

Rainforest Destruction at the Queen Sofia Museum

The Queen Sofia Museum in Madrid (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía) is one of the best known in Spain. Designed by the architect Jean Nouvel, the museum has been extended over the last three years by the Spanish construction company Dragados/ACS. The extension was opened on 26th September 2005.

Jatoba timber (*Hymenaea courbaril*) from the Brazilian Amazon's Pará State has been used in the library, exhibition rooms, auditorium and offices in this new building. The jatoba was brought from timber companies that have been involved in criminal activities in an area renowned for lawlessness and illegal logging. The timber arrived in Spain between 2003 and 2004.

Illegal logging in the State of Pará

Pará State has suffered most from illegal logging in Brazil. Pará is the largest timber exporting region in the Amazon and has lost an area of rainforest the size of Austria, the Netherlands, Portugal and Switzerland combined.

Pará's story is common across the Amazon. It tells of a 'boom and bust' cycle whereby many loggers destroy the rainforest and abandon it to cattle ranchers and other large scale farming ventures. The land's nutrient value declines when it is deforested and it becomes fit for nothing but poor grazing or farmland, providing few economic opportunities for the local communities.

Fuelling this cycle is a state of lawlessness in which land invasions and illegal occupancy of public land are backed by violence and even murder. Pará has the highest rate of assassinations linked to land conflicts. These are hardly ever investigated. As local forest dwellers, who depend on the land for hunting, fishing and small scale farming are forced away from their territory, the gulf between rich and poor in Pará widens.

Amazon under siege

The Amazon rainforest covers 5% of the world's land and extends over some 7.8 million kilometres.¹ Almost half of all known species live in the Amazon, among them 353 species of mammals, 3,000 fish species, 1,000 species of birds, 60,000 plant species and an estimated 10 million insects.² It has 25,000km of navigable rivers and contains around 20% of the Earth's fresh water. Consequently, the Amazon plays a vital role in maintaining biodiversity, regional hydrology and climate.

The Amazon also has one of the world's highest rates of forest destruction. Between August 2003 and 2004, an area of 26,130 square kilometres (almost the size of Belgium), was destroyed.³ It is estimated that between 60-80% of logging in the Brazilian Amazon is illegal.⁴

¹ Leroy, J.P. & Silvestre, D.R. 2003. Relatoria Nacional para o Direito Humano ao Meio Ambiente. Plataforma Brasileira de Direitos Humanos Econômicos, Sociais e Culturais (DhESC) Brasil. Relatório da Missão ao Pará. 16-28 February 2003.

² Biologist Alberto Val from INPA – National Institute for the Amazon Research. In Revista Ciência Hoje. Rio de Janeiro. April 2001.

³ INPE, 2005. PRODES – Amazon Forest Satellite Monitoring/2003-2004 deforestation data. www.obt.inpe.br/prodes/

⁴ In 2004, 58.8% of logs were produced without any authorization from IBAMA. However, the total level of illegality will be higher since most companies with Forest Management Plans do not respect forest laws and regulations. Companies also misuse official paperwork to launder illegal wood from non authorized areas. The 80% figure comes from IBAMA's own estimate published in SAE (1997) Forest policy - lumbering exploitation in Amazonia. Brazilian Secretariat of Strategic Issues, April 1997.

One of the driving factors behind this forest destruction is the demand for cheap timber from the international market place. The use of rainforest timber in the new extension at the Queen Sofia Museum, is just one example of how European buyers and builders are contributing to the destruction of this precious rainforest.

The evidence

Documents provided to Greenpeace by the museum show that the timber was imported by the Spanish company 'Maderas Besteiro'. This company purchased the timber from three Brazilian companies (1) Madeireira São Marcos, (2) Serraria Sao Jose and Serraria Santa Clara.

All these companies have been involved in illegal logging activities in the Pará State and have been fined by IBAMA, a federal agency responsible for environmental issues and forest conservation in Brazil.

(1) Madeireira São Marcos – known commercially as MASMACIL

- **Fined in 2002** for cutting timber without documentation⁵ and transporting timber without a valid licence.⁶
- **Fined in 2004** for cutting timber without a licence (441 m³ of Jatoba logs, the same species used in Museum)⁷ and processing more timber at it's sawmill than had been legally declared.⁸

This mill is known to have sourced timber from at least one other company involved in illegal activity. One of its contractors Madeireira Bossato (known commercially as Irmaos Bossato Ltd) was accused of possessing false land titles and had its forest management plan in the Altamira region suspended when the Verde para Sempre Extractive Reserve was created. In May 2004 the company was fined for having logs of different species without documentation.⁹

(2) Serraria Sao Jose and Serraria Santa Clara

Serraria Sao Jose and Serraria Santa Clara are both owned by two members of the Lorenzoni family, who have been accused of involvement in illegal logging activities in the State of Pará. This includes the illegal appropriation of land, the illegal cutting of timber, deforestation, providing false documents in order to exploit forest areas as well as creating social conflict with small land owners. In 1998 and 2002, Paulo Lorenzoni twice submitted to IBAMA false legal ownership deeds for a farm, Comavel 1, rich in jatoba timber. On both occasions, IBAMA identified and rejected the false documents.

Serraria Sao Jose:

- **Fined in 2002** for hiding its monthly report on timber movements from IBAMA¹⁰ and processing logs in its sawmill without documentation throughout 2001 to 2002.¹¹
- **Fined in 2003** for transporting sawn timber by barge without documentation.¹²

⁵ Fine 149708 in August 2002 – various species.

⁶ Fine 161858 in April 2002 – species Ipe.

⁷ Fine 370235 in August 2004 – species Jatoba.

⁸ Fine 370233 in August 2004 – species Cumaru.

⁹ Fine 370212 in May 2004 – various species

¹⁰ Fine 143899 in October 1998 – various species

¹¹ Fine 149706 in June 2002

¹² Fine 370418 in March 2003 – species tatajuba

Serraria Santa Clara:

- **Fined in 2004** for processing logs without documentation.¹³

Europe's trade in illegal timber

The Member States of the European Union (EU) are fuelling the international demand for timber products from illegal and destructive sources. Large volumes of timber from areas like the Amazon are entering European ports and are being used in construction and sold in shops. The EU lacks the legal tools to prevent such timber from entering the market place.

Greenpeace calls on the Spanish Government and other European Member States to:

- **Adopt legislation to halt the import and marketing of illegally logged timber into Europe and promote environmentally and socially responsible forest management worldwide.** Such a law should allow for the prosecution of individuals and companies involved in the illegal trade of timber and timber products. Ultimately such a law should ensure European consumers that any timber products they buy are from legal and well managed forests and that traders engaged in legitimate trade are not undermined.
- **Develop strong Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) between producer countries and the European Union** which will tackle corruption and weaknesses in the forest governance of producer countries and that will fully parliamentarians, NGOs and indigenous people organisations within those countries, leading to responsible forest management practises, such as those specified under the principles and criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).
- **'Green' their timber procurement** by introducing legal and sustainable purchasing criteria and stop fueling illegal and destructive logging activities using public money.
- **Implement and enforce existing national and European legislation on bribery and money laundering**, which are regularly linked to the trade in illegally logged timber.
- **Provide sufficient funding for forest conservation and sustainable forest management** in timber producing countries and ensure that EU subsidy programs do not fund or promote forest destruction.

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¹³ Fine 370208 in March 2004 – species maderia