

A Greenpeace investigation into illegal and destructive logging in the Amazon Rainforest

All three international companies targeted by Greenpeace's Amazon campaign in Brazil - Malaysian based WTK/Amaplac, Eidai from Japan and French based Lapeyre - have shifted ground as a result of campaign work carried out over the last six months.

After years of unsustainable logging operations in Brazil, Amalpac has agreed to discuss with Greenpeace a schedule for FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification of Amaplac's operations in the Amazon. Eidai have stated publicly to Greenpeace in Japan that "they will no longer buy illegal logs" and will discuss FSC with their Brazilian subsidiaries. Lapeyre is ready to make a commitment to buying FSC Amazon timber, via its Brazilian subsidiary Eldorado and has joined the FSC buyers group in Brazil. Following a recent meeting with Greenpeace, Lapeyre made a commitment that within 5 years they will only source from 'cultivated forests' or from ancient forests if it is supported by an independent certification system supported by Greenpeace and other major NGOs.

Throughout Brazil, the Greenpeace campaign is receiving extensive media and political attention. The Government clampdown on illegal logging operations after success of the investigations and exposes against multinational companies is called the 'Greenpeace Effect'. The recently announced statement to investigate illegal logging and government timber purchases by the G8 nations in Japan in July is also forcing companies to rethink previous practices

With the depletion of South East Asian and Central African forests, the Amazon rainforest is now being targeted by transnational corporations as a key source of tropical forest products. Huge, majestic trees like the Samauma, known as the 'Queen of the Forest', are being exploited to make cheap plywood for the construction industry in the USA, Japan and Europe, including the UK

To highlight the extent of illegal and destructive logging in the remote regions of Amazonas and Para States, Greenpeace this year has been using the ship the MV Amazon Guardian to track down the illegal loggers as well as tracking from the air and on land. Greenpeace has also been promoting sustainable solutions in these regions such as rubber tapping.

The Greenpeace expedition on board the MV Amazon Guardian documented several illegal log rafts being towed in the region's Purus River heading towards the main plywood mills in Amazonas State, which export mainly to Europe and the United States. The hundreds of small rivulets and streams of the little explored region of rainforest - which covers 60% of Brazil - create an excellent opportunity for illegal loggers to

evade detection. The Brazilian Government has estimated that 80% of all logs cut in the Brazilian Amazon are extracted illegally.

Greenpeace uncovered evidence of European based timber companies trading with companies with an illicit track record. In Amazonas all plywood and veneer exporting companies were found to have been involved in the illegal logging in the previous two and half years including Amaplac a subsidiary of WTK, the Malaysian logging giant. Amaplac exports over 70% of its plywood and veneer to the UK. WTK is one of the top rainforest destroyers in the world with operations in the heart of the Amazon, Malaysia, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Papua New Guinea, Cambodia and Burma.

According to the Brazilian Environment Agency, IBAMA, Amaplac is one of the ten worst offenders for using illegal logs in the Amazonas State. For example during the log transport seasons from 1997 to 1999, the company was fined by IBAMA in Amazonas State for possessing illegal logs. Many of its third party suppliers were also fined during this period for the illegal exploitation, transport and sale of logs.

In May 1999, Amaplac was fined US\$10,000 because it was unable to confirm the origin of 2, 700 cubic metres of logs. The number of illegal logs found would be much greater if the Brazilian Government's inspection structure was stronger. In the State of Amazonas, for example, they currently rely on only one inspector per 4 million hectares, an area the size of Switzerland.

Greenpeace has also been investigating Eidai do Brazil, which is owned by Eidai Inc. in Japan. Eidai is the largest processed forest products exporter in Brazil's Para State and exports plywood and veneer to the USA, Japan, the UK and the Netherlands. In 1997, its exports were worth more than US\$31 million.

During field investigations in December 1999 in Brazil's Para State, Greenpeace was able to identify an illegal supply of logs in an Eidai timber yard using ultraviolet paint. As a result of Greenpeace's evidence, Eidai was fined \$1,800 by IBAMA officials and the logs were confiscated under the new Brazilian Environmental Crimes Law. During the same operation, IBAMA also apprehended and fined another logging truck delivering undocumented timber to Eidai.

In July, Eidai do Brazil received a record fine from IBAMA of about US\$1.88 million for using timber obtained illegally. This fine refers to 9 legal infractions applied by IBAMA, regarding 6,200 cubic meters of logs processed by Eidai during September 1999 to February 2000. The illegal logs are part of a larger volume of 22,000 cubic metres of illegal logs discovered during the investigation by IBAMA of Eidai's record, upon the request of Greenpeace.

The initial 6,200 cubic metres of illegal timber falls under Brazil's new Environmental Crimes Law, which took effect in September 1999. Fines

for the remaining logs processed by Eidai prior to the new legislation are currently under consideration by IBAMA. With these 9 new violations, Eidai over the last 11 years has been in violation of Brazilian Forest Laws 108 times.

The Greenpeace investigation has continued throughout this year. In May, Greenpeace stopped an illegal log raft in the Jurua River in Amazonas and handed it over to IBAMA. The raft was carrying logs of the increasingly rare Samauma species. Greenpeace has also uncovered newly constructed illegal logging roads in the frontier areas of pristine rainforest areas in Para State and illegal logging activities on indigenous lands for the mahogany trade. Further investigations are being planned for the Amazon.