, "the public must rely solely on the information provided by Arauco, which represents a conflict of interest, since Deloitte and PwC should act as impartial third parties."

The certification itself turns out to be thinner than the marketing suggests. GCJLab found that Deloitte's June 2022 report, which certifies Arauco as carbon neutral for 2020, was built on calculations and data that Arauco itself prepared — undercutting the claim of independent verification. On top of that, the report is classified as a "limited assurance report," the lowest tier of audit rigor, well short of the more rigorous "reasonable assurance" standard normally expected for a claim of this scale.

The underlying numbers raise further doubts. In 2017 alone, wildfires fueled by tree plantations released roughly 100 million tons of CO2-equivalent — nearly ten times the 11 million tons of carbon Arauco claims to have sequestered in 2020. Yet the company's sustainability reporting doesn't acknowledge any responsibility for those fire emissions.

GCJLab's investigation also surfaced a less visible relationship: Arauco's ties to COPEC, Chile's largest fossil fuel company. COPEC operates in more than 80 countries and, like Arauco, is controlled by the Angelini family's AntarChile holding company — the same Roberto Angelini Rossi chairs both. Arauco markets itself as though it exists independently of its parent company's fossil fuel business, and while it buys oil directly from COPEC for its own projects, there's no indication that relationship factors into its carbon-neutrality claims.



△ *Arauco's Pulp Mill, Biobío Region, southern Chile.*
Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)

4
Reality of Mapuche Communities, Social Organizations, Resistance, and Repression

In this chapter of this report, the situation experienced by Mapuche communities is analyzed. Through exclusive interviews recorded in the field by the international GJEP delegation in October 2024, the relationship of Mapuche communities with forestry companies and the Chilean State was analyzed. As noted in the Executive Summary, testimonies in this chapter are attributed by role or affiliation rather than by name to protect interviewees from possible state reprisal.

"The elders suffer the consequences of the State of Chile. [The state] made a treaty that Wallmapu belonged to the Mapuche nation people, and they did not respect that. Later they came here to kill the lonkos, the peñis, the families. One hundred years ago they carried out a tremendous massacre and burned down entire Mapuche houses; the State does not see that as a terrorist act, for them it was total normality. The State of Chile has no memory [...] They want to subjugate us with laws and keep us prisoners so that our families become their employees."

— Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation

4.1 STATE RESPONSIBILITY

The current conflict cannot be understood without reviewing the Chilean State's original responsibility in the fracture of territorial balance. Testimonies describe a state trajectory marked by the breach of agreements such as the Treaty of Tapihue (1825) and a so-called "pacification" that constituted a process of extermination and isolation against the Mapuche people during the late-19th century. Official history labeled this process with the euphemism "Pacification of Araucanía" though, it was a genocidal campaign aimed at seizing Mapuche land and political autonomy.

This lack of institutional memory allows the State to maintain a historical debt while reproducing narratives that strip the Mapuche of their status as people with inherent rights:

"The elders suffer the consequences of the State of Chile. [The state] made a treaty that Wallmapu belonged to the Mapuche nation people, and they did not respect that. Later they came here to kill the lonkos, the peñis, the families. One hundred years ago they carried out a tremendous massacre and burned down entire Mapuche houses; the State does not see that as a terrorist act, for them it was total normality. The State of Chile has no memory. They carried out the supposed 'pacification' by killing all the Mapuche, what pacification are they talking about? They say 'we are aware that Arauco has a sorrow', but if they know that Arauco has a sorrow, why don't they solve it? Quite the opposite, they hurt us more. For the rich, their economic interest has more value than human life; for the State, we are not people. They want to subjugate us with laws and keep us prisoners so that our families become their employees."

— Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

▸ Contradiction Between State Discourse and Practice

This account directly challenges the legitimacy of the State by demonstrating the contradiction between its discourse of "peace" and the reality of its exercise of power. State responsibility is not limited to 19th century dispossessions, but continues today through the prioritization of economic interests over human life and the expansion of punitive legal frameworks aimed at Mapuche communities. The "sorrow of Arauco," far from being an abstract lament, reflects the direct consequences of a state political project that refuses reparation and continues to function through domination and dehumanization. "Arauco Has a Sorrow" is the title of a song by the Chilean singer-songwriter Violeta Parra, the most influential in the country's history. In Chile, it's common to say that Arauco has suffered many injustices, but no one helps to resolve them.

▸ Institutional Failure and the Limits of CONADI

The recognition of ancestral property is not only a political demand of the communities but in many cases has already been formally acknowledged by the State's own administrative mechanisms. However, implementation remains obstructed by bureaucracy, insufficient resources, and lack of political will. After the dictatorship, the Chilean state created the National Indigenous Development Corporation (CONADI). The institution was tasked with purchasing land to return to the communities. However, it has failed to meet the communities' demands.

▸ The "Applicability Process" and Deferred Justice

In the following testimony, the role of the State in delaying restitution is made explicit:

"In this case, the owners on paper, they already understood that the territory is Mapuche and made it available so that at some point the State would return the territory to us. I don't know how much longer it could take, because we have been waiting for five years. It may take longer because it depends on the resources they allocate for that, because the State definitely has to pay these people for the place. And that is the most complex thing. According to them, there is a huge list of communities waiting for the same thing. We are among those communities with a little advantage, because we have been with the applicability process since 2009. And that means that the State has to return the land at some point, the State has already recognized that it has to return the land and that is how it will have to be. We are calm in the place, but at the same time restless."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

This account demonstrates that the persistence of the conflict stems not from disputes between private actors, but from the State's failure to fulfill its own recognized obligations.

The "applicability process" since 2009, refers to formal state recognition that a Mapuche community's claim is legitimate and eligible for restitution. However, delays in funding and bureaucratic processes often transform recognized rights into indefinite waiting periods. The "restlessness" mentioned by the community is the direct result of a state policy that, although it recognizes the dispossession on paper, proves incapable of definitively handing over the territory to its ancestral owners.

4.2 - LAND USURPATION BY THE STATE AND COMPANIES, VERSUS MAPUCHE TERRITORIAL RECOVERIES

▸ Competing Definitions of "Usurpation"

The concept of "usurpation" has recently been used by the State to criminalize Mapuche presence on disputed lands. For communities, however, the original usurpation was a historical process of violence and expulsion executed by settlers and large landowners under state protection. Faced with this memory of dispossession, the recovery of the territory is not seen as criminal, but an act of intergenerational justice that allows new generations to inhabit the space with a freedom that was denied to their ancestors:

"And for us, it is a form of joy to see that children can walk through those spaces without being expelled from the place, because our ancestors lived through that. They lived the experience of being expelled from their own territories, from their own property, from their own fields, by the settlers, by the large landowner."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

▸ Territorial Recovery as Intergenerational Justice

This testimony reframes land recovery as an act of justice rather than criminality, challenging official narratives about property. What the current Chilean legal framework condemns as "usurpation," communities understand as the end of a cycle of dispossession and the "recovery" of their territory.

The ability of children to move freely through these lands without fear reflects a deeper demand: not only for legal recognition, but for reparation for the historical trauma of displacement. By enabling the consolidation of large estates through expulsion, the Chilean State validated an original usurpation– one that the communities are now seeking to reverse, returning the right to inhabit their lands and to be rooted in their culture.

4.3 THE USURPATION LAW AND LEGAL REPRESSION

▸ Expansion of Punitive Legal Frameworks

Recent legal reforms, including the Usurpation Law, have significantly expanded the State's capacity to criminalize land recovery efforts. This legislation not only increases the penalties for those who occupy properties, but the introduction of "permanent flagrancy" enables police intervention without judicial oversight.

For the communities, this law represents a punitive barrier that seeks to suffocate territorial restitution processes, which generated a deep disappointment towards the progressive government of Gabriel Boric, under whose administration the law emerged.

"We are also a little worried because the State has hardened the laws against us regarding everything that is taking possession of land, territorial recovery; the State has hardened the laws. So our people are also a little more afraid with the new law that now speaks of usurpation. It is complex for us because people, adult people, are now a little afraid of being able to continue with this struggle, because the law has been hardened, the State has taken care to do so"

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

▸ Fear as a Tool of Governance

The testimony highlights how legal reforms function not only as punitive mechanisms, but as instruments of fear, especially in older people who have sustained long-term struggles. By prioritizing penal punishment over the solution of the territorial debt, the State—regardless of the political party in power—confirms its role as protector of private landowning and forestry property over the human and ancestral rights of the communities.

"And for us, it is a form of joy to see that children can walk through those spaces without being expelled from the place, because our ancestors lived through that. They lived the experience of being expelled from their own territories, from their own property, from their own fields, by the settlers, by the large landowner."

— Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation

4.4 CRITICISM OF THE GABRIEL BORIC GOVERNMENT

▸ Collapse of Political Expectations

A deep break in the political trust of the communities towards the State occurred under the government of Gabriel Boric. The arrival to power of a progressive and left-wing government in 2022 generated expectations of dialogue and reform. However, the testimonies reveal deep disillusionment as repressive measures have intensified.

"We did not think that this would happen in [the Boric] government, which was a government where this should not have happened. In the left-wing government that should support the people, no, it was not like that. We could expect that a right-wing government would harden the Chilean laws, and it was not like that; it was in the government where it should not have been. So, on that side, we are a little worried, but at the same time also happy because we are in the place and waiting for the territory to be transferred to the community at some point."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

▸ Structural Nature of State Power

This testimony shows that the State's role in the criminalization of the Mapuche struggle did not fundamentally change with a shift in government, but rather took on a deeper moral contradiction for the communities. The concern expressed reflects the disillusionment of seeing a political sector that claims to support the people instead reinforce legal frameworks that intensify

"We almost lost our culture because of being next to a city, and also because of racism. Because our grandparents always protected their children. They didn't teach them Mapudungun (original Mapuche language), because of the racism that existed here. [...] So we lost our culture, we lost our language, we lost everything. And now that we are adults, we want to rescue that because that is what identifies us. [...] But there is something that calls us and we come back"

— Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation

persecution. At the same time, the expressed "happiness" of remaining in recovered territory underscores that the legitimacy of the community presence on the land does not depend on state approval. The community remains in a position of actively waiting, insisting that the state's responsibility lies not in strengthening punitive laws, but in fulfilling the transfer of ancestral lands.

Beyond the ideological orientation of any particular government, communities identify a structural problem of sovereignty and power. The State, even when presenting itself as progressive, is perceived as operating in a framework shaped by corporate interests. In this context, transnational forestry and extractivist companies exert significant influence over legislative processes, directing the use of the law towards the subjugation and containment of peoples who obstruct their economic expansion.

"A government with a more socialist inclination, but it has no power over it, but rather it is a government that is submissive to large companies, transnational companies. And precisely all the laws are made to the extent that the large companies guide them. And so it is subjecting our people to these injustices."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

This testimony points to a form of governance in which the State functions less as a guarantor of rights and more as an administrator of external economic interests. From this perspective, the criminalization of Mapuche communities and the hardening of legal frameworks are not anomalies, but structural features of an extractivist model that depends on territorial control. The responsibility of the Chilean State is thus reflected not only in its actions, but in its failure to prioritize international treaties and historical obligations to Indigenous Peoples over the demands of powerful economic actors.

4.5 TERRITORIAL RESISTANCE PROCESSES

▸ Emergence of Contemporary Resistance (Post-1997)

In 1997, in the commune of Lumaco (Araucanía), Mapuche community members set fire to trucks belonging to Forestal Arauco in protest against the forestry model and the usurpation of their lands. The event marked a turning point in the politicization of the Mapuche people and the continuation of a long history of resistance.

It initiated a new phase characterized by anti-capitalist ideas, autonomism, and self-determination, and the use of direct action– including sabotage of forestry machinery– alongside territorial recovery that the State declared illegal.

The most prominent organization to emerge in this period was the Coordinadora Arauco Malleco (CAM), which was committed to sabotage against forestry companies. Today, its founder Hector Llaitul and its spokesperson Rafael Pichun, along with other leaders and members, are in prison, facing sentences of between 20 and 90 years.

Over time, many more Mapuche groups have followed similar paths of territorial recoveries and sabotage leading to nearly 100 Mapuche political prisoners in the country's jails.

▸ Ecological and Spiritual Foundations of Resistance

Through dialogue with multiple communities, the delegation documented the deeper motivations behind these actions, linking territorial defense to ecological degradation and spiritual survival.

"Look, you see around here how it is full of eucalyptus, there is no native forest left, there is no lawen (Mapuche medicinal plants) left. And that is the struggle we have, even though we have imprisoned peñis or we have our lamuen (sister), we have clandestine peñi, we are not going to fall. We are going to get up anyway and we are going to continue fighting. There are different organizations, yes, but the goal is only one, and that is to fight for the Mapuche people against any company that wants to come here to interfere, to come, to take out our minerals that we have here. Which for them is wealth and for us is also wealth, but for us, it is spiritual wealth that we have. They see everything with money. We see it as spiritual because we are Mapuche, we have our rakiduam (thought) and we are not going to lose that."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

The testimony shows that the resistance is not only political but existential. It is rooted in the loss of native forests and ecosystems, medicinal plants (*lawen*), and the spiritual relationship between the Mapuche people and their territory. Despite ongoing criminalization, communities describe a spiritual force that motivates and guides them as Mapuche people. It arises from the clash between an economy based on capital and an existence based on *rakiduam* (thought) and spirituality, where the protection of the ecosystem is inseparable from the survival as a people. In this context, the destruction of native forests for exotic tree plantations is understood not only as environmental damage, but as a form of violence against an existence based on *rakiduam* and spirituality, where the protection of the ecosystem is inseparable from the survival as a people. The struggle is positioned, then, as a legitimate response to this violence.

▸ Cultural Loss and Generational Return

The impact of structural racism in Mapuche territory has not only resulted in material dispossession but in a process of cultural erosion. For many families living near urban centers, the loss of language and traditional customs was shaped by discrimination and social exclusion imposed by Chilean society. Today, however, many communities describe a process of return, in which younger generations, after experiencing urban displacement and cultural uprooting– feel called back to their origins and begin reclaiming their identity, language and connection to the land:

"We almost lost our culture because of being next to a city, and also because of racism. Because our grandparents always protected their children. They didn't teach them Mapudungun (original Mapuche language), because of the racism that existed here. So the parents kept doing the same thing and maybe they were so hurt by everything that happened that they didn't want their children to suffer what they suffered. And so it went from generation to generation. So we lost our culture, we lost our language, we lost everything. And now that we are adults, we want to rescue that because that is what identifies us. Many of us left when we were little with our parents to another place. But there is something that calls us and we come back"

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation

This testimony reveals that the silence surrounding *Mapudungun* and Mapuche traditions was not voluntary, but a response to historical trauma and racism. The decision not to transmit the language or customs appears here as a way of protecting their children and grandchildren from the discrimination they themselves had endured. In this sense, cultural loss appears not as rupture, but as a survival strategy shaped by fear and exclusion.

At the same time, the testimony reflects a powerful process of generational return. Many young Mapuche who grew up outside their territories now feel compelled to reconnect with their origins, recover their language, and rebuild a sense of belonging. Territorial recovery therefore becomes more than a political demand: it is the physical and spiritual space through which memory, identity, and collective continuity can be restored.

▸ Historical Memory and Territorial Legitimacy

The delegation interviewed several *Lonkos* (traditional authorities) from various communities, who explained the reasons for the **land recovery** they are undertaking. Their testimonies frame territorial recovery not as a new political claim, but as the continuation of a much longer historical struggle rooted in collective memory and ancestral presence,

"we are clear that these are properties that belong to us by natural origin, because we have always belonged to this territory, unlike the State that we all know has only been inhabiting these spaces for two centuries. And beyond that it is not like that. We also know about the incursion that the settlers had into our territory when the Pacification campaign was carried out and also the dispossession, almost in its entirety of our property, our territory. Beyond the massacre, of the blood that the State project brought with it."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

For the communities, the current conflict cannot be separated from the "Occupation of Araucanía," (1861-1883) referred to by the state as the "Pacification of Araucanía." Through military force, the Chilean State incorporated Map-

uche lands into national territory, displacing communities into "reductions" (smaller poor quality lands), allowing the State to hand over large tracts of ancestral lands to European and Chilean settlers.

Within Mapuche memory, this process is understood not as modernization or pacification, but as a foundational trauma marked by massacre, dispossession, forced displacement, and the destruction of autonomous forms of life. The loss of territory represented not only a material loss, but also the fragmentation of social, political, cultural, and spiritual systems that had organized Mapuche life for centuries.

The testimonies also describe earlier attempts to pursue land restitution through institutional and legal channels. Community leaders describe a process of accumulated frustration with state bureaucracy which only deepened internal divisions due to the lack of concrete change.

"Our community, if you can go back a little further, wanted to do it in a diplomatic way. Many old leaders, many older people who also wanted to do it in the legal way (land recovery), so to speak, through seeking out State institutions to be able to somehow have a minimal land return. But in reality, it was years and years of searching that yielded no results. They were always given the hope of perhaps achieving something. But over time it never resolved any problem, only promises, crumbs, and also causing internal conflict within the community itself, because there was nothing concrete."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

This account reflects a deep breakdown of trust in state institutions. The prolonged waiting and the lack of concrete solutions are interpreted as intentional on the part of the State, which, through its inaction, ends up delegitimizing the "legal route" among younger generations.

Faced with decades of dispossession, ecological degradation, and failed institutional processes, the Lonko justifies the step towards territorial control and direct action as an ethical and necessary decision.

▸ Direct Action as Ethical Response

"And faced with that, the most radical option was left to us, if you can say that, the decision that demands a little more courage. And many times there are risks involved, but it was taken. It was the direct struggle to be able to position ourselves as a community and to be able to carry out our life project in the territories, especially the forest areas. Because the forestry companies have been there for a long time and we have also seen that they have caused significant damage to our land, to our soil, to the water, to nature, to the vegetation, to the flora, the fauna. There has been a negative change since the arrival of the forestry presence."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

The testimony links this "radical option" to the environmental impacts of the forestry industry. Forestry companies are described as agents of degradation of vital elements (water, soil, biodiversity). Within this framework, territorial recovery is understood not only as resistance to dispossession, but as an effort to defend and rebuild the conditions necessary for re-establishing a Mapuche "life project" rooted in the land.

▸ Territorial Recovery as Ecological Restoration

The process of **territorial recovery**, however, transcends land ownership. It is also understood as the recovery of identity. Interviewees repeatedly describe the return of biodiversity as inseparable from the recovery of the possibility of fully existing as Mapuche:

"I believe that by recovering those spaces, we also recover spaces such as water, as the biodiversity spaces that had been lost are shown. The animals are there, today the animals are walking, but there are spaces that are further up there and many other native forests too. So that recovery also reconstructs nature. We find ourselves with nature and the way of life is improved. That is very important in these times, especially given how the world is and climate change and everything that affects us. So, we also have the challenge, as Mapuches, to seek a sustainable, harmonious, and balanced way of life. That is what we need to rebuild the most from the thought of our heart. Because if we continue the Western life, this path leads us nowhere. So there are many challenges as Mapuche, many challenges and many responsibilities too, if one feels Mapuche. That is what I can say."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

The testimony describes a profound critique of the dominant Western model of development associated with ecological destruction, social fragmentation and the climate crisis. The recovery is not only an act of historical justice but an ethical responsibility to reconstruct balance, sustainability and *"piwke rakiduam"* (thought of the heart), in an active exercise of harmony with the environment.

Within this perspective, being Mapuche is not understood solely as an ethnic identity, but as an active ethical relationship with territory and all forms of life. Territorial recovery therefore, becomes the material basis for rebuilding autonomous forms of existence that reject the logic of consumption and seek to re-establish spiritual and ecological ties with nature.

▸ Itrofillmongen and Intergenerational Responsibility

Current processes of resistance and territorial recovery are deeply connected to the principle of ***Itrofillmongen***, which refers to respect for and protection of all forms of life. For the communities, recovering the territory is the only way to guarantee that future generations inherit healthy ecosystems and recover the right to move freely through the land of their ancestors:

"So today we fight so that the coming generation does not suffer what our people, ancestors, our elders suffered, which is the inability to walk through our lands, because they were spaces that belonged to our grandparents, not generations very far back either. As our sister here said, today, in those recovered properties, in those fields, the flora and fauna are seen, wild animals are seen, birds are seen, something that the Chilean* huinca *(foreigner), the settler who was in that space before, made impossible due to the excessive use of chemicals on the lands."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

The testimony emphasizes that territorial recovery is not only about the return of land, but the return of life itself. The reappearance of wild fauna and flora acts as an indicator of territorial health. By eliminating the use of chemicals associated with the extractivist model of the "*huinca*," the community re-establishes the balance of the *Itrofillmongen*, allowing biodiversity to coexist again with the Mapuche life project.

In this sense, *Itrofillmongen* connects ecological restoration with cultural continuity, collective memory, and the responsibility to ensure that future generations inherit a living territory.

Within the framework of the territorial recoveries, another fundamental dimension of the resistance becomes clear: the formation of consciousness through daily practice. For the communities, cultural reconstruction is not a theoretical exercise, but a pedagogical process rooted in everyday life, where children are actively integrated into caring for nature, and the territory becomes a space of sovereign learning:

"We have a very great potential, which is our children. And that is what we work on every day, in creating awareness. Fortunately, we have good human capital and within the community, the children have quite a critical thought. And finally, I insist, children are not the future, they are the present. And within that, we work, for example, with planting, with the garden, so that they know what the native trees are, and that they cultivate the native trees. And that is within what we can do, our small fruit."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

This testimony reveals that the transmission of the Mapuche culture is sustained through a direct relationship with the land. By defining children as the "present," the community affirms that territorial recovery is not only about reclaiming hectares of land, but about healing the social fabric, damaged by dispossession and racism. Knowledge of native flora, gardening and ecological care become tools of cultural resistance, allowing new generations to grow with critical consciousness and an identity rooted in the protection of their own ecosystem.

▸ Autonomy and Community Life

This process of reconstruction culminates in the consolidation of a model of life that seeks to move beyond dependence on state institutions and precarious urban labor. Here, autonomy is manifested as a tangible economic and social reality, measured by the community's capacity to sustain its people and reverse the processes of forced migration to the cities:

"We are working, we are making a life in the territorial recovery processes and we no longer want the State's approval. I believe we are doing it well, and I believe the results back us up. That is what also gives us satisfaction and happiness. Because we see change. We see the difference already in most of our people who do not need to go to work in the cities. There are even people from the city who have come and integrated into our community, and continue to work in our style according to our project. And it has been sustained. People are getting ahead, they have their animals, they have their crops, their space. And I think that re-animates us and gives us strength, despite the hostile moment we are experiencing."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

The central theme of this account is **autonomy**. By no longer seeking state approval to validate their territorial processes, the community demonstrates that the land recovery can support the development of its own economy, rooted in agriculture, livestock raising and collective work. This "way of life" not only provides economic dignity but also generates a return to the countryside, in which Mapuche families and young people reconnect with community life despite the hostile political conditions surrounding them.

▸ Synthesis: A Multidimensional Struggle

Taken together, these testimonies show that the current Mapuche resistance is not limited to demands for land tenure but constitutes a profound movement of **civilizational reconstruction**. The reasons for the struggle are multidimensional and are articulated around three fundamental axes:

Firstly, **territorial recovery** is presented as a necessary response to the historical wound of the "Occupation of Araucanía" and genocide of the Chilean State. For the communities, recovering territory is not viewed as an end in itself, but as an act of justice that seeks to halt the environmental destruction caused by the forest extractivist model. In this context, the concept of ***Itrofillmongen*** takes on practical meaning: the struggle is for water, native forest, biodiversity, and the understanding that human well-being is inseparable from the health of the environment.

Secondly, **identity reconstruction** unfolds alongside territorial recovery, acting as a crucial element of resistance against structural racism and cultural erosion imposed by the Chilean State. The return to the land allows communities to reclaim *Mapudungun*, traditional customs, and collective memory, while also creating pedagogical practices that integrate the youngest into the care of the ecosystem.



△ Guard outside of the Temuco prison during the meeting of the GJEP delegation with Mapuche political prisoners inside the prison. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)

Finally, the struggle is driven by a profound ethical commitment to a **Mapuche life project** (*Küme Mongen*) grounded in autonomy and **balance**. This project represents a systemic critique of the dominant Western model of development and its consequences–climate crisis, violence, and dispossession–while proposing a sustainable alternative capable of sustaining the community and reversing the forced migration to cities.

4.6 REPRESSION AND CRIMINALIZATION PROCESSES AGAINST MAPUCHE COMMUNITIES

▸ Escalation of Repression (1997–Present)

Between 1997 and 2019, the increase in Mapuche territorial resistance was met by an intensification of repression by the Chilean State. During this period, dozens of Mapuche community members were killed by police and state security forces in the context of territorial recovery actions.

Among the most emblematic cases were the assassination of Matias Catrileo in 2008 during the government of Michelle Bachelet, and the killing of Camilo Castrillanca in 2018 during the government of Sebastián Piñera. The Castrillanca case generated widespread notoriety and outrage after videos circulated showing militarized police shooting him in the back while he was unarmed and driving a tractor.

These cases have become symbols of a broader pattern of violence, impunity, and militarization in Mapuche territory.

▸ Militarization and Criminalization

The current situation in Wallmapu is marked by a sustained and increasingly normalized militarization of daily life. Through repeated states of exception, the deployment of armed forces has become a permanent feature of many Mapuche territories. This militarization not only affects everyday community life, but is reinforced by a legal framework that increasingly shifts the political conflict into the sphere of criminal prosecution.

The implementation of new laws and judicial practices has allowed land recovery efforts to be interpreted through the logic of combating organized crime and terrorism, deepening the divide between the Chilean State and the Mapuche people.

The delegation interviewed numerous communities, all of which expressed great concern about the militarization they are experiencing. Community members warned that the expanding system of militarization, surveillance, and punitive legislation is increasingly being used to stigmatize territorial recovery processes as high-complexity crimes:

"The other thing is that the region is also militarized, it is populated by military personnel, which is the Carabineros in this case, to ensure compliance with the laws. There is a new law, which is about criminal organizations, during this government of Gabriel Boric. If a land recovery is carried out, [the participants] are automatically a criminal organization that have a leader, and we can take them prisoner because they are committing a crime and belong to a criminal organization."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

This testimony denounces what communities describe as a process of "guaranteed criminalization," in which the category of "criminal organization" becomes a political mechanism for dismantling the community organization itself. By equating land recovery with organized crime, the State not only justifies the use of military force and exceptional intelligence techniques but attempts to strip the Mapuche struggle of its historical and political legitimacy, reducing it to a criminal phenomenon that must be eradicated through the imprisonment of its leaders.

Criminalization is not only manifested through arrests and imprisonment but in the routine violation of basic procedural guarantees and due process. Claudio Donoso, a socio-environmental educator interviewed by the delegation, described how the judicial system increasingly operates under a logic of exception when dealing with Mapuche defendants.

"... [Mapuche prisoners] don't have a fair trial. All the hearings are online. They cannot communicate with their lawyer correctly. Many of them are under very long preventive detentions, without sufficient evidence."

–interview with Claudio Donoso

The legal vulnerability faced by Mapuche political prisoners is deeply concerning. The excessive use of pretrial detention, combined with the limitations of virtual hearings, undermines due process and effectively turns detention into a form of punishment before trial. In many cases, weak or insufficient evidence is offset by the isolation imposed through these legal procedures.

Pre-trial detention is a personal precautionary measure that a judge may order during a criminal investigation. It entails keeping people imprisoned while judicial proceedings are underway and prior to the issuance of a final conviction. Mapuche community members are often subjected to pre-trial detention periods that are far longer than usual, resulting in racist and disproportionate judicial measures.

Donoso also emphasized the **systemic racism** that governs the public and judicial agenda in Chile. His testimony underlines a painful contradiction: while the voice of the communities is systematically ignored, the arrival of an international delegation manages to generate media coverage and institutional responses that had previously been absent:

"So they (the GJEP delegation) met with [the Mapuche political prisoners]. They learned and held a press conference outside [the Temuco prison]. Radio BioBio arrived. They made news. Everything worked quite well because this country, unfortunately, is so racist that some gringos have to come to say things for it to appear in the news. Or the newspapers, or the journalists, or a television channel. There is the solution. All in a minute."

This criticism points to what could be described as a form of "legal and media racism." The fact that visibility and institutional response appear only under international scrutiny demonstrates that the previous lack of attention was not due to insufficient resources, but to a political dynamic of invisibilization. In this context, access to justice and public legitimacy appears deeply conditioned by ethnicity and social class, granting greater credibility to the foreign observer than to the affected subject.

4.7 CONCLUSION: CRIMINALIZATION AS STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

Criminalization in Mapuche territory operates as a system of structural and multifaceted violence, extending beyond legal frameworks into social, cultural, and generational dimensions. Despite this, the persistence of territorial recovery efforts demonstrates the resilience of Mapuche communities and the continued legitimacy of their demands.

"They are also uprooted from their community. We have had cases like that of Pelantaro, Héctor Llaitul's son, who at some point, along with the people he was arrested with, were taken to the Valdivia prison (a prison far from their homes), thus also being uprooted or separated from their family, impeding or restricting the right to visit."

—Lawyer for the Mapuche political prisoners, interviewed by GJEP.

▸ Legal and Judicial Violations

Continuing the analysis of criminalization, testimony from the legal defense team representing community members at the Biobío Penitentiary Compliance Center (CCP) helps systematize many of the violations reported throughout this investigation. The lawyer identifies two central concerns: the erosion of procedural guarantees through the increased use of virtual judicial processes and the annulment of Mapuche cultural identity within penal institutions:

"I want to talk about the prison conditions of the Mapuche political prisoners. Currently, for example, those who are here in the Biobío Penitentiary Complex have extremely limited access to their cultural conditions and the realization of their identity as Mapuche"

—Lawyer for the Mapuche political prisoners, interviewed by GJEP.

The lawyer's testimony confirms that the Chilean State not only criminally prosecutes those involved in the territorial struggles but, once imprisoned, subjects them to conditions that strip the accused of their most basic rights. The insistence on eliminating virtual hearings and restoring in-person trials is not a technical detail, but a requirement to guarantee effective communication between lawyer and defendant, which is significantly weakened in remote proceedings.

Likewise, the restriction of cultural practices in prisons such as El Manzano (Biobío) or Temuco represents an extension of institutional racism within the penitentiary system. These practices violate international treaties ratified by the Chilean State including ILO Convention 169, which requires respect for the social, cultural and spiritual traditions of indigenous peoples, even during incarceration.

The legal defense team of the community members also maintains that criminal prosecution functions not only to punish alleged crimes, but as a mechanism to weaken and disarticulate the social movement. According to the lawyer, imprisonment serves as a form of exemplary punishment aimed not only at those detained, but also at those who continue the territorial recovery processes outside prisons:

"The injustices we see are represented in various ways from the beginning of criminal prosecution, when they are criminalized for trying to recover their land [...]. In the criminal prosecution stage, the Prosecutor's Office and the State have turned to criminalizing the struggle. And the criminalization of the struggle is seen in the use of the penal system, to prosecute them, to be able to imprison them, and in that way make the struggle and the recoveries that exist outside falter. It is a kind of lesson for people who are not imprisoned today, to tell them 'If you commit these acts (that for them are a struggle), you will be imprisoned, you will be criminalized'."

—Lawyer for the Mapuche political prisoners, interviewed by GJEP.

This testimony describes what legal sociology often refers to as "penal populism" or "penal law of the author," in which identity and political cause (the struggle) are punished as much as or more than the alleged acts themselves. According to the defense, the objective is to weaken collective morale: by imprisoning the leaders, the State seeks to "make the Mapuche territorial recovery processes falter," using prison as a device for preventive social control.

The lawyer also described how punishment extends beyond imprisonment itself, affecting the vital bond between prisoners, their families and their communities. The transfer of Mapuche prisoners to distant prisons appears as a deliberate tactic of uprooting that violates fundamental rights of both the inmates and their families:

"They are also uprooted from their community. We have had cases like that of Pelantaro, Héctor Llaitul's son, who at some point, along with the people he was arrested with, were taken to the Valdivia prison (a prison far from their homes), thus also being uprooted or separated from their family, impeding or restricting the right to visit."

—Lawyer for the Mapuche political prisoners, interviewed by GJEP.

The case of Pelantaro Llaitul illustrates what communities describe as a systematic practice of territorial separation. By transferring Mapuche prisoners to facilities far from their territories and families, the State imposes an unofficial emotional punishment that weakens the community fabric. This "uprooting" is not only geographical but spiritual and cultural, as it prevents the exercise of collective identity and transforms family visits into a process of logistical exhaustion, again contravening international standards on the treatment of Indigenous prisoners.

▸ Rejection of the "Terrorism" Label

One of the points of greatest friction in public discourse concerns the classification of Mapuche resistance under anti-terrorism legislation. Movement spokespersons and members emphatically reject this characterization, arguing that their actions are not directed against the civilian population, but specifically against the interests of large extractivist industries operating in their ancestral territories:

"We flatly deny the term that our struggle is terrorist, since there is not and has never existed on the part of the Mapuche movement indiscriminate actions against the common civilian population."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

The testimony establishes a clear ethical distinction between sabotage of industrial property and indiscriminate attacks on civilians. By rejecting the idea that their actions are "terrorist" in nature, the movement seeks to dismantle the official narrative used to justify militarization, exceptional legal measures and political repression. From this perspective, the "terrorist" label is understood as a political construction designed to delegitimize a struggle that they define as selective and focused resistance against the agents of territorial dispossession.

According to imprisoned members of the Coordinadora Arauco Malleco (CAM), it is essential to understand the nature of their actions as distinct from attacks against people, but rather exclusively focused on sabotage against extractive industries. The following testimony defines the organization's actions as a form of political defense against the forestry industry and extractivist expansion.

"In the specific case of us, the Coordinadora Arauco Malleco, all the militants or all the community members who are, the peñi (brothers) who are deprived of liberty, respond to a struggle mainly against the forestry industry, against the extractivist industry. And it is limited only to that. We, as Coordinadora Arauco Malleco, can say that in 30 years of existence we have not been able to be linked, and there has never been any event related to bloodshed or to indiscriminate action. Quite the opposite. We vindicate and we take responsibility for the political violence that is exercised as a defense, against the forestry industry and against extractivism."

—Member of the support group for CAM political prisoners.

The importance of this testimony lies in its explicit assumption of responsibility for what is described as "political violence," while simultaneously distinguishing these actions from terrorism or indiscriminate violence. By declaring that their struggle is strictly against extractivist capital and that in three decades they have avoided "bloodshed," the community members position their resistance as an exercise of territorial self-defense and not an attack on civilians, workers, or state forces. Within this framework, sabotage is presented not as a random act of criminality, but as a political tool of territorial self-defense against an economic model they consider incompatible with the survival of the Mapuche world.

▸ Dialogue, Negotiation, and Political Resolution

Alongside more confrontational forms of resistance, there are communities that prioritize dialogue and institutional tools as pathways toward territorial restitution. The following testimony reflects a willingness to seek political solutions through negotiation rather than violent confrontation:

"I believe that fortunately, the repression has decreased a little, and I also believe it is due to the way we carry this out: because we never wanted to do it violently, our intention has never been bad, like to kill a police officer or go against justice in a bad way, but always seeking the solution, seeking dialogue. And that we amicably reach an agreement with the State. Now, I believe the State has to respond to us or to the current owners of the estates that the State handed over to them."

—Mapuche community member interviewed by the delegation.

This testimony shifts the responsibility for resolving the conflict towards the State, suggesting that the conflict must be resolved through negotiated compensation or mediation with the current owners of the estates to advance transfer of lands back to the Mapuche communities. The community positions itself as an actor willing to negotiate, provided the State fulfills its responsibilities regarding territorial restitution. This stance demonstrates that, even under conditions of pressure and repression, the Mapuche movement continues to pursue political solutions that avoid escalating the conflict.

▸ Criminalization and the Family

Criminalization in Mapuche territory does not affect only individuals, but strikes at the core of social organization: the family. Through the testimony of Rafael Pichún's mother, it becomes clear how the "terrorist" label has been systematically used across generations to persecute and weaken community leadership in a cycle of persecution that seems to have no end:

"And well, I am Rafael Pichún's mother. And this is my son's third imprisonment. For speaking out, for defending the community, he is a Werken, the spokesperson here ... They always call him a terrorist. I went through it with my husband, who was in prison for a long time. My son, my two sons were imprisoned at that time. My husband, for defending the land right here. All the edges here were forestry, it's full of pine. We are surrounded by plantations. So, for defending the land, he went to prison and then they accused his two other sons. Now his son is imprisoned again, my son Rafael."

—Mother of political prisoner Rafael Pichún.

This testimony exposes the intergenerational nature of repression in Mapuche communities. The mention of Lonko Pascual Pichún–whose case reached the Inter-American Court of Human Rights–connects present-day repression with a much longer history of the community and family struggle against tree plantations. For this family, the State is not a guarantor of rights, but an agent of raids and detentions that criminalizes the role of the Werken (spokesperson), transforming the defense of the territory into a hereditary family sentence.

Beyond the political dimension, the imprisonment of Mapuche leaders also generates a crisis of care that disproportionately impacts women and the elderly. In Rafael Pichún's case, pretrial detention not only deprives him of freedom but leaves his children in an extremely vulnerable situation following the death of their mother, forcing the grandmother to care for the children amidst state harassment:

"He is a father of four children ... he has two small children. He was in charge of his son and the children do not have their mother, their mother passed away. He was in charge of his son. And now I have to be responsible. I am in charge of my two youngest grandchildren. It has been very difficult for me. All my life I have been seeing them imprisoned ... I always said: my husband is not a terrorist. Neither is my son neither, no one is a terrorist here in Chile. I would let the police come in and search the house. The police never found anything."

—Mother of political prisoner Rafael Pichún.

The testimony reveals the hidden violence embedded in prolonged pretrial detention: the breaking of family and care networks. By imprisoning a father who was responsible for children who had already lost their mother, the judicial system imposes a form of punishment that extends far beyond the accused individual and directly impacts Mapuche children and elders.

The grandmother's testimony reflects this added burden, experienced amidst repeated raids, surveillance and arrests. At the same time, her willingness to allow police searches in order to prove that "there is nothing," underscores the innocence of a community that is besieged by a justice system that seeks "terrorists" among families simply defending their right to exist in landscapes dominated by monoculture plantations.

▸ Criminalization as Structural Violence

As these testimonies demonstrate, criminalization in Mapuche territory operates as a system of structural violence that extends far beyond the legal sphere. By labeling territorial defense as "terrorism," the Chilean State not only justifies militarization and exceptional judicial measures but also imposes a transgenerational punishment that fractures families and harms children.

At the same time, the persistence of territorial recovery processes–despite raids, imprisonment and the transfer of prisoners far from their communities–demonstrates that strategies of exemplary punishment have failed to silence Mapuche political demands.

The experience of many Mapuche communities confirms that, as long as the extractivist model continues to surround and threaten community life, prison will not be understood by the Mapuche people as a space of criminal punishment, but as a space of resistance from which demands for justice, dignity, and the definitive return of their territory continue to be raised.



△ *The mother (right) of Lonko Juan Pichún and political prisoner Rafael Pichún speaks to the international GJEP delegation in the historic Temulemu community.*
Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)

5
The Situation of Genetically Engineered Trees (Transgenic and Gene-Edited) in Chile

Large forestry companies such as Arauco (Angelini group) and CMPC (Matte group) seek to expand their monoculture tree plantations. One of their less-known strategies is the genetic modification of eucalyptus and pine varieties to make them more tolerant to cold, drought, pests, and altitude, among other factors. These varieties pose a serious threat to ecosystems and communities by expanding species with high socio-environmental impacts.

5.1 GLONI: THE HYBRID GENERATED BY FORESTAL ARAUCO

Seventeen years of research and a large investment have allowed the production of a hybrid called GloNi, a tree resulting from the mixture of Eucalyptus globulus and Eucalyptus nitens. This hybrid, created by the company Forestal Arauco, was released in Chile in 2014, and has expanded across 7 regions of the country.

BIOFOREST, the biotechnology arm of Forestal Arauco, maintains international alliances with various universities for the development of genetically modified trees. Its work has been important in the creation of GloNi.

The academic Fernando Droppelmann, involved in the ambitious GloNi project, explains it as follows: "***Eucalyptus globulus*** is a species with very good wood properties for fiber production, but poorly tolerant to cold. On the other hand, ***Eucalyptus nitens*** has excellent growth and is also quite cold-tolerant, however, it has lower quality fiber, so what has been achieved is that the developed GloNi have the growth and cold tolerance of E. nitens combined with the extraordinary wood characteristics of E. globulus."

The name GloNi is an acronym for the fusion of the words Globulus and Nitens, the two varieties of eucalyptus that were hybridized to create the new tree. GloNi is the company's most known and successful hybrid to date. While not genetically engineered (gene edited or transgenic), these high-tech hybrids demonstrate the desire of the company to advance their eucalyptus plantations into higher altitude and colder regions, where ***Eucalyptus globulus*** cannot grow.

Through the transparency law requested from CONAF (National Forestry Corporation), the quantity of GloNi eucalyptus planted in Chile could be confirmed. Currently, there are 13,000 hectares of the hybrid planted in the country. The regions with the largest quantity of GloNi eucalyptus are Biobío and Los Ríos. However, it is also present in Ñuble, La Araucanía, Maule, Los Lagos, and Aysén.

GloNi, which was released in 2014, already has 12 years since its dispersal, enough time for Forestal Arauco to evaluate a monoculture rotation. It is estimated that in this decade the company has already collected data on GloNi's productive performance through the analysis of its properties of cold resistance, altitude, water stress, pulp production, wood quality, among others.

According to sources who requested confidentiality, Forestal Arauco is producing large-scale GloNi clones from its various nurseries, which they seek to expand in various regions of Chile and abroad, particularly Brazil. The large-scale dispersal of this variety could mean that the invasive nature of the eucalyptus is enhanced, generating numerous problems for communities and ecosystems. These new hybrids could generate an unprecedented expansion of eucalyptus monoculture, increasing the enormous catastrophe derived from forest fires, mega-drought, and the loss of biodiversity.

While GloNi is not genetically engineered, other research into GE trees is occurring in Chile.

5.2 DOES A GENETICALLY ENGINEERED EUCALYPTUS EXIST IN CHILE?

Genetically engineered (GE) trees are trees whose DNA has been altered using biotechnology. There are three main approaches: "transgenic" trees, which have genes inserted from an entirely different species; "cisgenic" trees, which receive genes from another member of the same species; and "gene edited" trees, which use tools often described as "molecular scissors" to cut, remove, or relocate genes within the organism's own genome, without introducing foreign DNA. Companies pursue these techniques for different ends. Traditional transgenic methods have produced eucalyptus varieties with faster growth, pesticide resistance, or even the ability to generate their own insect-repelling toxins. More recently, companies like Arauco have turned to gene editing to alter a tree's wood chemistry — specifically its lignin content — making it easier to break down for pulp, chemicals, liquid fuels, textiles, and other products.

In 2018, researchers Alejandra Parra and Verónica González of the Latin American Observatory of Environmental Conflicts (OLCA) published ***Transgenic Trees in Chile***, warning of the risks that use of GE varieties would add to the existing impacts of tree plantations. The report found strong industry interest in the technology during the 2000s but concluded that no GE trees had actually been released in Chile: "Fortunately, in Chile there is no regulatory framework to provide a productive use to these technologies, which discourages the development of research in this area due to its high cost and the impossibility of obtaining a return through the commercial use of transgenic tree varieties in Chile."

To check whether that was still the case, in 2024 we filed a request under Chile's Transparency Law asking the Agricultural and Livestock Service (SAG) whether any permits had been issued, or transgenic trees introduced, over the previous decade (2014–2024). SAG's response: "Regarding the entry or existence of transgenic forest crops, the Service has not received authorization requests for the importation or cultivation of propagation materials of transgenic forest species (seeds or plants) for the period consulted."

While no GE eucalyptus exists in Chile today, the picture looks different elsewhere in South America. Brazil, the world's leading pulp and paper producer, already has several GE eucalyptus varieties in development that have been approved for commercial planting, and an active public debate over their use. Chilean companies have entered the Brazilian market aggressively — Arauco and CMPC have both bought land there and are planning enormous new pulp mills — positioning themselves to benefit from Brazil's comparatively lax environmental rules including commercial GE trees. Arauco's move into Brazil, including its new mega-mill



△ *Sofia Valenzuela, researcher at the University of Concepción. Valenzuela works in collaboration with Arauco to develop genetically engineered gene-edited trees for future tree plantations in Chile. The GJEP delegation interviewed Valenzuela about her research. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)*

in Mato Grosso do Sul, suggests the company's interest in GE tree plantations may simply be waiting for a more permissive regulatory environment.

5.3 GENE-EDITED EUCALYPTUS: ARAUCO'S INTERNATIONAL BET

CRISPR is a gene-editing technique that modifies an organism's own DNA rather than inserting genetic material from another species, which distinguishes it from transgenic methods. Often described as "molecular scissors," it allows scientists to cut and edit DNA at specific locations in the genome.

The technology gained global recognition in 2020, when Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for developing the CRISPR-Cas9 editing method. More recently, advances in artificial intelligence have further accelerated efforts to expand and commercialize CRISPR-based technologies.

CRISPR has also generated real ethical controversy. Critics have raised concerns, for example, about editing human embryos to alter behavioral or physical traits, reviving longstanding debates about eugenics and about a technology likely to be accessible only to those who can afford it. Scientific evidence has also countered industry claims that gene editing is precise and safe: a peer-reviewed study published in Science found that even after a targeted DNA break is repaired, the surrounding genome can remain structurally altered, with disrupted gene activity that persists and is passed on to future generations of cells — a phenomenon researchers call "chromatin fatigue." That finding raises serious concerns specifically about gene-edited trees, since any resulting environmental consequences would likely be both unpredictable and irreversible.

Because CRISPR edits an organism's own DNA rather than inserting foreign genetic material, biotechnology companies argue it shouldn't be regulated as strictly as traditional transgenic GMOs — and in most countries, including Chile, it currently isn't. Proponents contend the resulting changes could occur naturally; critics point to growing evidence of unintended, potentially irreversible, and heritable off-target effects as reason for stronger oversight. Either way, this regulatory gap is exactly what companies are moving to exploit to bring gene-edited eucalyptus and other tree varieties to market in Chile and elsewhere.

Facing legal obstacles to conventional transgenic trees, Arauco has pursued this path directly: in September 2023, the company acquired TreeCo, a US-based forest biotechnology firm specializing in CRISPR, for US$49 million. Founded by two North Carolina State University scientists, TreeCo focuses on gene-edited trees — a clear signal of Arauco's intent to develop the technology, and reason for concern that GE varieties could already be in development, or close to introduction, in Chile.

Sofía Valenzuela, one of Chile's leading forest biotechnology researchers, was interviewed about her work with Arauco on gene-edited trees by the GJEP delegation at the University of Concepción, where she works. In a 2019 interview, Valenzuela reflected on the industry's decades-long struggle to win approval for transgenic trees, hoping gene editing may offer a way around that impasse: "It has been a long battle to have GE trees commercially, after almost three decades we haven't succeeded in authorizing their use. I see that the genome editing opens a new door for us to have these trees [GE trees] in commercial plantations." (Alliance for Science interview, 2019)

Arauco isn't alone: our investigation also found that CMPC has an alliance with Neocroptech, a Chilean company working with CRISPR and other agricultural biotechnology tools.

In 2024, we submitted transparency requests to SAG and CONAF asking how many genetically edited trees exist in Chile. Both agencies responded that they had no such information — a troubling sign that public agencies are not systematically monitoring or regulating these technologies, despite their potentially serious impacts.

5.4 SITUATION OF UNIVERSITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED PINE AND EUCALYPTUS SPECIES

In Chile, several universities are involved in developing genetically modified pine and eucalyptus varieties, including the Universidad de Chile, Universidad de Concepción, Universidad Mayor, and Universidad Austral de Chile — all of which collaborate with major Chilean forestry companies on new GM tree varieties.

The Forest Genomics Laboratory at the University's Biotechnology Center runs the Euca-Drought project, which aims to identify eucalyptus varieties that are both drought-tolerant and more water-efficient. The project is funded by the state through the National Research and Development Agency (ANID) and supported by Bioforest, Arauco's biotechnology arm.

Internationally, Chilean forestry companies collaborate with North Carolina State University on biotechnology, genetics, and silviculture; Oregon State University on biotechnology and silviculture; and the University of Toronto and University of British Columbia on recovery and productivity research.

One notable milestone: CMPC, working with the Universidad de Concepción, sequenced the genome of the native ***Araucaria araucana*** — an endangered species and one of Chile's most emblematic trees, and a vital food source for the Mapuche people through its pine nut, the ***piñón***. The sequencing has raised concerns about the tree's potential privatization or genetic manipulation.

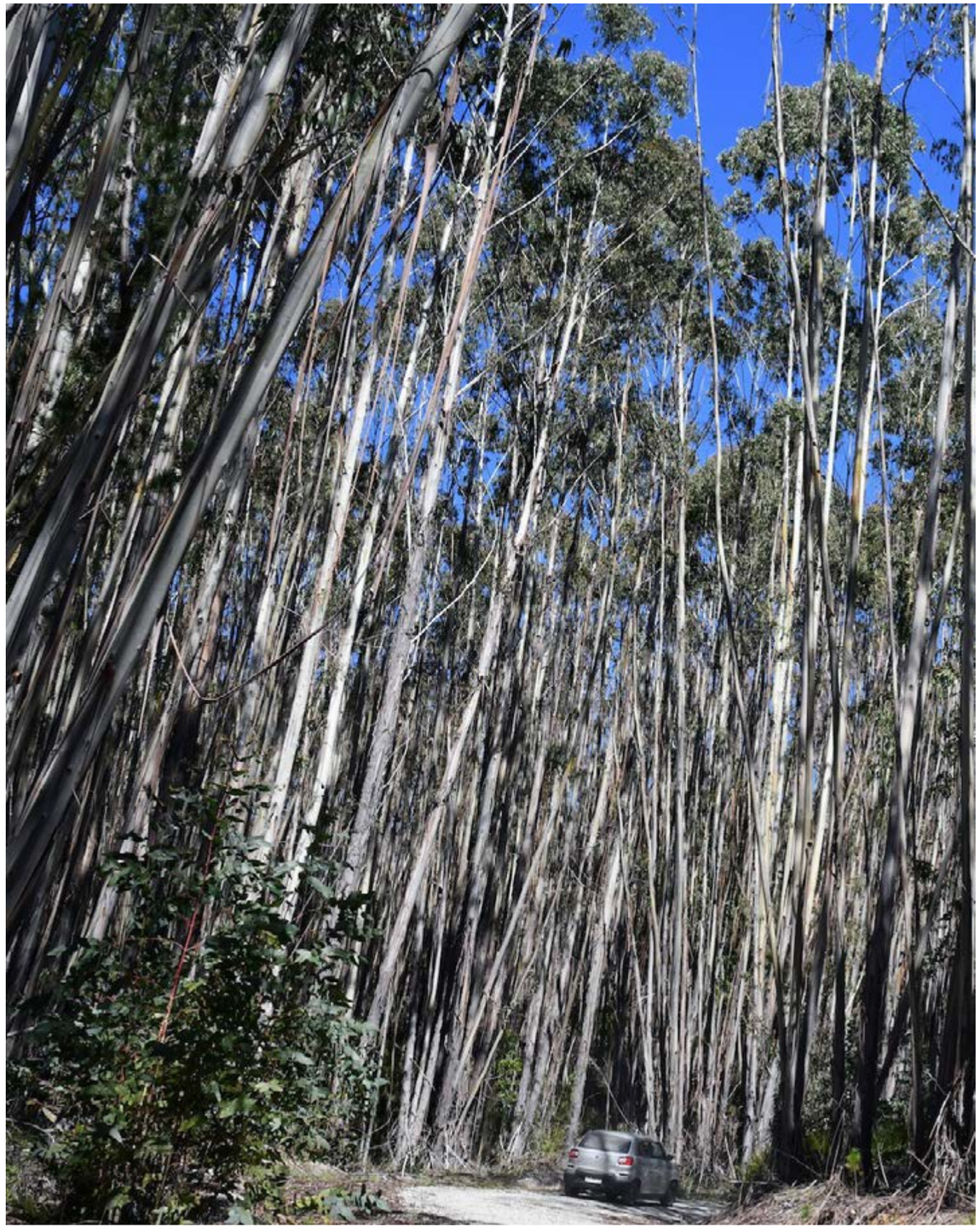
5.5 THE NEED FOR REGULATION OF TREE PLANTATIONS AND GENETIC ENGINEERING IN CHILE

Genetically engineering trees is a uniquely high-stakes undertaking. Trees can live for hundreds, even thousands, of years, and engineered varieties can disperse widely through pollen and seed — creating disruptive, likely irreversible changes to forest ecosystems. Many of the species being modified, including pine and eucalyptus, are already highly invasive, which makes uncontrolled dispersal — and its impact on communities and biodiversity — even more likely.

Cold-resistant eucalyptus varieties illustrate the risk concretely: they could extend plantations into mountainous areas that still hold native forest and the ecosystems that supply clean water and shelter biodiversity. This technological push is part of a broader expansion strategy: in 2024, the Chilean Wood Corporation (CORMA) announced that Arauco and CMPC, with government backing, plan to add one million hectares of pine and eucalyptus plantations by 2049 — a 30 percent increase that would dramatically worsen forest fires, water scarcity, and biodiversity loss. Gene editing could accelerate this expansion even further, deepening the catastrophe already driven by wildfires, mega-drought, and biodiversity loss.

Chile does have some regulation of transgenic trees that has slowed their spread. But there is no clear regulatory framework for technologies like CRISPR gene editing — a gap that leaves the door open for large forestry companies like Arauco and CMPC to introduce genetically engineered tree plantations at scale.

There is one body putting the brakes on industry's hopes for gene edited trees to evade regulation. A July 2026 decision by the Board of the Forest Stewardship Council, the leading global sustainable forestry certifying body, concluded that their existing ban on genetically modified organisms (GMOs including GE trees) includes gene editing. This means that gene edited trees and their products are banned from certification by the FSC and any company that commercially produces them would lose their FSC certification. The FSC's ban on GMOs has acted as a market barrier to the commercial development of GE trees and now will further act as a block to development of gene edited trees.



▹ *Eucalyptus plantation along the road entering the Nahuelbuta National Park. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)*

6
Closing Conclusions and Projections During the New Far-Right Government of Jose Antonio Kast

As a conclusion of this report, it can be affirmed that the industrial forestry model in Chile is not only a system of economic exploitation but also a mechanism of territorial dispossession and cultural erosion that has fractured the balance of Wallmapu. The expansion of pine and eucalyptus plantations has generated a multidimensional socio-ecological crisis, characterized by severe water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and devastating mega-fires. In response, Mapuche resistance emerges not only as a demand for the return of land but as a civilizational proposal based on the Itrofillmongen – respect for all forms of life – and autonomy, seeking to restore ecosystems that have been displaced by the logic of capital and invasive monoculture plantations.

"International civil society, human rights organizations, Indigenous movements, as well as climate and environmental justice advocates must play an active role in exposing these abuses, amplifying Mapuche voices, and demanding accountability from both the Chilean state and the transnational corporations that benefit from this model."

However, the future outlook is alarming. With the arrival of the **far-right government of José Antonio Kast** (2026-2030), **repression** and the usurpation of ancestral lands is projected to deepen. This scenario raises urgent concerns:

Intensification of criminalization: The new administration is expected to use recent punitive laws, such as the **Usurpation Law**, with greater force to prosecute territorial recovery processes under the label of "criminal organizations." Additional repressive legislation could also be introduced.

Militarization of daily life: The normalization of states of exception and the deployment of military forces in Mapuche territory could escalate into unprecedented levels of state violence, justified through a discourse of "pacification" that has historically concealed genocidal practices.

Extractivist and biotechnological expansion: The Kast government will likely facilitate the expansion of the forest frontier into native forest protection zones, taking advantage of regulatory loopholes to introduce **genetically edited (CRISPR)** species and new hybrids, further aggravating the environmental catastrophe and the vulnerability of communities.

In short, the testimonies collected warn that the Chilean State, under this new leadership, risks consolidating and intensifying a system of **legal and media racism** that nullifies human and ancestral rights in favor of the interests of the powerful economic groups.

Chile's geographical isolation, combined with a media landscape largely aligned with government and corporate agendas, enables the state to carry out systematic violations against the Mapuche people with limited external scrutiny or accountability. **In this context, international attention and solidarity are not optional—they are essential.**

The defense of Wallmapu and the rights of the Mapuche people cannot be understood as a local or isolated struggle. It is part of a global confrontation with extractivist models, false climate solutions, and the expansion of a bioeconomy that commodifies life itself. As such, responsibility extends beyond Chile's borders. **International civil society, human rights organizations, Indigenous movements, as well as climate and environmental justice advocates must play an active role in exposing these abuses, amplifying Mapuche voices, and demanding accountability from both the Chilean state and the transnational corporations that benefit from this model.**

At a time when repression is deepening and democratic space is narrowing, global solidarity can serve as a critical counterweight—helping to break through media silence, deter further violence, and support the Mapuche people in their ongoing defense of land, culture, and life itself. The future of Wallmapu, and the broader struggle for ecological and cultural survival, may well depend on it.

ANNEX
GJEP Delegation Itinerary and Activity Summary

The following section provides a chronological account of the delegation's activities and meetings during its visit to Chile.

From 7 to 20 October 2024, the international GJEP delegation carried out a series of visits to see in situ the situation of Mapuche communities and the impacts of the forestry industry in Chile and Wallmapu.

In these intense days of work, the delegation visited four regions and eleven municipalities, six Mapuche indigenous communities, and two peasant communities affected by tree plantations. The delegation also traveled to three pulp mills and met with hundreds of people and representatives of community, indigenous, and civil society organizations affected by the forestry industry.

After extensive efforts to obtain access credentials, members of the international delegation were able to enter prison facilities and interview incarcerated Mapuche community members, obtaining exclusive testimonies from Mapuche political prisoners. In total, GJEP delegation members visited three prison facilities and interviewed eleven political prisoners.

The delegation also participated in the launch of the Spanish version of the book "Portraits of Struggle," (Retratos de Lucha), met with socio-environmental organizations in the city of Concepción, and visited national parks and protected reserves, among other activities that enriched the delegation's understanding of the social, political and environmental realities of Wallmapu.

▿ *Members of the GJEP international delegation: interpreter David Hathaway (center) and delegation lead Anne Petermann (right) speak to the media following the delegation's meeting with Mapuche political prisoners inside the prison. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)*



Day One: October 7

Meeting with Political Prisoners in the Temuco Prison and Press Conference with Relatives and Media

On October 7, 2024, three members of the international delegation entered the module for Mapuche community members in the Temuco prison. There they interviewed seven political prisoners and met with their relatives outside.

The seven Mapuche political prisoners interviewed are members of the Coordinadora Arauco Malleco (CAM), one of the oldest Mapuche organizations involved in coordinating land reclamation efforts against forestry companies and large landowners. They are Rafael Pichún Collonao, Daniel Canio Trancal, Juan Carlos Mardones Saez, Pelantaro Llaitul Pezoa, Jorge Caniupil Coña, Luis Menares Chanilao, and Roberto Garling Infanta.

Despite their individual cases, the prisoners described a number of common experiences. Many have spent extended periods in pre-trial detention, and encountered obstacles to communicating with their defense lawyers. Several also testified about torture, mistreatment and degrading prison conditions.

All have been accused of participating in acts of sabotage against forestry machinery, and face sentences of up to 90 years in prison for crimes alleged by prosecutors, even though the actions did not involve attacks on, or physical harm to, individuals.

RAFAEL PICHÚN COLLONAO, SPOKESPERSON FOR THE CAM

Inside the prison, the GJEP delegation listened to the testimonies of the seven political prisoners, including that of Rafael Pichun Collonao, spokesperson for the Coordinadora Arauco Malleco (CAM). Pichun assumed the role after the arrest of the previous spokesperson, Hector Llaitul, in 2022. LLaitul was sentenced to 23 years in prison.

At the time of the interview, Rafael Pichún had spent nearly two years in pretrial detention in the Temuco prison. The charges against him stem from an incident that allegedly occurred in the commune of Quilleco, in the Biobío region, where prosecutors accuse him of being the intellectual author of an act of sabotage of forestry machinery.

Pichun is the father of four children–2 adults and 2 minors. The younger children lost their mother to illness and, during his imprisonment, are being cared for by relatives.

His history of political imprisonment stretches back more than two decades. He was first imprisoned in the early 2000s and was imprisoned again between 2002 and 2009. Over the years, he has entered and left prison on several occasions, as have his brothers and his father, a renowned Lonko (Mapuche leader) Pascual Pichun. The documentary "The Trial of Pascual Pichún" recounts the history of criminalization experienced by the Temu Lemu community and its Lonko.

Pichun told the GJEP delegation that he considers himself a political prisoner, arguing that he is being prosecuted for his ideas and for his role within the Mapuche movement, and not for his actions. He maintains that the case against him is based not on evidence, but on his family history of territorial struggle and his position as the spokesperson for the Coordinadora Arauco Malleco.

He described his request to be transferred to the Traiguén prison, where he would be closer to his relatives and children. Although the court approved the transfer, he remained in Traiguén for only one day before being returned to Temuco. He explained that in Traiguén, he was left in a module where all his clothes and belongings were stolen.

Pichún further explained that, after the transfer, masked individuals forcibly removed him and returned him to the Temuco prison. Upon his arrival, they punished him without explanation and locked him in a cell without food and under poor conditions. Pichún denounced the experience as a form of torture.

"With my family, we are no longer asking for my transfer, because all these irregular events are occurring," he commented.

Pichún also explained that prisoners are forced to participate in government "reintegration" programs.

"For not participating they don't give us benefits," he stated.

He further reported that:

"The same day of the transfer, the police went to my children's school with weapons, with machine guns. That is to say, from childhood we are watched, since we are in schools and kindergartens."

He emphasized that CAM is a political organization that does not carry out attacks against individuals.

"Our struggle is clean. Even so, the government and the far-right say that we are terrorists and murderers; and that the CAM has stopped development and progress."

He also emphasized that powerful economic interests exercise significant influence over political institutions:

"Businessmen like Angelini, Matte and Von Appen have manipulated judges, politicians, mayors including Mapuche leaders."

In January 2026, Rafael Pichun was sentenced to seven years in prison after being found guilty of acting as the intellectual author of an attack on forestry machinery.

PRESS CONFERENCE AND MEETING WITH RELATIVES OUTSIDE THE TEMUCO PRISON

After the meeting with the seven political prisoners and listening to the story of Rafael Pichún and the other incarcerated community members, the GJEP delegation participated in a press conference outside the Temuco prison, together with relatives of the prisoners.

The event included interviews with several media outlets, including Radio Biobio, one of Chile's most widely followed news outlets. Through these interviews, the GJEP delegation was able to share its observations from inside the prison and bring greater visibility to the testimonies and concerns raised by the Mapuche political prisoners.

During the press conference, family members highlighted the lack of due process guarantees, the repression and mistreatment experienced by prisoners, and the irregularities they believe characterize many of the judicial proceedings against Mapuche community members.

The gathering also provided an opportunity for the delegation and the families to exchange information, discuss recent developments in the cases, and gain a deeper understanding of the conditions facing Mapuche prisoners and their communities.

Day Two: October 8

The Renaco Pastales Mapuche Community and Launch of the Book "Portraits of Struggle" by Orin Langelle

▿ *The Lonko of the Renaco Pastales Mapuche community speaks to the GJEP international delegation about the lands their community has recovered from forestry companies and large landowners through direct action. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)*



On 8 October 2024, the international GJEP delegation traveled to the Renaco Pastales Mapuche community in a rural area of the commune of Temuco, capital of the Araucanía region. The community is linked to territorial recovery processes and the Coordinadora Arauco Malleco (CAM). Its members have denounced state "set-ups" and "repression", as well as the usurpation of their lands by forestry companies and large landowners.

THE WORK OF TERRITORIAL RECOVERY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY OF THE RENACO PASTALES COMMUNITY

In 2021, together with 20 other Mapuche communities, Renaco Pastales issued a statement declaring that ***"the militarization imposed by this fascist government responds to the substantive advance of the political and territorial recovery process emanating from our expressions of struggle in conjunction with the Mapuche autonomous movement."***

In 2024, the community reported completing a new grain harvest, on lands occupied for many years by the forestry company Bosques Cautín of the Von Appen family.

"For some time now, through a determined struggle on the part of our families, our community, and organization, we have recovered, controlled, and defended. And returned our lands to be fertile and productive, in spite of the company maintaining eucalyptus monoculture with all the damage that this entails," they expressed in a statement.

During the visit, the GJEP delegation toured the community's territorial recovery which remains in dispute with forestry companies. Leaders and ancestral Mapuche authorities from various territories gathered to share their reflections with GJEP.

The delegation also observed the community's wheat and cereal crops growing in areas where pine and eucalyptus had previously grown. Community members explained that these efforts have strengthened family food sovereignty and transformed land once used for the industrial production of pulp for export, to land used for the artisanal production of food for local indigenous communities.

THE MEETING BETWEEN GJEP, THE MAPUCHE COMMUNITY, AND THE RELATIVES OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

The meeting with Renaco Pastales was held in a Mapuche ceremonial space (*rewe*) and a conversation space (*trawun*). The activity had a large turnout with approximately 30 people attending, including relatives of Mapuche political prisoners.

During the gathering, various Mapuche organizations testified to the international delegation about the severe repression they have experienced across decades and centuries. The Renaco Pastales community also expressed concern for members currently imprisoned, including Mapuche political prisoner Luis Menares Chanilao, whom the GJEP delegation had visited the previous day in the Temuco prison.

The delegation also shared information with the communities and presented the Spanish version of Orin Langelle's photography book "Portraits of Struggle." In addition, they delivered aid, provisions, and cleaning supplies for the political prisoners.

LAUNCH OF THE BOOK "*RETRATOS DE LUCHA*" ("PORTRAITS OF STRUGGLE") BY ORIN LANGELLE

In the city of Temuco, capital of the Araucanía Region, the Spanish version of the photography book *Portraits of Struggle* was officially launched. The book is the work of photojournalist Orin Langelle, a member of the international GJEP delegation. Several photographs in the publication document Langelle's work in Chile beginning in 2004.

The event was held at the Leo Libros bookstore, where the book was presented to an audience that had the opportunity to engage with the author, ask questions, and obtain copies through a voluntary contribution. The publication brings together photographs taken across four continents over a span of fifty years, including important visual records of the Mapuche struggle in Wallmapu and the social uprising in Chile in 2019.

The presentation also featured musical performances by local singer-songwriter and activist Alejandra Parra, simultaneous interpretation by David Hathaway, support from GJEP Executive Director Anne Petermann, and audiovisual documentation by GJEP Communications Director Steve Taylor.

Day Three: October 9

Visit to Mapuche Communities in the Cordillera Territory

▽ *The Lonko of the Kilape López community is interviewed by the GJEP international delegation. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)*



On this day, the international delegation traveled into the Andes, amid enormous volcanoes and ancestral Mapuche lands. The objective was to meet with two emblematic Mapuche communities in the cordillera area of the commune of Curacautín, in the Araucanía Region.

KILAPE LÓPEZ MAPUCHE COMMUNITY: DOCUMENTED BY GJEP IN 2019 AND 2024

The ancestral Kilape López community, located in the commune of Curacautín, has been engaged for years in an active process of territorial recovery of lands seized by large landowners in the area, who seek to establish tourism, agricultural, and forestry businesses.

The community is involved in various processes of productive recovery, using the recovered lands to grow food and produce fodder for their animals during the difficult winter months in the high mountains of the Andes. Throughout this process, community members have experienced repression, the use of firearms by police against them, and the political imprisonment of some members.

In 2019, a previous GJEP delegation visited this Mapuche territory over two days and was present during a police raid of the community that left several people injured. The delegation documented the situation extensively through photography and witnessed the repression against the community firsthand.

In this second visit, five years later, the 2024 GJEP delegation sought to assess the current situation of the community and follow up on the territorial claim process. A *trawun* (collective conversation) was held in a ceremonial space at the foot of the Andes Mountains and imposing volcanoes. During the gathering, the Lonko (community leader) shared that two young members of the community had recently been arrested and imprisoned. He also reported on the progress of the territorial recovery process, the fruits of the community's persistent struggle, and the agricultural and livestock production capacity they have achieved over time. At the same time, he emphasized the high costs of this struggle as a result of state repression, which, he commented, was targeting young people.

Other community members spoke about the importance of the struggle carried out by the Mapuche people, emphasizing that it is a battle that has continued for centuries, from the Spanish invasion in the 16th century to the current invasion by the Chilean State in the 21st century.

The arrest and imprisonment of the two young Mapuche members of the community was also discussed. These young men are Rubén Cheuquepan and Leandro Catrileo Camargo. According to their relatives and lawyers, both are being unjustly charged.

The international delegation delivered photographs from its 2019 visit to the community, including a photograph of Cheuquepan and Camargo when they were free, taking part in a ceremony with their community and demanding their rights as Mapuche. These photographs, deeply appreciated by the community, are also included in the book *Portraits of Struggle*, which was presented as a gift to the community.

The Kilape López community remains an important reference point in the Mapuche struggle. In a public statement, they affirmed: "as Pewenche territory we are not left out of the different raids that have been carried out in different lof of Wallmapu where we view with caution the excessive force of the Chilean police that attack and violate all political and spiritual rights towards our people, especially *pichikeche* (children) and ancestral authorities. We reject the acts of violence exercised historically not only against our lof but against the entire Mapuche Nation People. As Lof Kilape López Autónomo we join the autonomist thought of the territories in resistance."

To this day, the community remains engaged in territorial recovery processes against large landowners and companies that illegitimately appropriated the Río Blanco estate, among others. At the same time, its two political prisoners, Rubén Cheuquepan and Leandro Catrileo Camargo, remain in prison. According to the Prosecutor's Office, they are accused of carrying firearms and attempted arson, while their relatives maintain that they are innocent of these charges.

LIEMPI COLIPI, ANOTHER MAPUCHE COMMUNITY IN THE CORDILLERA VISITED BY GJEP

Later that same day, the international delegation visited the nearby Liempi Colipi community. This gathering was more intimate, with approximately ten participants, all key members of the community. The meeting took place at the community center, where a large mural depicting the Mapuche worldview adorned the walls.

During the meeting, which lasted several hours, participants discussed the political and repressive situation currently facing Mapuche communities in Wallmapu and throughout Chile. Members of the Liempi Colipi community highlighted a series of laws that, in their view, have increased the persecution and criminalization of Mapuche communities engaged in resistance and territorial recovery processes.

The first law they identified was the so-called Usurpation Law, or "Anti-Occupation Law," which was approved during the government of Gabriel Boric. According to community members, the

law allows police forces to evict Mapuche communities without the need for a judicial order. In practice, they argued, it facilitates repression against communities involved in territorial recovery efforts.

They also discussed the Nain-Retamal Law, commonly known as the "Easy Trigger Law," which expanded police powers regarding the use of force and firearms in situations where officers claim their safety is at risk. This law was also approved during the Boric administration. Another concern raised was the new Anti-Terrorism Law, which community members believe gives police and prosecutors broader powers to pursue Mapuche organizations under criteria that are often applied in discriminatory ways. Community representatives warned that these laws pose significant obstacles to the exercise of Mapuche autonomy and self-determination.

During the meeting, members of the international delegation shared information about developments in genetically engineered trees, the global expansion of extractive industries, and other issues of concern to the community.

The visit concluded with the presentation of a copy of *Retratos de Lucha (Portraits of Struggle)* and a mutual commitment to remain in communication.

▽ *The 2019 GJEP delegation to Chile visited Liempi Colipi where they were given permission to document this traditional Mapuche ceremony which honors mañke, the Andean condor, a sacred bird. Photo: Orin Langelle (langellephoto.org)*



Day Four: October 10
The Historic Temulemu Community in Araucanía and the CET-Cañete Prison

During this day, the international delegation visited one of the most emblematic Mapuche communities in the struggle for territorial recovery and resistance to forestry companies and large landowners. The Temulemu Mapuche community, located in the commune of Traiguén in the Araucanía Region, has faced decades of state repression and judicial criminalization, including arrests, prosecutions, and imprisonment of its traditional authorities.



△ *Lonko Juan Pichún (right) speaks to the GJEP delegation in Temulemu. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)*

Several of the leaders of the TemuLemu community are currently or have recently been imprisoned, including Rafael Pichún, whom the delegation visited on the first day of the trip at Temuco Prison, and his brother Juan Pichún, Lonko of the Temulemu community and host of the meeting held during the delegation's visit. Eight months after this meeting, Juan Pichún was also imprisoned and transferred to Temuco Prison. In 2026 he was released from prison and placed under house arrest.

The international GJEP delegation met with Juan Pichún and other family members of political prisoners and other prominent members of the Temulemu community. The delegation also visited the community's elementary school and health center, both of which community members described as frequent targets of police surveillance and harassment.

MEETING AT THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

The gathering between the international delegation and members of the Temulemu community took place at a community health center located near the community. This facility was established as part of the reparations ordered after the Inter-American Court of Human Rights found the Chilean State responsible for the repression, harassment, political persecution, and imprisonment experienced by members of the Pichún family and the Temulemu community.

Approximately thirty people attended the meeting, which was led by Lonko Juan Pichún. He reflected on the long history of struggle carried out by the community and described the ongoing repression and criminalization that has resulted in the imprisonment of several community members, including his brother Rafael Pichún.

The mother of both Juan and Rafael Pichún also spoke, recalling that her former husband—and father of the two leaders—had spent years in prison after being prosecuted under Chile's anti-terrorism legislation. She described the use of protected witnesses and other mechanisms that, in her view, were employed to criminalize the community's struggle.

Staff from the local elementary school also addressed the gathering. They described the constant presence of heavily armed police near the school and expressed concern about the impact on Mapuche children, who regularly witness officers carrying automatic weapons in the school and around the area.

Throughout the meeting, community members emphasized that the Inter-American Court of Human Rights had already ruled against the Chilean State for its treatment of the Temulemu community, underscoring the long-standing pattern of repression they continue to face.

THE ARREST OF LONKO JUAN PICHÚN FOLLOWING THE GJEP DELEGATION'S VISIT

More than eight months after the international GJEP delegation's visit, Juan Pichún, Lonko of the Temulemu community and host of the delegation's meeting, was arrested by Chilean investigative police in front of his children during a heavily armed police operation.

Juan Pichún's arrest took place on June 26, 2025, amid growing tensions in the region. According to his supporters and legal defense team, the operation lacked basic due process guarantees. Prosecutors allege that Pichún was involved in a series of arson attacks. His detention, however, has been described by community members as a new "set-up" intended to weaken community organization and undermine the territorial defense efforts of Mapuche communities.

Sergio Millaman, attorney for Juan Pichún, publicly questioned the strength of the case against his client, describing the evidence presented by prosecutors as "merely speculative." Millaman argued that the information gathered during the investigation does not provide a sufficiently well-founded basis to conclude that Pichún participated in the alleged acts. According to the defense, there are no witnesses placing him at the scene, no images linking him to the events, and no victim testimony identifying him as one of the participants.

Juan Pichún was incarcerated in the Mapuche prisoners' module at Temuco Prison, where his brother Rafael Pichún is also imprisoned, but was eventually moved from the prison and remains under house arrest.

VISIT TO THE CET-CAÑETE PRISON AND MEETING WITH POLITICAL PRISONER VÍCTOR LLANQUILEO

Following the visit to the Temulemu community, the delegation traveled to the commune of Cañete, where it entered the CET-Cañete prison facility to meet with Mapuche political prisoner Víctor Llanquileo.

Five members of the international delegation were granted access to the facility and conducted an interview with Llanquileo, who at the time was serving a mixed custodial regime that combined time in the penitentiary center with periods of house arrest.

During the interview, Llanquileo emphasized what he described as the structural causes of the Mapuche struggle, highlighting the historical occupation of Mapuche territory by large forestry, agricultural, and energy companies, as well as large landowners, with the support of the Chilean State.

Over the course of the approximately two-hour meeting, Llanquileo guided the delegation through parts of the prison facility, including agricultural projects carried out by prisoners and workshops where woodcrafts and other forms of manual work are produced. He explained how he seeks to maintain and practice Mapuche culture through these activities, incorporating traditional agricultural knowledge and ancestral woodworking practices into his daily life.

Víctor Llanquileo remains under this mixed prison regime while completing his sentence. Although he was convicted, he maintains that he is innocent and argues that his imprisonment is political in nature.

Day Five: October 11

Arrival in the Mapuche City of Tirúa, One of the Epicenters of the Mapuche Autonomist Movement

On this day, the international delegation arrived in the coastal city of Tirúa, where it would spend the next two nights learning firsthand about Mapuche culture and the realities of life in the territory. The commune of Tirúa lies along the Pacific coast and forms part of what is known as *Lavkenmapu*—the territory of the Lafkenche (coastal) Mapuche people.



During the day, the delegation toured different areas of the city and observed the high level of militarization present in the region. This included photographic documentation of several police installations whose size and scale appeared disproportionate to the relatively small population of Tirúa.

As part of the visit, the delegation met with Relmu Witral, a community organization of Mapuche women weavers. The organization is dedicated to the cooperative production of traditional Mapuche textiles made from wool and dyed with native plant-based pigments. Through fair-trade networks, the women are able to market their work while preserving traditional knowledge and cultural practices.

The delegation also spent time walking through the city of Tirúa, learning about local culture, gastronomy, and traditions in a territory whose population is predominantly Mapuche. The remainder of the day was dedicated to logistical preparations for the following stages of the delegation's itinerary.

△ *International delegation visits the city of Tirúa and the Relmu Witral organization of Mapuche artisan and weaver women.*
Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)

Day Six: October 12

Visit to Mapuche Communities in Resistance in the Pocuno and Lago Lleu Lleu regions

▿ *Members of the Pocuno community explain to the international delegation the situation of criminalization and repression they face daily.*
Photo: Orin Langelle/ GJEP



During this day, the GJEP delegation visited the historic Mapuche community of Pocuno in the morning. Known for its long history of resistance, the Pocuno community was immortalized in the song *Angelita Huenumán* by the renowned Chilean singer-songwriter Víctor Jara, who was murdered following the military coup that brought Augusto Pinochet to power. In the afternoon, the delegation visited communities engaged in territorial recovery processes in the Lago Lleu Lleu and Lake Lanalhue areas, and toured the community's school and greenhouse.

THE POCUNO MAPUCHE COMMUNITY

In the Pocuno community, the GJEP delegation learned about the long history of struggle and repression experienced by community members. At the time of the visit, two members of the community were imprisoned: Claudia Nahuelan and Federico Astete, both accused of leading a Mapuche resistance organization that the Chilean State classifies as a terrorist organization.

Community members recounted the history of territorial recovery efforts carried out by their families, as well as the constant police harassment they have faced over the years. They also presented evidence of attacks against the community, including gunfire directed at homes and acts of arson.

On January 9, 2024, community member Claudia Nahuelan—who remains imprisoned—was arrested and subsequently transferred through several prison facilities before being held in Arauco. Federico Astete, the other imprisoned community member, is being held in Concepción Prison after being arrested while in hiding.

During the visit, community members welcomed the international delegation and shared firsthand testimony about the conditions they face and their determination to continue defending their territory despite ongoing repression and hardship. The delegation also learned about young children of the community's political prisoners, who, at the time, had not seen their parents for more than nine months.

The gathering lasted several hours and concluded with the presentation of a copy of *Portraits of Struggle* to the community.

MEETINGS WITH MAPUCHE COMMUNITIES AROUND LAGO LLEU LLEU

The Lago Lleu Lleu territory is emblematic in the history of Mapuche resistance. For many years, lands surrounding the lake were occupied by forestry companies, settlers, and large landowners. Through decades of struggle and territorial recovery efforts, Mapuche communities have regained control over much of the lakeshore and have developed local economic initiatives, including family- and community-based tourism, agriculture, and other forms of sustainable livelihood.

The delegation visited several communities in the Lleu Lleu territory, including both ongoing and consolidated territorial recovery processes. Community members described the permanent police and military presence in the area, including the use of drones and other surveillance technologies that regularly monitor their territory.

Throughout the day, the GJEP delegation shared information on issues relevant to the communities, while community members explained the challenges they currently face. Several participants also gave video interviews to the GJEP audiovisual team.

The delegation met with family members and supporters of several community youth who have since been imprisoned under Chile's new anti-terrorism legislation. Lientur Millacheo and Jaime Huenchuñir were arrested at the end of 2025 and prosecuted under the new law, which allows for prolonged periods of pretrial detention.

Community members continue to demand fair trials for the imprisoned young Mapuche activists, calling for their release and denouncing what they describe as systematic torture and mistreatment during detention and imprisonment.



△ *The international delegation met with communities around Lake Lleu Lleu – the territory is a major feature in the history of Mapuche resistance. Photo: Langelle/ GJEP (2024)*

Day Seven: October 13

Nahuelbuta National Park, the Last Refuge of the Ancient Araucaria Forests on the Coast of Wallmapu



On this day, the delegation departed early from the city of Tirúa and traveled to Nahuelbuta National Park, an important refuge for biodiversity in Arauco Province. Located in the Nahuelbuta Mountain Range of Chile's coastal cordillera, the park is increasingly threatened by the expansion of industrial pine and eucalyptus plantations which surround it.

The park is known as the last refuge of the araucaria forests in the coastal mountain range of Chile and Wallmapu. The araucaria (*Araucaria araucana*) is an emblematic and ancient tree species that can live for more than 1,000 years and is considered endangered in parts of its range.

To reach the park, the GJEP delegation traveled for several hours along steep and nearly impassable mountain roads, climbing to elevations of approximately 1,500 meters above sea level. The journey offered an opportunity to witness the scale and grandeur of the ancient araucaria forests and the remarkable biodiversity associated with this unique coastal mountain ecosystem, side by side with the devastated landscapes of pine and eucalyptus plantations and clearcuts.

At the top of the mountain overlooking the park, the delegation interviewed naturalist Edgardo Flores, a specialist in local biodiversity who has contributed to the discovery of several new species in the region. Flores explained the impacts of industrial pine and eucalyptus plantations on the mountain ecosystem and on the araucarias themselves, which face growing threats from land-use change, large-scale wildfires, emerging diseases, and rising temperatures associated with climate change.

Throughout the day, the GJEP delegation documented the area through photography and video, capturing images of one of the last remnants of the rich biodiversity that once characterized much of the coastal mountain range before it was largely replaced by industrial tree plantations.

The delegation also observed the deteriorating condition of the park's infrastructure, including the absence of park rangers and the limited resources available for monitoring and protecting this ecologically significant area. Community members and local experts expressed concern that insufficient funding and oversight leave the park increasingly vulnerable to environmental pressures and future threats.



◁ *Nahuelbuta National Park hosts the last coastal araucaria forest in Chile and Wallmapu. The vast majority of the region has been replaced by pine and eucalyptus plantations. Photo: Langelle/ GJEP (2024)*

△ *At the highest peak of the Nahuelbuta National Park, naturalist Edgardo Flores explains to the delegation the impacts of industrial pine and eucalyptus plantations on the park's ancient araucaria trees. Photo: Petermann/ GJEP*

Day Eight: October 14

Meeting with Communities Affected by Chile's Largest Pulp Mill



During this day, the GJEP delegation traveled to rural communities neighboring the Arauco pulp mill in the Horcones area. This facility is the largest pulp mill in Chile, producing approximately 2.1 million tons of pulp annually and generating significant environmental and social impacts in the surrounding communities.

In 2023, the Arauco pulp mill in Horcones was expanded through the MAPA Project, an ambitious initiative by Forestal Arauco designed to consolidate its position as the largest pulp producer in Chile and one of the largest in the world.

The delegation met with residents who have lived alongside the facility for decades. Community members described chronic health problems that they associate with the mill's operations, including persistent headaches, respiratory illnesses, and elevated rates of cancer and other diseases. Many residents also expressed concerns about water contamination and the quality of the water available for human consumption.

The delegation met with local authorities, including Councilwoman Nicole Fritz, who has publicly raised concerns about the environmental and social impacts of the pulp industry in the region. The delegation also interviewed Javier Sandoval, a Regional Councilor in the Biobío Regional Government, who has worked to bring greater public attention to the impacts of the forestry sector and advocates for alternatives to the current development model.

In addition, the delegation met with local community leaders who described the daily challenges faced by residents living near the country's largest pulp mill. Participants also raised concerns about other industrial facilities that provide services to Forestal Arauco, including Andina Ingredients, which they accuse of causing serious environmental harm in the area.

The GJEP delegation visited one of the families living adjacent to these industrial facilities and was able to observe firsthand the overwhelming industrial odors, as well as what residents described as inadequate environmental and safety conditions associated with nearby industrial operations that process forestry-derived chemical products.

Throughout the day, the delegation conducted interviews with affected residents, community leaders, and public officials, while also documenting conditions through photography and video. These materials were collected to help record and communicate the reality experienced by communities living in the shadow of Chile's largest pulp production complex.

◁ *International delegation interviews neighborhood, regional, and community leaders who denounce the environmental and health impacts of the Forestal Arauco mega-pulp industry in the Horcones sector.*

Pictured are Councilwoman Nicole Fritz (left), Bio bio Regional Councilor Javier Sandoval (center) and Jose Orellana local leader in the Horcones community. Photo: Langelle/ GJEP (2024)

Day Nine: October 15

Meeting with Socio-Environmental Organizations Challenging Chile's Forestry Model



In the city of Concepción, capital of the Biobío Region, the international delegation participated in an expanded gathering of socio-environmental organizations working to confront the expansion of industrial tree plantations and promote community-based alternatives.

The event was organized by the **Network for Overcoming the Forestry Model**, an initiative that brings together more than twenty socio-environmental organizations united in opposition to the expansion of industrial pine and eucalyptus plantations. The network was established in 2021 during a gathering in Curanilahue, in Arauco Province, and since then has organized demonstrations, citizen legislative initiatives, public education efforts, and other actions aimed at confronting the impacts of the forestry model.

In its own words, the Network is "an articulation of organizations that aims to improve the quality of life of people and communities in the territories, as well as promote the protection of biodiversity and water, as a response to the consequences of forest extractivism."

During the gathering, network participants presented the history and development of their organization through presentations, reports, and visual materials. Academic allies also shared research on the impacts of industrial tree plantations, including the role that highly flammable species such as pine and eucalyptus play in exacerbating large-scale wildfires. Participants were also informed about the findings of the **Tribunal for the Rights of Nature**, held in 2023, which issued a symbolic verdict finding forestry companies responsible for contributing to the conditions that have fueled devastating wildfires in Chile.

The GJEP delegation shared information about the global expansion of genetically engineered trees and the risks posed by these technologies in countries such as Brazil and Chile, where they could further intensify the ecological and social impacts associated with industrial tree plantations.

The delegation also interviewed representatives of participating organizations to learn firsthand about their experiences, concerns, and proposals for change. Among the alternatives discussed were the protection of the rights of nature, water, and biodiversity; the transition beyond an extractivist forestry model through sustainable production systems; improvements in land-use planning; limits on the concentration of land ownership in forestry regions; greater levels of meaningful public participation; and expanded access to environmental justice.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to maintain communication and strengthen collaboration between Chilean and international organizations in order to advance future joint initiatives.

◁ *International delegation meets with members of the Network for Overcoming the Forestry Model (Red por la Superación del Modelo Forestal) in the Biobío region in Concepcion. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)*

Day Ten: October 16

Travel to the University of Concepción and Meeting with Political Prisoners at Concepción Prison

▿ *International delegation hears testimony from family members of political prisoners outside the Concepción prison. Photo: Langelle/GJEP*



In the city of Concepción, the international delegation visited the University of Concepción to learn about developments in biotechnology applied to the forestry industry. Later that day, the delegation met with relatives and lawyers of Mapuche political prisoners held at Concepción Prison. The delegation also entered the prison, where members were able to meet with Héctor Llaitul, one of the historic leaders of the Coordinadora Arauco Malleco (CAM), who is serving a 23-year prison sentence.

UNIVERSITY OF CONCEPCIÓN

During the morning, the GJEP delegation visited the University of Concepción to meet with Dr. Sofía Valenzuela, former Regional Secretary of Science (SEREMI) during the government of Gabriel Boric and director of the university's forestry biotechnology research program.

The delegation conducted a recorded interview with Dr. Valenzuela regarding developments in forestry biotechnology in Chile. During a meeting lasting approximately two hours, she shared information about the development of genetically modified and genetically edited pine and eucalyptus varieties, as well as her research collaborations with the forestry company Arauco.

During the interview, the GJEP delegation expressed concerns regarding the development and potential commercialization of genetically engineered trees, including those produced through both transgenic and gene-editing technologies–in particular those aimed at developing cold tolerance in eucalyptus trees which would enable the expansion of eucalyptus plantations to higher elevations and colder climates.

MEETING WITH MAPUCHE POLITICAL PRISONERS, RELATIVES, AND LAWYERS AT CONCEPCIÓN PRISON

On a cold rainy day outside Concepción Prison, the GJEP delegation met with relatives, lawyers, and support organizations working with Mapuche political prisoners. Supporters had established a camp outside the prison, where they shared information about the situation faced by incarcerated Mapuche community members and their families.

During these conversations, relatives and legal advocates emphasized what they described as the systematic criminalization of members of Mapuche resistance organizations, as well as the lengthy prison sentences imposed on many community members. The delegation was able to speak directly with relatives and members of the legal defense team of Héctor Llaitul, one of the co-founders and historic leaders of the Coordinadora Arauco Malleco (CAM).

The delegation subsequently entered the prison and spent approximately two hours meeting with Llaitul. During the conversation, he explained the political and historical foundations of the resistance activities carried out by CAM, describing them as part of the broader struggle for territorial recovery and as a response to the long history of violence and dispossession experienced by the Mapuche people at the hands of the Chilean State.

Following the prison visit, the delegation conducted interviews with members of the support group for Mapuche political prisoners. Participants described the difficult conditions experienced by incarcerated community members and the challenges faced by their families, contributing valuable testimony to the delegation's ongoing documentation of the situation in Wallmapu.

Day Eleven: October 17

Visit to Communities Affected by the 2023 Mega-Fires in Quillón, Ñuble Region

One of the communities most severely affected by the catastrophic forest fires that swept south-central Chile in 2023 was the rural population of Quillón in the Ñuble Region. Residents of the San Ramón sector—one of the areas where the fires originated and which suffered extensive destruction—continue to demand that Forestal Arauco take measures to reduce the risk of future fires. Community members criticize forestry practices that they believe contribute to the spread and intensity of wildfires, including the accumulation of highly flammable biomass near homes and inadequate firebreaks between industrial plantations and residential areas.

▿ *Peasants who suffered the mega forest fires protest outside Forestal Arauco's Nueva Aldea pulp mill, which they blame for spreading the fires with its monoculture system. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)*



On the morning of October 17, the GJEP delegation met with families affected by the 2023 mega-fires. The gathering took place outside the Nueva Aldea pulp mill, owned by Forestal Arauco. There, community members displayed banners in protest and shared their experiences with the international delegation.

During the meeting, residents explained that they were organizing a collective legal action seeking to hold Forestal Arauco accountable for the fires due to poor management of biomass in the area. They are seeking compensation for the losses suffered during the fires, which they contend were intensified by Arauco's plantations surrounding their communities. The company maintains extensive pine and eucalyptus plantations throughout the region, as well as the Nueva Aldea pulp mill, located only a few kilometers from the affected communities.

Throughout the day, the GJEP delegation traveled through the surrounding area, observing the vast expanses of highly flammable pine and eucalyptus plantations that dominate the landscape. Delegation members also visited areas directly impacted by the 2023 fires and documented the scale of the destruction.

The Nueva Aldea facility has been the subject of environmental conflicts with neighboring communities for many years. Residents have raised concerns regarding air pollution, contamination of the Itata River, and other ongoing environmental and public health impacts associated with industrial operations in the area.

The fires affected not only homes and livelihoods, but also important native ecosystems. Among the areas damaged was Cayumanque Hill, which contains one of the best-preserved remnants of native forest in the region. This ecosystem includes native vegetation and centuries-old specimens of roble pellín (*Nothofagus obliqua*), also known locally as coyán or hualle.

The international delegation collected extensive video testimony from affected residents and community leaders and presented copies of *Portraits of Struggle* to community members during the visit.

This work built upon an earlier international delegation organized by Global Justice Ecology Project in 2017 to investigate what were, at the time, the worst wildfires in Chile's history. The delegation examined the relationship between the fires and the expansion of industrial tree plantations, together with years of drought in the region—the result of both climate change and the depletion of water resources by fast-growing pine and eucalyptus plantations.

Day Twelve: October 18

Visit to the Valdivian Rainforest and the “Senderos del Bosque” Ecological Restoration Center

Senderos del Bosque **(“Forest Trails”) is an ecological restoration initiative led by Claudio Donoso. For decades, restoration and conservation efforts at the site–a former tree plantation–have focused on bringing back and protecting native forest ecosystems and biodiversity, transforming the area into an important refuge for threatened and endangered species.**



△ *Claudio Donoso demonstrates the pure water that returned to the Senderos del Bosque after the former pine plantation was ecologically restored with native species. Photo: Langelle/ GJEP (2024).*

During a guided tour of the property, Donoso explained the ecological, cultural, and social importance of Chile’s native forests, as well as the urgent need to protect and restore them. Delegation members learned about several endangered tree species found in the region, including the queule (*Gomortega keule*) and the naranjillo (*Citronella mucronata*). Both species are threatened by the ongoing loss and fragmentation of native forests, much of which has resulted from their replacement with industrial pine and eucalyptus plantations.

Throughout the visit, Donoso also discussed the history of the forestry model in Chile and its impacts on native ecosystems, biodiversity, water resources, and rural communities. The delegation documented the visit through photography and video and conducted an extended interview with Donoso, gathering valuable testimony on the potential for ecological restoration in Chile’s damaged ecosystems, as well as the long-term ecological and social consequences of industrial tree plantations in south-central Chile.

Day Thirteen: October 19

Visit to Areas Affected by Clear-Cutting and the Valdivia Pulp Mill

▽ *Clearcut in a pine plantation owned by U.S. company Hancock Chilean Plantations. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2024)*



During this day, the international delegation documented the impacts of industrial clear-cutting in the Los Ríos Region on lands owned by the U.S.-based company Hancock Chilean Plantations. The delegation also briefly visited the Valdivia pulp mill, a facility with a long history of environmental controversies, including the ecological disaster that resulted in the mass death and displacement of black-necked swans in the Cruces River wetlands.



△ *Alejandra Parra (center) explains the mass death and displacement of black-necked swans in the Carlos Anwandter Nature Sanctuary. Photo: Langelle/ GJEP (2024)*

The GJEP delegation began the day in the company of local residents touring and discussing the impacts of industrial tree plantations and large-scale clear-cutting operations.

HANCOCK FOREST PROPERTIES

The delegation toured an expansive clearcut and documented the extensive environmental impacts. They recorded firsthand accounts from local residents regarding the consequences for their communities including the destruction of native ecosystems, the loss and contamination of water, and the resulting deterioration of rural livelihoods and quality of life. The delegation documented the clearcut running right up to and over a water course, in violation of environmental law.

The lands visited are owned by the U.S. company Hancock Chilean Plantations, which operates extensive forestry holdings in the Araucanía and Los Ríos regions. Hancock entered Chile in 2014 after acquiring part of the forestry assets of the Chilean company Masisa. In 2019, the company established Hancock Natural Resource Group South America as its regional operating subsidiary.

VALDIVIA PULP MILL

Later that afternoon, the delegation began its return journey toward Temuco in preparation for the conclusion of the international visit and the return trip to the United States. Along the way, members of the delegation stopped to view Forestal Arauco's Valdivia pulp mill.

The facility, visible from the roadside, has been associated with one of Chile's most significant environmental disasters. The case involved the contamination of the Cruces River and the subsequent mass death and displacement of black-necked swans from the Carlos Anwandter Nature Sanctuary.

Known as the Cruces River environmental disaster, the incident occurred in 2004 and resulted in the collapse of a critical wetland ecosystem. The contamination led to the destruction of *luchecillo* (*Egeria densa*), the principal food source of the black-necked swans, causing widespread mortality and migration of the birds from the sanctuary. Numerous scientific studies and legal proceedings linked the damage to industrial effluent discharged from the Celco-Valdivia pulp mill, owned by Forestal Arauco.

The disaster sparked widespread public mobilization in Valdivia and became one of the most significant environmental conflicts in modern Chilean history. Following years of public pressure, legal action, and scientific investigation, Forestal Arauco was held responsible for the damage and required to implement mitigation and remediation measures. The documentary *Ciudad de Papel* ("Paper City") chronicles the events surrounding this environmental disaster and the community response that followed.

APPENDIX (2026)

The Kast Government and the Deepening of Territorial Dispossession in Chile

In March 2026, the new Kast administration took power in Chile. Its first months were marked by rapid institutional restructuring aimed at weakening environmental oversight and consolidating militarization in the Mapuche territory of Wallmapu. Territorial dispossession and human rights violations in the region are not new phenomena, but rather long standing features of state policy that have persisted under successive governments. However, the current administration has intensified these trends by openly aligning with the interests of large forestry companies, agribusiness interests, and major landowners.

DEEPENING THE EXTRACTIVIST MODEL

The GJEP delegation visited Chile in 2024 during the administration of President Gabriel Boric. In March 2026, however, a new government took office under President José Antonio Kast. Kast represents Chile's far right and openly expresses enthusiasm for the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship.

The first 90 days of the Kast administration were marked by rapid institutional restructuring aimed at weakening environmental oversight and consolidating militarization in the Mapuche territory of Wallmapu. Territorial dispossession and human rights violations in the region are not new phenomena, but rather longstanding features of state policy that have persisted under successive governments. However, the current administration has intensified these trends by openly aligning with the interests of large forestry companies, agribusiness interests, and major landowners.

This direction was reinforced during the presidential Public Address of June 1, 2026, which included proposals to strengthen the forestry sector, expand extractive industries, and reform the Indigenous Law. The proposed reforms would facilitate the further commercialization of ancestral Mapuche lands and strip away the few existing legal protections designed to prevent their transfer to private interests.

CORPORATE EXPANSION AND THE THREAT OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED TREES

In his June 1 address, President Kast reaffirmed his government's commitment to the forestry industry by announcing measures to fast-track environmental permits and accelerate investment. Framed as part of an effort to create a "more competitive and modern" forestry sector, these measures are designed to streamline the expansion of industrial tree plantations.

Environmental deregulation could also facilitate the introduction of genetically engineered trees, including transgenic and gene edited varieties–in particular by excluding gene edited organisms from regulation as GMOs.

This deregulation is favored by the criteria of agencies like the SAG in Chile, which tend to consider products of CRISPR genetic editing as equivalent to conventional mutations, exempting them from regulations applied to traditional GMOs. Organizations like the Global Justice Ecology Project (GJEP) have warned that the introduction of these species under "green" rationales conceals their likely impacts including deepening the water crisis, increasing the use of toxic chemicals, exacerbating wildfires, and devastating native biodiversity.

GJEP has been joined by forest protection and human rights organizations internationally in raising concerns about these technologies because of their role in reinforcing the large-scale monoculture forestry model and its impacts. Industry advocates promote genetically engineered trees as a solution to challenges such as climate change, insect infestation and declining productivity. These technologies, however, not only fail to address the underlying ecological problems created by industrial plantation forestry itself, but are predicted to worsen the impacts of plantations on ecosystems and communities.

DISMANTLING TERRITORIAL RIGHTS AND WEAKENING THE LAFKENCHE LAW

To facilitate corporate control over natural resources, the administration has proposed radical reform of the Indigenous Law that would significantly weaken the few existing protections for Indigenous territories. Proposed changes to the Indigenous Law would facilitate the leasing, mortgaging, and commercialization of lands that were transferred to Indigenous communities through state restitution programs.

At the same time, the government has moved to undermine implementation of the Lafkenche Law (Law No. 20.249), which recognizes the rights of Indigenous communities to protect and manage Marine Coastal Spaces for Indigenous Peoples (ECMPOs). In an effort to accelerate aquaculture, salmon farming, port development, and other coastal investments, the government has suspended or delayed the approval of new ECMPO applications. Indigenous organizations charge that these measures undermine ancestral stewardship rights and weaken protections for coastal ecosystems and marine biodiversity.

MILITARIZATION AND CRIMINALIZATION: THE CASE OF TEMUCUICUI

Alongside these policy changes, the Chilean State has continued to expand the use of security and criminalization measures in Mapuche territory. Territorial demands and land recovery processes are increasingly framed through the language of national security, organized crime, and terrorism.

One of the most visible examples has been the series of large-scale police and military operations carried out in the community of Temucuicui. Officially justified as law-enforcement actions or efforts to apprehend criminal suspects, these police and military operations have been widely condemned by Indigenous organizations and human rights advocates, who argue that they function as forms of collective punishment and intimidation directed at communities engaged in autonomous territorial and political organizing.

For many Mapuche communities, the intensification of militarization under the Kast administration reflects a broader strategy aimed at securing the expansion of forestry and extractive industries while weakening the rights of Indigenous Peoples to resist those projects.

Books & Reference Texts

Ecological, social, and cultural impacts of the Chilean forestry model

▿ *Chilean flag stands amidst burned pine plantations – Fires in January and February 2017 burned more than half a million hectares and killed eleven people. The fires started in industrial timber plantations. At the time, the fires were the worst in the country's history. Photo: Langelle/GJEP (2017)*



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△ *GJEP delegation drove for hours through industrial pine and eucalyptus plantations and passed countless logging trucks en route to pulp mills. Photo: Langelle/ GJEP (2024)*



▵ Banner outside of the Temuco prison reads: No to racist trials and political convictions! Stop imprisoning people for fighting for their rights! Forestry companies out of Wallmapu! Photo: Petermann/GJEP (2024)

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