The top overall stories of the past two weeks include: a mandatory mercury buyers’ registry will soon be a reality, a Special Project for the Development of Madre de Dios was created, and illegal mining raids continue. Details on those stories and more below.

By the end of next month, the government expects to have established a mercury and cyanide buyers’ registry. Only registered buyers will legally be able to buy either chemical, which are used in the extraction of gold process.

The government created a Special Project for the Development of Madre de Dios (Proyecto Especial para el Desarrollo de Madre de Dios). The project has an initial budget of 100 million soles (around $36 million) and the objective to offer alternatives to the segment of the population that was engaged in illegal mining activities. This project was approved by Presedential Decree and will start within a month.

There were two new major illegal mining raids executed by the government, one in the La Pampa region of Madre de Dios department (buffer zone of Tambopata National Reserve) that involved 1,200 police and military, and the other in the San Gabán region of Puno department that involved 200 police. Both raids focused on the destruction of equipment used in illegal mining operations.

Regarding the controversial major raid at the end of April in the Huepetuhe region of Madre de Dios department, officials clarified that the targets of the raid were indeed illegal miners. This raid was controversial because, unlike raids in the La Pampa region, it occurred within the legal mining corridor. However, officials stated the targets of the raid had been ejected from the formalization process because the quantity of extracted gold exceeded the allowable limits for small-scale mining operations and/or they were illegally operating in rivers (which is banned).

Video of the recent raids can be seen here and here.

Two photo galleries about illegal mining in Madre de Dios were published, one by the Guardian (link here) and the other by the AP (link here).

It is most likely that the major raids will continue as the High Commissioner for the Formalization Process, Daniel Urresti, stated the government’s objective to eradicate 70% of the illegal mining in Madre de Dios by July, and 100% by December of this year.

The formalization/saneamiento process continues. The government estimates that by the end of 2014, more than 6,000 miners will have completed the formalization process.

The most detailed information on the status of the formalization process comes from the department of Puno. In Puno, nearly 7,000 miners officially entered the formalization process by the April 19 deadline. Of these, only four have completely finished the formalization process to date. However, 20 have approved environmental studies (known as an IGAC), so this number will likely slowly start to rise.
• Four offices of the national company authorized to buy gold from formalized miners, *Activos Mineros SAC*, will soon open in Puno\(^{10}\).

• *El Comercio* reported that, between August 2012 and January 2014, money laundering associated with illegal mining rose by 50%, a rate much higher than that associated with drug trafficking\(^{11}\).

• High Commissioner Urresti, warned that in the upcoming local and regional elections in October there will be many representatives of illegal mining interests seeking office\(^{12}\).

• The full Congress approved the law linking the control of fuel in Madre de Dios to illegal mining\(^{13}\), and not drug trafficking as the law stated before. This discrepancy was at the center of the prolonged and deadly strikes in Madre de Dios last month.

• Peru, Colombia and Ecuador agreed to share information and jointly fight illegal mining along their common borders. The agreement was reached in a meeting of Defense Ministers in Quito, Ecuador last week\(^{14}\).

We would like to credit ProNaturaleza’s “[Observatorio Amazonia](#)” as our primary resource for articles related to illegal mining in Peru.

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**References:**