Top Stories

- Daniel Urresti has been replaced as High Commissioner of the Formalization Process by retired army officer Augusto Aníbal Soto Castañola.
- Two new major raids on illegal mining operations in Madre de Dios
- Candidates linked to illegal mining interests are running in the upcoming election for president of Madre de Dios

Formalization Process

- According to new official numbers from the Peruvian Ministry of Energy and Mining, 69,083 miners officially entered the formalization process before the entry deadline expired on April 19\(^1\). To date, only four (all in Puno) have completely finished the process\(^2\).

- The new High Commissioner of the Formalization Process, Augusto Soto Castañola, has indicated that he will follow steps similar to his predecessor to eliminate illegal mining, including seizing and destroying machinery during raids\(^3\). Indeed, he quickly led a major raid in the La Pampa district of Madre de Dios in July\(^4\).

Madre de Dios

- There were two new major raids on illegal mining operations, both along the Malinowski River in the buffer zone of the Tambopata Natural Reserve\(^5,6,7\). The first raid, in mid-June, was the first one targeting the upper Malinowski River. The second raid, in early July, was further downstream in La Pampa, an illegal mining hotspot that has been the subject of several other raids this year.

- Before leaving his post, Urresti estimated that illegal mining in Madre de Dios would be reduced by 70% by the end of July and eradicated entirely by the end of the year\(^8\). Indeed, illegal mining has reportedly been greatly reduced in Huepetuhe and La Pampa, two areas that were previously hotspots\(^9\). Moreover, one of the logistical centers for mining in La Pampa, an area along the Interoceanic Highway known as Poblado 107, has been closed down\(^10\).

- According to an article in El Comercio, “almost all” of the nine candidates registered for the upcoming (October 5) election for regional president of Madre de Dios are linked to illegal mining\(^11\). The candidates include Juan Imura Cjuno, who is currently under investigation for trafficking chemicals related to gold extraction, and Luis Otsuka Salazar, the president of the Miner’s Federation of Madre de Dios (FEDEMIN)\(^12,13\).

Remediation

- Peru’s National Water Authority (ANA) is working to accelerate final approval of a national law on water resources\(^14\). The new law would give ANA greater control over the management and direction of the National Water Strategy. The strategy is part of an action plan covering the period 2015-2024 that would progressively reduce contaminants and remediate and recover zones impacted by mining. The legislation is currently undergoing a validation process, and if approved will take effect in 2015.
The Environmental Ministry (MINAM) issued a resolution to form a working group to develop a training program on environmental standards and chemical use in mining, including the reduction of cyanide and mercury. The group will also be responsible for identifying and mapping degraded areas for reclamation and remediation.\(^5\)

**Regional and International Cooperation**

- In June, the Chief of Southern Command of the US Marine Corps (John Kelly), met with the Peruvian Minister of Defense (Pedro Cateriano) to discuss increasing bilateral cooperation between the two countries to combat illegal mining, narcotrafficking, and terrorism.\(^6\)

- The Pacific Alliance, which includes Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Chile, has begun a series of meetings to establish synergies to combat organized crime involved in the production, sales, and exportation of minerals, including gold.\(^7\)

**Other Issues**

- A new assessment done by the Peruvian Agency for Assessment and Environmental Control (OEFA) found that regional government bodies are not providing adequate oversight of the formalization process (such as the proper supervision of environmental inspections), nor are they adequately reporting illegal mining operations. OEFA assessed each region on a point scale with a maximum of 100 points. Madre de Dios received the second-lowest score of only 16 points out of 100.\(^8\)

- According to the National Statistics Institute, Peru’s crackdown on illegal mining has taken a noticeable toll on the Peruvian economy; in April it fell to its lowest monthly rate of economic expansion since the global financial crisis five years ago.\(^9\)

- The Peruvian Government once again extended the intervention of the military, in support of the national police, to ensure internal control and order during the raids on illegal mining operations in Madre de Dios and Puno. The current extension lasts until the end of July.

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

**ACA contact for Comments/Questions:** Rachel Tennant rtennant@amazonconservation.org

**References:**
