



# DEFENDING LAND, WATER AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

## THE CHALLENGES

Around the world, rural and Indigenous communities are fighting for their rights to live with safety, justice and dignity—and often their very survival—in a rapidly changing world.

The aggressive drive to develop land, build mega-dams, mine for minerals, harvest rivers and oceans and log the earth's remaining forests is unjustly pushing millions of Indigenous people and small farmers out of the homes where they've lived for generations. These communities are not consulted, respected, or at times even acknowledged as their lands and waters are plundered for profits that will not be shared.

Further, our global dependence on carbon-emitting fossil fuels and large-scale industrial agriculture are deepening the climate crisis. But these dangers are not experienced equally by all people. The rights of rural and Indigenous communities to live how they choose—sustainably and independently—are unjustly stripped away.

## HOW WE MAKE CHANGE

To counter these grave challenges, AJWS supports communities working to slow climate change, stop harmful development projects and protect the land, water and natural resources that they depend on for survival. We support a constellation of grassroots organizations and determined advocates as they shape powerful

### WE'RE BUILDING A WORLD WHERE:

- The rights to land, water and other natural resources are guaranteed for all people, especially Indigenous people, the rural poor, women and other marginalized communities.
- People and the planet are living in mutual interdependence, with a just distribution of resources to support human life and healthy ecosystems.
- Rural and Indigenous communities have achieved food sovereignty—the ability to produce diverse, sustainable crops to earn a living and feed themselves.

social movements to ensure that land, water and natural resources are used equitably and sustainably.

In communities around the world, our grantees' efforts are resulting in critical progress for vulnerable rural people. Communities are fending off illegal land grabs and winning legal battles reaffirming that their land can't be used for development without their consent. They are preserving access to clean water, stopping the destruction of forests, and implementing innovative solutions to ward off threats posed by climate change.



In El Salvador, AJWS grantees march in support of environmental activists who have been imprisoned for defending their communities' right to water. Photo by Andrea Padilla Moreno

## OUR IMPACT AROUND THE WORLD

The activists, organizations and movements we support are making progress in their communities and around the globe:

- In Kenya, communities across the country are being threatened by the LAPSSET Corridor project—a mega-development plan that includes a crude oil pipeline that will sever villages, and a massive network of trains and highways that will endanger fragile ecosystems throughout the region. In the remote reaches of northern Kenya, over 2,500 Indigenous Samburu people are among those in the way of this industrial colossus—but they're fighting back. AJWS grantee **Samburu Women Trust (SWT)** is part of a nascent coalition, including many AJWS partners, working on multiple fronts to prevent and remedy LAPSSET's harm. SWT is helping Samburu communities obtain legal titles to their lands to prevent the destruction of their homes. And at every opportunity, they are emboldening women to take the lead.



Samburu women connect following a community meeting in Memirloshe village, in central Kenya. *Photo by Lameck Ododo*

In 2024, AJWS invested in **163 social change organizations** around the world to slow climate change and protect the land, water and natural resources that rural and Indigenous people depend on for survival.

- In Thailand, massive development projects have uprooted local communities and disrupted fragile ecosystems across the country. But **Save Andaman Network (SAN)**, an AJWS grantee, refuses to allow these sacrifices. When plans for an environmentally damaging coal-fired power plant were announced in the coastal Krabi region, a coalition of community-based organizations including SAN mobilized thousands of people into a powerful social movement demanding that seaside and island communities and resources be protected. After years of tireless, coordinated advocacy and public protests, SAN prevailed—the Thai government canceled the project in 2022.
- In El Salvador, a coalition supported by AJWS achieved a nationwide ban of metallic mining, a toxic practice that had poisoned the water supply. Twelve grassroots organizations funded by AJWS organized tens of thousands of local people over 11 years to pressure the government to intervene. Thanks to this advocacy, in 2017, El Salvador became the first country ever to ban metallic mining nationwide.

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