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Indigenous Peoples in Latin America: Statistical Information

Updated September 10, 2025

Congressional Research Service

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R46225



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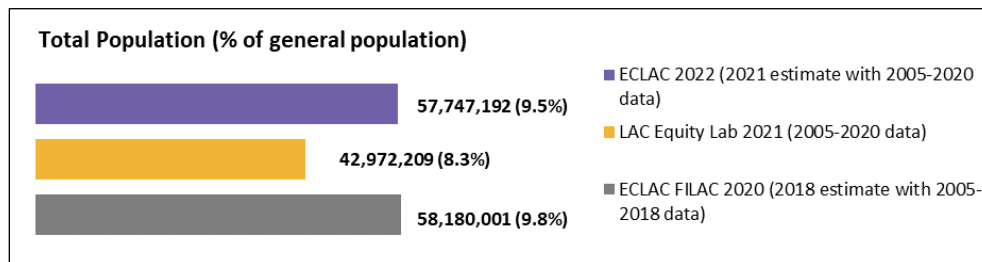
September 10, 2025

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Indigenous Peoples in Latin America: Statistical Information

This report provides statistical information on Indigenous peoples in Latin America. Data and findings on the people vary, sometimes greatly, including on populations and languages, socioeconomics, land, natural resources, climate change, and human rights. For example, the figure below shows that population estimates collected by the United Nations and the World Bank between 2005 and 2020 on Indigenous populations in Latin America varied by roughly 15 million or 8%-10% of the region's total population. Population and other statistics may vary for a number of reasons, including differences in source methodology, changes in national census questions, the number of countries covered, and the years examined.

Indigenous Population and Percentage of General Population of Latin America



Sources: Graphic by CRS using data from UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Development Fund for the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, *Los pueblos indígenas de América Latina—Abya Yala y la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible: tensiones y desafíos desde una perspectiva territorial*, 2020; World Bank's LAC Equity Lab web page "Ethnicity–Socio-demographics," updated August 2021; and ECLAC, *The sociodemographic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2022.

Note: ECLAC 2022 and ECLAC FILAC 2020 publications cover the same 17 countries while the World Bank's LAC Equity Lab covers 14 countries (data is not provided for Bolivia, Chile, and Paraguay).

Estimates may also vary, as there is no consistent definition for Indigenous peoples. The United Nations and many countries rely on self-identification of Indigenous peoples as do most of the sources cited in this report. In counting distinct groups, this report uses the term "Indigenous groups" or "Indigenous peoples" rather than "tribe," "nation," "ethnic minority," or "sociolinguistic group."

Data may also vary due to geographical differences. Countries considered to be part of "Latin America" vary. This report includes the following countries in Latin America: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Appendix A includes a compilation of selected informational resources regarding Indigenous peoples, covering languages; socioeconomics; land, natural resources, and climate change; international organizations; and human rights. **Appendix B** lists national agencies that oversee Indigenous affairs in each Central American or South American country.

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Introduction

Congress has long been interested in the status of Indigenous peoples abroad. In 1992, the 102nd Congress enacted H.R. 5368 (P.L. 102-391) requiring that the U.S. State Department describe in its annual human rights report “the extent to which Indigenous people are able to participate in decisions affecting their lands, cultures, traditions and the allocation of natural resources, and assess the extent of protection of their civil and political rights.” Issues relating to Indigenous peoples abroad periodically have been considered in congressional hearings focused on such topics as environmental protection, energy opportunities, and human rights.¹

This report provides statistical information on Indigenous peoples in Latin America, including populations and languages, socioeconomic data, land, natural resources and climate change, human rights, and international legal conventions. **Appendix A** contains a compilation of informational resources related to Indigenous peoples, including on languages; socioeconomics; land, natural resources, and climate change; international organizations; and human rights. National agencies that oversee Indigenous affairs in each country are listed in **Appendix B**.

Terms

According to the *Manual for National Human Rights Institutions* that accompanied the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, “Indigenous peoples have argued against the adoption of a formal definition at the international level, stressing the need for flexibility and for respecting the desire and the right of each Indigenous people to define themselves.... As a consequence, no formal definition has been adopted in international law. A strict definition is seen as unnecessary and undesirable.”² Rather than define Indigenous peoples, the United Nations relies on self-identification to categorize Indigenous populations; many countries do the same. According to the UN, “Indigenous peoples are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live.”³ The International Labor Organization (ILO) describes Indigenous peoples as being descended from “populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries.”⁴ The Organization of American States (OAS), a regional multilateral

¹ For example: U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps, Narcotics and Terrorism, *Environmental Protection in an Era of Dramatic Economic Growth in Latin America*, 106th Cong., 2nd sess., July 25, 2000 (Washington, DC: GPO, 2000), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-106shrg69746/pdf/CHRG-106shrg69746.pdf>; U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, *Energy Opportunities in South America*, 115th Cong., 1st sess., May 17, 2017 (Washington, DC: GPO, 2017), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-115hhrg25455/pdf/CHRG-115hhrg25455.pdf>; U.S. Congress, Tom Lantos Commission on Human Rights, *The Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the Americas*, 116th Cong., 2nd sess., November 20, 2020 (Washington, DC: GPO, 2020), <https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/events/hearings/rights-indigenous-peoples-americas>.

² United Nations, The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: A Manual for National Human Rights Institutions, HR/PUB/13/2, 2013, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/UNDRIPManualForNHRIs.pdf>. For more information about the United Nations, the International Labor Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization, see CRS Report R47715, *The United Nations System: Frequently Asked Questions*, by Luisa Blanchfield and CRS Report R48306, *United Nations Membership: In Brief*, by Luisa Blanchfield and Matthew C. Weed.

³ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “Indigenous Peoples at the UN,” accessed August 14, 2025, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/Indigenouspeoples/about-us.html>.

⁴ International Labor Organization, “Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169),” 1989, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169.

organization comprising most of the independent countries of the Western Hemisphere, adds “Indigenous peoples are original, diverse societies with their own identities that constitute an integral part of the Americas.”⁵ This CRS report uses the term “Indigenous peoples” or “Indigenous groups” rather than “tribe,” “nation,” “ethnic minority,” or “sociolinguistic group” and examines such groups living in: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Population Data

There are various sources, including from official and nongovernmental sources, which may use distinct methodologies for estimating the population of Indigenous peoples in Latin America, such as national censuses, household surveys, and population projections. This variance has resulted in different population estimates. For example, 2020 and 2021 estimates of Indigenous populations in Latin America range from 43 million to 58.2 million and indicate the groups comprise 8%-10% of the region’s total population, (see **Figure 1**).⁶ Indigenous populations in each examined Latin American country number from the tens of thousands, such as in El Salvador, to over five million, such as in Mexico, Guatemala, and Peru (see **Figure 2**). Indigenous populations as a percentage of a country’s total population vary from under 1%, such as in Brazil and El Salvador, to over 20%, such as in Bolivia, Guatemala, and Peru (see **Figure 3**).

A 2025 report from the Latin American Association on Population characterized the 20th century as making Indigenous peoples invisible in official statistics across the region with changes in the 21st century including national census questions regarding self-identification.⁷ More specifically, the report described an increase in the number of national censuses that quantified the Indigenous population: one country in the 1980 census round, three countries in the 1990 round, and 15 countries in the 2000 and 2010 rounds. During the 2020 census round, which was complicated by numerous factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, 12 of 13 countries that conducted censuses counted Indigenous peoples.⁸ Additionally, the same report suggested disaggregated data is important for goals such as sustainable development and the defense of human rights.⁹

⁵ Organization of American States, “Who We Are,” accessed July 8, 2025, https://www.oas.org/en/about/who_we_are.asp.

⁶ In this report, Latin America includes Mexico, the land mass of Central America (Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama), and the land mass of South America (Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay). The exception is French Guiana, which is an overseas department of France and is not included in this report.

⁷ Rosario Aparicio López and Alessandra Traldi Simoni (coordinators), *Los desafíos de la inclusión estadística de los pueblos indígenas y afrodescendientes en América Latina y el Caribe*, e-reports no. 6, Asociación Latinoamericana de Población, 2025, https://www.alapop.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Serie-Ebook_Los-desafios-de-la-inclusioen-estadistica_N6.pdf, p. 30.

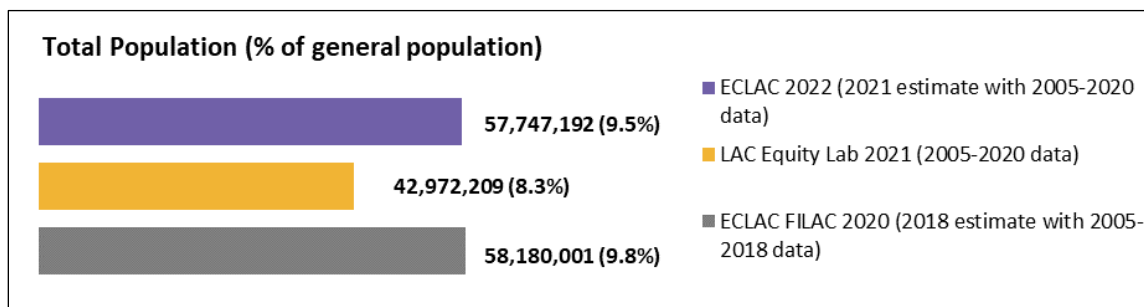
⁸ Rosario Aparicio López and Alessandra Traldi Simoni (coordinators), *Los desafíos de la inclusión estadística de los pueblos indígenas y afrodescendientes en América Latina y el Caribe*, e-reports no. 6, Asociación Latinoamericana de Población, 2025, https://www.alapop.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Serie-Ebook_Los-desafios-de-la-inclusioen-estadistica_N6.pdf, p. 27 and pp. 31-33.

⁹ Rosario Aparicio López and Alessandra Traldi Simoni (coordinators), *Los desafíos de la inclusión estadística de los pueblos indígenas y afrodescendientes en América Latina y el Caribe*, e-reports no. 6, Asociación Latinoamericana de Población, 2025, https://www.alapop.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Serie-Ebook_Los-desafios-de-la-inclusioen-estadistica_N6.pdf, p. 9.

The sources cited in this report contain data limitations, which are discussed in **Appendix A**. The countries listed in each table or graph of this report may differ from others in this report based on the information available in the sources.

A 2024 UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) publication reported a “sizeable increase” for Indigenous population estimates since 2010 “resulting from both demographic dynamics and an increase in self-identification associated with country efforts to improve census measurements in contexts where Indigenous Peoples have greater recognition and play a greater role.”¹⁰ A 2022 ECLAC publication reported that “despite still having younger population structures than the non-indigenous population, these populations are also beginning to experience ageing processes, as seen in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay.”¹¹

Figure 1. Indigenous Population Estimates of Latin America

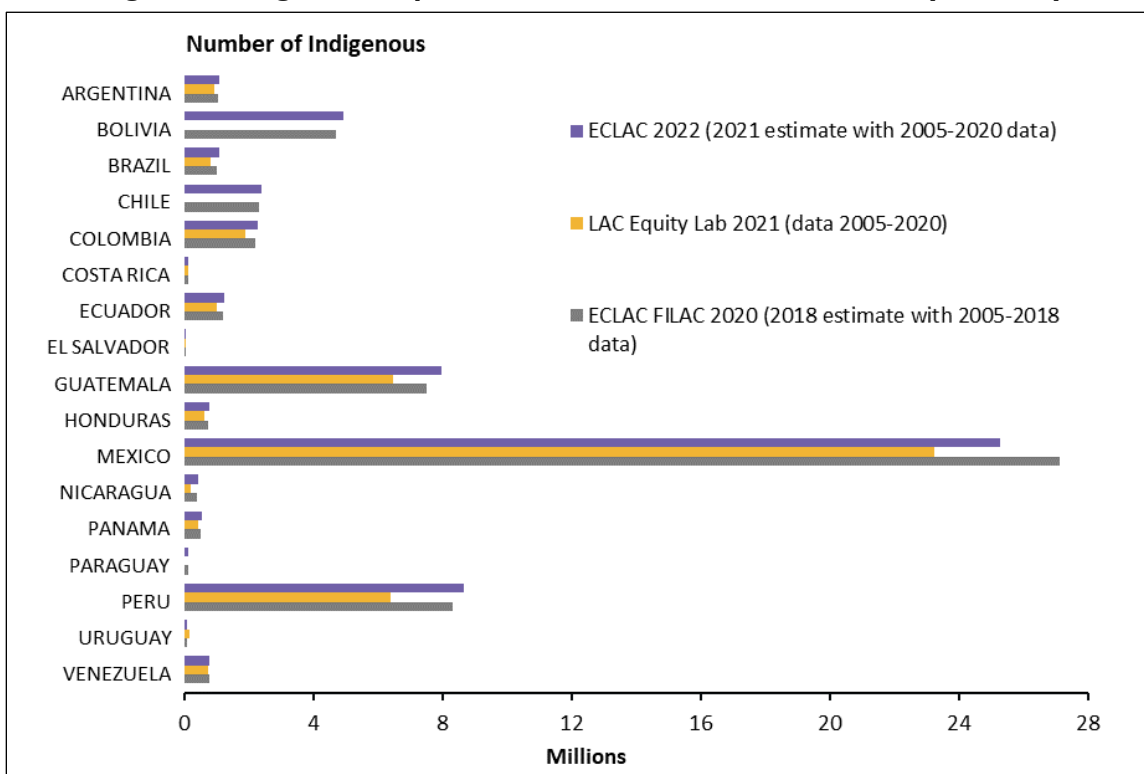


Sources: Graphic by CRS using data from UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Development Fund for the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (Spanish acronym FILAC), *Los pueblos indígenas de América Latina—Abya Yala y la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible: tensiones y desafíos desde una perspectiva territorial*, 2020; World Bank’s LAC Equity Lab web page “Ethnicity—Socio-demographics,” updated August 2021; and ECLAC, *The sociodemographic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2022.

Note: ECLAC 2022 and ECLAC FILAC 2020 publications cover the same 17 countries while the World Bank’s LAC Equity Lab covers 14 countries (data is not provided for Bolivia, Chile, and Paraguay).

¹⁰ UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *Population, Development and Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean: second regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development*, LC/CRPD.5/3, 2024, <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/b9c109f5-43e2-471f-9fa8-5e74862e6018/content>, p. 151.

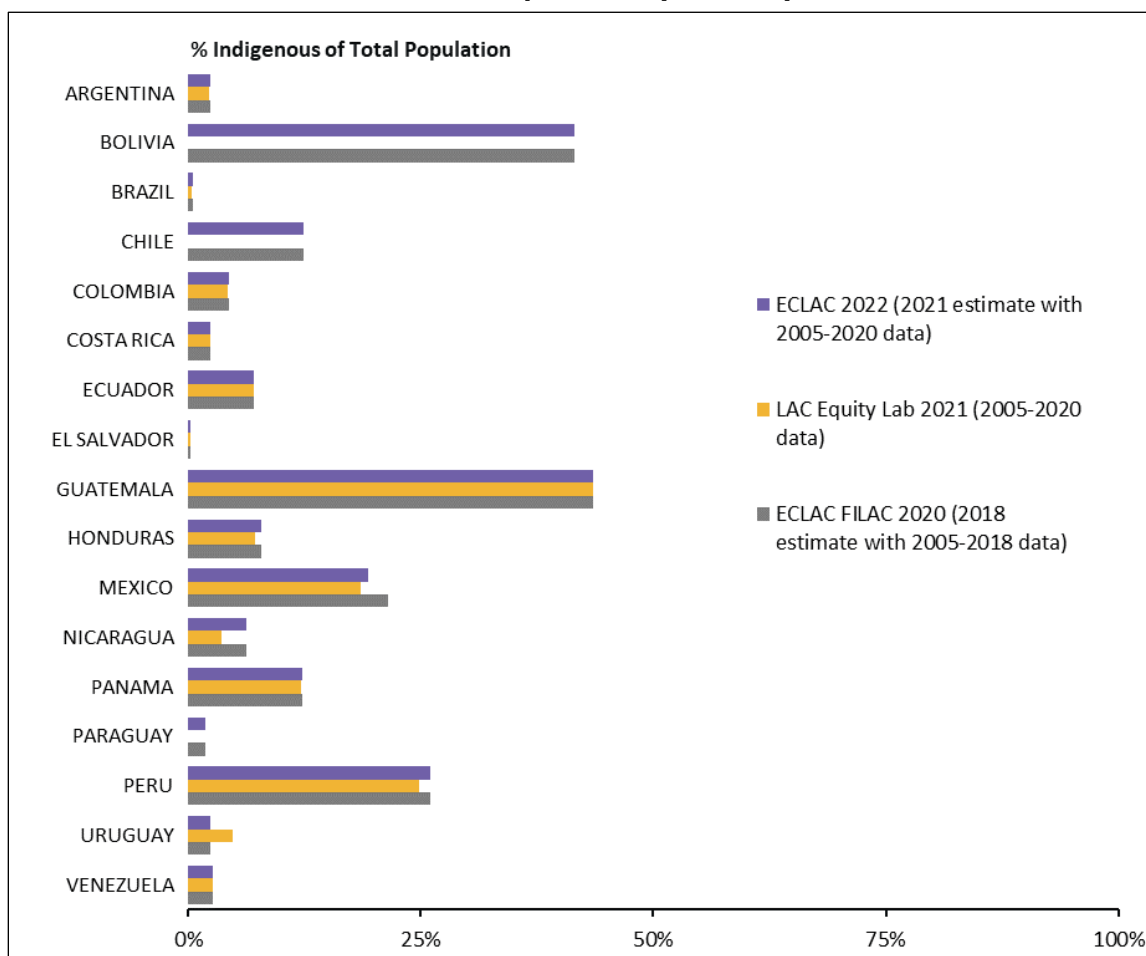
¹¹ UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *The sociodemographic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean*, LC/CRPD.4/3, 2022, <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/10c71b97-a147-4349-b7ee-7fb952f950c6/content>, p. 80.

Figure 2. Indigenous Population Estimates in Latin America by Country

Sources: Graphic by CRS using data from UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Development Fund for the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (Spanish acronym FILAC), *Los pueblos indígenas de América Latina—Abya Yala y la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible: tensiones y desafíos desde una perspectiva territorial*, 2020; World Bank's LAC Equity Lab web page "Ethnicity—Socio-demographics," updated August 2021; and ECLAC, *The sociodemographic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2022.

Note: The World Bank's LAC Equity Lab does not provide data for Bolivia, Chile, and Paraguay.

Figure 3. Indigenous Population Estimates in Latin America as a Percentage of General Population by Country



Sources: Graphic by CRS using data from UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Development Fund for the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (Spanish acronym FILAC), *Los pueblos indígenas de América Latina—Abya Yala y la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible: tensiones y desafíos desde una perspectiva territorial*, 2020; World Bank's LAC Equity Lab web page "Ethnicity—Socio-demographics," updated August 2021; and ECLAC, *The sociodemographic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2022.

Note: The World Bank's LAC Equity Lab does not provide data for Bolivia, Chile, and Paraguay.

ECLAC's 2024 report noted "substantial progress in including Indigenous Peoples in population censuses and thereby improving their statistical visibility" though it also found that "where records are concerned, particularly those relating to health (including vital statistics) and social protection, disaggregated data on the population belonging to Indigenous Peoples are few and far between."¹²

¹² UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *Population, Development and Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean: second regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development*, LC/CRPD.5/3, 2024, <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/b9c109f5-43e2-471f-9fa8-5e74862e6018/content>, p. 151 and 163.

Indigenous Groups and Languages

Estimates on Indigenous groups vary. A 2009 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report identified 655 Indigenous groups in 20 countries in Latin America.¹³ A 2014 ECLAC report cited 826 Indigenous groups in Latin America although it does not provide a country breakdown.¹⁴ Of these 826, the report noted that about 200 Indigenous groups live in voluntary isolation, which is defined by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights as groups that “do not maintain sustained contacts with the majority non-Indigenous population.”¹⁵ A 2020 Land is Life report about Indigenous groups living in voluntary isolation published: “There are accounts of 185 indigenous groups in both the Amazon and Gran Chaco regions (the existence of 66 has been confirmed).”¹⁶ The World Bank's 2015 report identified 774 Indigenous groups in 20 countries in Latin America with the caveat that “the total number of Indigenous peoples is not conclusive or fixed; rather, it needs to be understood as a variable figure that is continually changing as a result of new forms of indigenization, ethno-genesis, and legal recognition.”¹⁷ In a 2020 report, ECLAC counted 108 Indigenous traditional territories that cross national borders within Latin America.¹⁸

Data limitations on Indigenous ethnic groups

“As for the number and distribution of ethnic groups, the issue is even more problematic and the regional censuses might not be the best source, because ethnic frontiers rarely match national borders and no country keeps track of cross-border populations. Also, different ethnic groups sometimes receive...names given to several unconnected peoples.... On the other hand, a single group or linguistic family might receive different names in different countries ...”

—World Bank's *Indigenous Latin America in the Twenty-First Century: The First Decade*¹⁹

Following the International Year of Indigenous Languages in 2019, the United Nations declared 2022-2032 the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.²⁰ A 2022 UNESCO report stated that, for the United Nations, “Indigenous languages have a special value given that they represent

¹³ UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) and FUNPROEIB Andes (*Fundación para la Educación en Contextos de Multilingüismo y Pluriculturalidad* or the Foundation for Education in Multilingual and Multicultural Contexts), *Atlas Sociolingüístico de Pueblos Indígenas en América Latina Vol. I*, 2009, <https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/9791/file/PDF%20Atlas%20sociolingüístico%20de%20pueblos%20ind%C3%ADgenas%20en%20ALC-Tomo%201.pdf>, p. 68. For comparability with other sources, this figure excludes 10 Indigenous groups from Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, French Guiana, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago, which are not otherwise included in the report.

¹⁴ UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *Guaranteeing Indigenous People's Rights in Latin America: Progress in the past decade and Remaining Challenges*, 2014, https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/37051/4/S1420782_en.pdf, pp. 38-39.

¹⁵ Rapporteurship on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, *Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact in the Americas: Recommendations for the full respect of their human rights*, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, OEA/Ser.L/V/II. Doc.47/13, 2013, p. 4, <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/Indigenous/docs/pdf/report-Indigenous-peoples-voluntary-isolation.pdf>.

¹⁶ Land is Life, *Indigenous Peoples Living in Voluntary Isolation in the Amazon and Gran Chaco Regions Regional Report: Territories and Development*, regional report, 2020, https://en.pueblosaislados.org/_files/ugd/fe48e9_93bf42ac350341bc869ecb64042e70c6.pdf, p. 7.

¹⁷ World Bank, 2015, p. 24 and p. 26. This figure excludes six Indigenous groups from French Guiana.

¹⁸ ECLAC and FILAC, 2020. For comparability, these figures exclude French Guiana and Caribbean Island nations, which are included in some but not all of the aforementioned reports.

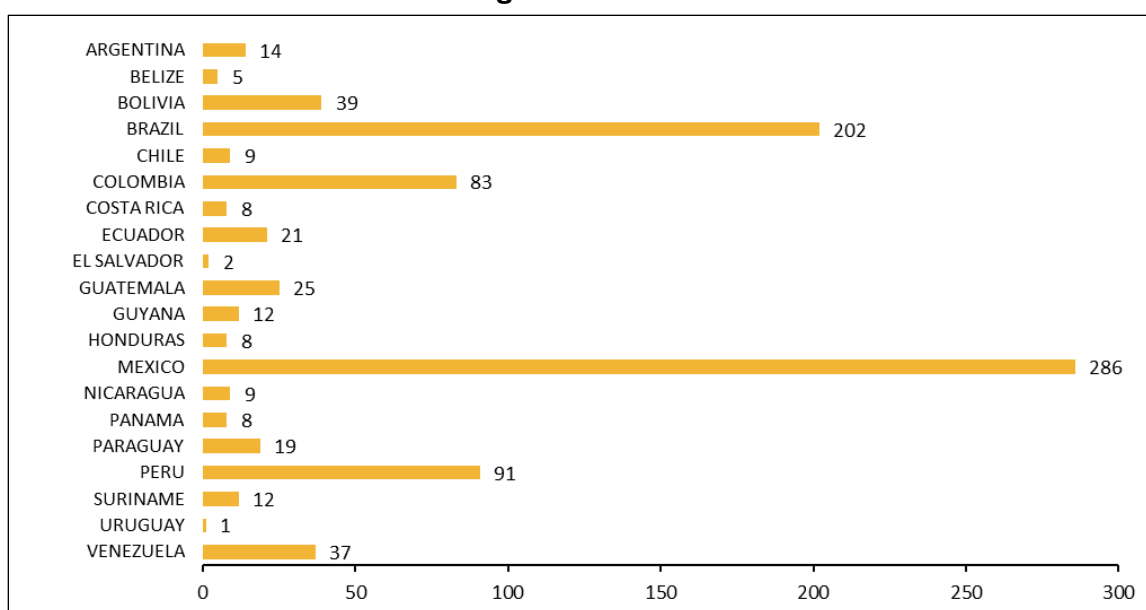
¹⁹ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and World Bank, *Indigenous Latin America in the Twenty-First Century: The First Decade*, 2015, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/145891467991974540/pdf/Indigenous-Latin-America-in-the-twenty-first-century-the-first-decade.pdf>, p. 24. Hereinafter, World Bank, 2015.

²⁰ United Nations, “General Assembly Adopts 60 Third Committee Resolutions, Proclaims International Decade of Indigenous Languages, Covering Broad Themes of Social Equality,” GA/12231, press release, December 18, 2019, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/ga12231.doc.htm>.

unique systems of knowledge and understanding of the world.”²¹ Figures on Indigenous groups and languages vary, with some experts asserting that 4 in 10 Indigenous languages around the world are in danger of disappearing.²² One article predicted that 1,500 languages will cease to be spoken by the end of the century, especially in Central America and the Amazon.²³

According to several sources, Indigenous languages number fewer than the number of Indigenous groups across the region as some languages are spoken by more than one group and some groups no longer speak an Indigenous language. A 2009 UNICEF report found 551 Indigenous languages spoken across 20 countries of Latin America, while a 2015 World Bank report found 558, and a 2025 publication by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL International) reported 891 Indigenous languages spoken across the same 20 Latin American countries.²⁴ The 2025 SIL International language statistics are illustrated in **Figure 4**.

Figure 4. Numbers of Indigenous Languages by Latin American Country in 2025 according to SIL International



Source: Graphic by CRS using data from Gary F. Simons, (editor), *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, twenty-eighth edition*, SIL International, 2025.

Note: These figures represent living languages and categorized as Indigenous by SIL International.

While some Indigenous languages have few speakers remaining, others are spoken by large populations, sometimes across more than one country. Speakers of Aymara (Argentina, Bolivia,

²¹ UNESCO, *Digital Initiatives for Indigenous Languages*, 2022, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387186.locale=en>, p. 29.

²² United Nations News, “Four in 10 Indigenous languages at risk of disappearing, warn UN human rights experts,” August 7, 2019, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/08/1043871>.

²³ Lindell Bromham et al., “Global predictors of language endangerment and the future of linguistic diversity,” *Nature Ecology & Evolution* vol. 6 (2022), pp. 163–173, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-021-01604-y>.

²⁴ UNICEF and FUNPROEIB Andes, *Atlas Sociolingüístico de Pueblos Indígenas en América Latina Vol. I*, 2009, <https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/9791/file/PDF%20Atlas%20sociolingüístico%20de%20pueblos%20ind%C3%ADgenas%20en%20ALC-Tomo%201.pdf>, p. 81. This figure excludes six languages from French Guiana. From World Bank, 2015, p. 26, this figure excludes six languages from French Guiana. Gary F. Simons, (editor), *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, twenty-eighth edition*, SIL International, 2025, <https://www.ethnologue.com/>.

Chile, and Peru), K'iche' (Guatemala and Mexico), Nahuatl (Mexico), and Q'eqchi' (Guatemala and Mexico) number over 1 million for each language.²⁵ Over 5 million people speak Quechua (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru) and Guaraní (Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay).²⁶

Governments of Latin America recognize Indigenous languages to varying degrees. For example, Article 5 of Bolivia's constitution lists Spanish as the country's national language along with all Indigenous languages, specifying those spoken by 36 groups.²⁷ Article 2 of Mexico's constitution includes a clause about preserving and enriching Indigenous languages.²⁸ While Chile does not recognize Indigenous peoples in its constitution, Indigenous languages are incorporated into bilingual intercultural education programs.²⁹

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2017-2021 American Community Survey, over 34,000 speakers of Indigenous languages from Latin America reside in the United States, up from previously reported 20,000 speakers in the 2009-2013 American Community Survey.³⁰

Continuity of spoken Indigenous languages can also be an indicator of broader socioeconomic conditions, such as biodiversity. According to a 2020 study highlighting Mexico and Brazil, "most of the places with the highest concentration of biological diversity coincide with spaces inhabited by Indigenous peoples whose members continue to speak the language of their ancestors."³¹ Regarding the Amazonian region in South America, a 2021 UN report described how "the loss of linguistic diversity entails the disappearance of Indigenous knowledge systems concerning environment and social organization, and parallels biodiversity loss."³² Additional resources about Indigenous groups and languages can be found in Appendix A, **Table A-1**. For

²⁵ Gary F. Simons, (editor), *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, twenty-eighth edition*, SIL International, 2025, <https://www.ethnologue.com/>.

²⁶ Gary F. Simons, (editor), *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, twenty-eighth edition*, SIL International, 2025, <https://www.ethnologue.com/>.

²⁷ Constitute.org, "Bolivia (Plurinational State of) 2009," translated by Max Planck Institute, accessed August 6, 2025, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Bolivia_2009.

²⁸ Constitute.org, "Mexico 1917 (rev. 2015)," translated by M. Fernanda Gomez Aban, accessed August 6, 2025, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Mexico_2015.

²⁹ See International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, *The Indigenous World 2025: Chile*, April 25, 2025, <https://iwgia.org/en/chile/5728-iw-2025-chile.html>; Lucinda Elliott, "Draft Chile constitution puts environment and indigenous rights at its core," *Financial Times*, July 4, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/25a20fc7-ae6e-4fe7-82a4-26635b3e96b8>; and "Chile indigenous: Time to make our voices heard," BBC News, May 14, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-57070812>. See also, Elisa Loncon Antileo, "The State of Bilingual Intercultural Education in Chile: History, New Challenges, and Current Scenarios," *Debates Indígenas*, March 1, 2025, <https://debatesindigenas.org/en/2025/03/01/the-state-of-bilingual-intercultural-education-in-chile-history-new-challenges-and-current-scenarios/#:~:text=In%20our%20country%2C%20Bilingual%20Intercultural,20%25%20of%20students%20were%20Indigenous>.

³⁰ See category "Middle and South American languages" for a full list of languages in U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey, "Detailed Languages Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over: 2017-2021," June 2025, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/language-use/2017-2021-lang-tables.html>. See also the U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey, "Detailed Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over: 2009-2013," October 2015, last revised December 16, 2021 <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2013/demo/2009-2013-lang-tables.html>.

³¹ Claudia Gafner-Rojas, "Indigenous languages as contributors to the preservation of biodiversity and their presence in international environmental law," *Journal of International Wildlife Law & Policy*, (June 12, 2020), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13880292.2020.1768693?scroll=top&needAccess=true#abstract>.

³² H. van der Voort, C. Rodríguez Alza, T.D. Swanson, and M. Crevels, "Chapter 12 Languages of the Amazon: Dimensions of Diversity," United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, *Amazon Assessment Report 2021*, 2021, [https://eng-ar21.sp-amazon.org/211112%20AR21%20Chapter%2012%20\(English\).pdf](https://eng-ar21.sp-amazon.org/211112%20AR21%20Chapter%2012%20(English).pdf), p. 3.

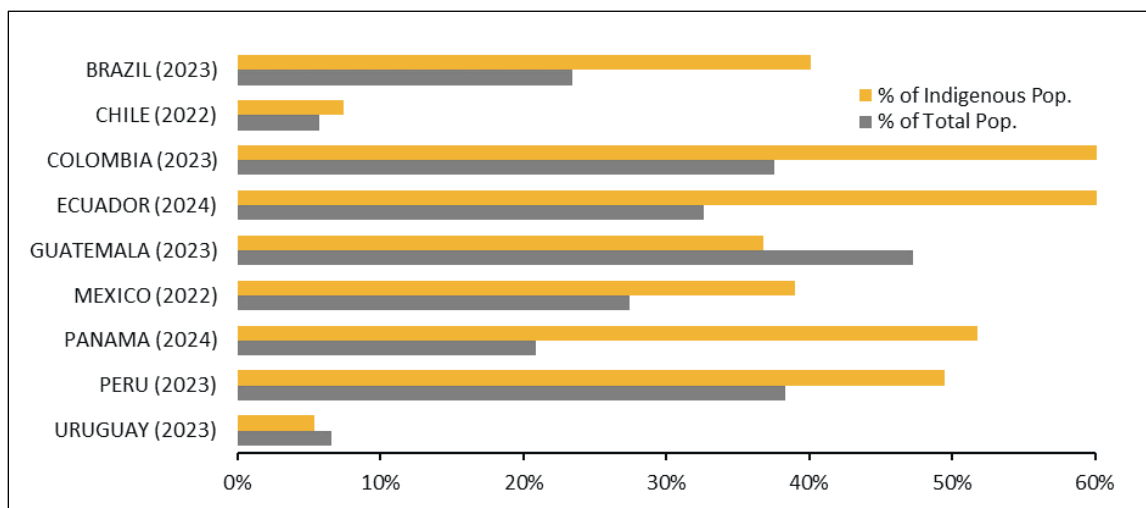
more on biodiversity, see the section below on “Land and Natural Resources” as well as related resources in **Table A-3**.

Socioeconomic Data

This section examines resources on and data about socioeconomic issues among Indigenous peoples, including poverty, access to services, education, work, and health. According to various sources, poverty rates among Indigenous peoples in Latin America are greater than those of non-Indigenous people. A 2024 ECLAC publication, for example, reported “poverty rates of the Indigenous population exceed those of the rest of the population in all [17 reporting] countries.”³³ According to the same report’s 2022 data, poverty rates among the Indigenous population ranged from 3.8% in Uruguay to 62% in Colombia while the poverty gap between the general population and the Indigenous population ranged from 0.4% in Uruguay to 38.3% in Panama.³⁴

Using the World Bank’s LAC Equity Lab data, **Figure 5** illustrates the rates of Indigenous populations living on less than \$8.30 a day in 2021 purchasing power parity terms (PPP), the poverty line for upper-middle-income countries, compared to the general population in select countries of Central and South America.³⁵

Figure 5. Rates of Indigenous People Living on Less than \$8.30 per Day in 2021 PPP in Select Latin American Countries



Source: Graphic by CRS using data from the World Bank’s LAC Equity Lab web page “Ethnicity–Poverty,” updated June 2025.

³³ UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *Population, Development and Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean: second regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development*, LC/CRPD.5/3, 2024, <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/b9c109f5-43e2-471f-9fa8-5e74862e6018/content>, p. 152.

³⁴ See Figure IX.1 in UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *Population, Development and Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean: second regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development*, LC/CRPD.5/3, 2024, <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/b9c109f5-43e2-471f-9fa8-5e74862e6018/content>, p. 152.

³⁵ World Bank LAC Equity Lab, “Ethnicity: Poverty,” updated June 2025, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/lac-equity-lab1/ethnicity/ethnicity-poverty>. See also World Bank LAC Equity Lab, “Lac Equity Lab: Poverty PPP2021,” accessed August 26, 2025, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/lac-equity-lab1/poverty1>.

Notes: The World Bank notes that ethnic identity is based on self-reported data. The numbers presented are based on a regional data harmonization effort comprised of the World Bank and the Universidad Nacional de La Plata's Center for Distributional, Labor and Social Studies, which may differ from official statistics from various Latin American countries. The figures for Ecuador and Panama are based on preliminary data. Monetary values are reported in USD 2021 purchasing power parity (PPP) terms. The web page was last updated June 2025.

“An important transformation is underway,” according to a 2019 ILO report, “whereby many Indigenous peoples have migrated from their traditional territories to urban areas” due to factors such as “changing aspirations, employment opportunities in agriculture becoming scarce, poor income generation opportunities, a lack of adequate infrastructure, as well as an increasing resource scarcity related to climate change.”³⁶ A 2022 ECLAC publication concurred: “it is now estimated that more than half of the region’s indigenous population resides in cities.”³⁷

Last updated in August 2021, the World Bank’s LAC Equity Lab provides statistics from select countries of Central and South America on Indigenous peoples’ access to various services, such as electricity, water, sewage and internet.³⁸ General trends show that Indigenous peoples have lower rates of access to services than the general population across about a dozen countries in Central and South America (not all countries listed provide data for every type of service).

A 2019 ILO report found a 31.2% wage gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous earners in Latin America and the Caribbean, the largest in comparison to other regions of the world.³⁹ The same report found that the region has the largest informal labor gap of any region in the world, with 82.6% of Indigenous peoples employed in the informal sector compared to 51.1% of non-Indigenous peoples.⁴⁰ Among the employed Indigenous population of the region, 31.7% were categorized as having attained “no education,” 39.3% a “basic” education, 18.7% an “intermediate” education, and 10.3% an “advanced” education.⁴¹

Last updated in August 2021, the World Bank’s LAC Equity Lab presented labor and education statistics for Indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants grouped together in select countries of Central and South America. While separate data for each group is not available, general trends show that Indigenous peoples combined with Afro-descendants have lower rates of employment, lower-skilled employment, and lower educational attendance and achievement levels than the general population across about dozen countries in the region (not all countries listed provide data for every labor and education category).⁴²

³⁶ International Labor Organization, *Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 Towards an Inclusive, Sustainable and Just Future*, 2019, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/%40publ/documents/publication/wcms_735607.pdf, p. 74.

³⁷ U. N. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *The sociodemographic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean*, LC/CRPD.4/3, 2022, <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/10c71b97-a147-4349-b7ee-7fb952f950c6/content>, p. 82.

³⁸ World Bank, LAC Equity Lab, “Ethnicity - Access to Services,” updated August 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/lac-equity-lab1/ethnicity/ethnicity-education>.

³⁹ International Labor Organization, *Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 Towards an Inclusive, Sustainable and Just Future*, 2019, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/%40publ/documents/publication/wcms_735607.pdf, p. 18.

⁴⁰ International Labor Organization, *Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 Towards an Inclusive, Sustainable and Just Future*, 2019, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/%40publ/documents/publication/wcms_735607.pdf, p. 16.

⁴¹ International Labor Organization, *Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 Towards an Inclusive, Sustainable and Just Future*, 2019, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/%40publ/documents/publication/wcms_735607.pdf, p. 81.

⁴² World Bank, LAC Equity Lab, “Ethnicity-Socio-demographics,” updated August 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/lac-equity-lab1/ethnicity/ip-population>.

The socioeconomic challenges faced by Indigenous peoples may also impact their health. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, a joint 2021 report from the UN and the Pan-American Health Organization highlighted that “deficiencies in access to services and in living conditions, which prevent an optimal response to the pandemic, intersect with and reinforce the various axes of the social inequality matrix, placing at a particular disadvantage the Indigenous population.”⁴³ One 2023 publication from the University of California at Santa Barbara found that “the remoteness of the Tsimané communities [in Bolivia] made little difference in preventing the spread of COVID-19, both in computer simulations and observed infections....the smaller, more isolated villages experienced the largest outbreaks proportionally, challenging the intuition that epidemics are likely to be limited in remote, low-density populations.”⁴⁴ A 2023 journal article, which reviewed 153 publications about Indigenous peoples and COVID-19, found that over half the publications studied communities in Brazil, United States, and Canada.⁴⁵ The journal article concluded that “a lack of empirical data...restricts our understanding to a limited number of Indigenous peoples in mostly high-income countries.”⁴⁶ In Appendix A, **Table A-2** lists socioeconomic resources relating to Indigenous peoples in Latin America.

Land and Natural Resources

As with other indicators, estimates on land owned by Indigenous peoples varies widely. A 2023 report by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) studied “community-based land and natural resource tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities” across “forests, grasslands, drylands, and...agricultural lands” in 73 countries.⁴⁷ Between 2015 and 2023, RRI found an increase in land owned by or designated for Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, and local communities globally from 17.60% to 18.53%, while in Latin America it rose from 19.62% of the land to 20.72%.⁴⁸ A 2018 global spatial analysis concluded that “Indigenous Peoples manage or have tenure rights over at least ~38 million km²” in 87 countries or approximately 28.1% of the land area studied.⁴⁹

⁴³ UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Pan American Health Organization, *Social Panorama of Latin America 2020*, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/46688-social-panorama-latin-america-2020>, p. 18.

⁴⁴ Sonia Fernandez, “Remoteness did little to reduce COVID-19 spread to Amazonian Tsimané,” *The Current*, August 22, 2023, <https://news.ucsb.edu/2023/021180/remoteness-did-little-reduce-covid-19-spread-amazonian-tsimane#:~:text=Indigenous%20peoples%20suffered%20disproportionately%20from%20the%20COVID%2D19,a%20lack%20of%20sovereignty%2C%20limited%20infrastructure%20and>.

⁴⁵ Pickering et al., “Indigenous peoples and the COVID-19 pandemic: a systematic scoping review,” *Environmental Research Letters*, vol. 18, no. 3:033001 (March 1, 2023), <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/acb804>.

⁴⁶ Pickering et al., “Indigenous peoples and the COVID-19 pandemic: a systematic scoping review,” *Environmental Research Letters*, vol. 18, no. 3:033001 (March 1, 2023), <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/acb804>.

⁴⁷ Rights and Resources Initiative, *Who Owns the World’s Land? Global State of Indigenous, Afro-Descendant, and Local Community Land Rights Recognition from 2015–2020*, 2nd ed., June 2023, https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/Who-Owns-the-Worlds-Land_Final-EN.pdf, p.10. See p.43 for definitions of Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, and local communities.

⁴⁸ Rights and Resources Initiative, *Who Owns the World’s Land? Global State of Indigenous, Afro-Descendant, and Local Community Land Rights Recognition from 2015–2020*, 2nd ed., June 2023, https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/Who-Owns-the-Worlds-Land_Final-EN.pdf, p.14. See also Rights and Resources Initiative, *Who Owns the World’s Land? A global baseline of formally recognized indigenous and community land rights*, September 2015, https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/GlobalBaseline_web.pdf.

⁴⁹ Stephen T. Garnett, et al., “A spatial overview of the global importance of Indigenous lands for conservation,” *Nature Sustainability*, no. 1, (July 16, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-018-0100-6>, pp. 369-374.

A 2023 Ford Foundation report stated that “Latin America has historically been at the forefront of global efforts to recognize the land and forest rights of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities,” while also indicating that these groups are “increasingly under threat due to regressive changes in governance, encroachment from government and private actors, and political violence against environmental and human rights defenders.”⁵⁰

In a 2025 report, ECLAC observed that violence against Indigenous movements in Latin America intensified in parallel to their demands for collective rights, particularly in relation to access and recovery of ancestral lands, control of natural resources, and environmental management.⁵¹ For example, a 2023 journal article evaluating 1,044 environmental conflicts involving Indigenous communities around the world showed that 78% of these conflicts involved mining, fossil fuels, dam projects, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and livestock, and resulted in landscape loss (56% of cases), livelihood loss (52%), and land dispossession (50%); Latin American Indigenous communities made up 6 of the top 10 communities most frequently reported to be involved in conflicts (Quechua, Mapuche, Aymara, Nahua, Kichwa, and Guaraní).⁵²

Both the fossil fuel and the renewable energy industries impact Indigenous territories around the world. Oil and gas affected 18% of global Indigenous lands with potential expansion of oil and gas infrastructure concentrated in six countries, including Ecuador, Guatemala, and Paraguay, according to a 2023 study.⁵³ The same study found that around the world, “renewable energy is a dominant driver of development pressure on 42% of Indigenous Peoples’ lands (3.6 million km²)” and highlighted Argentina as one country where “potential expansion of renewable energy...dominates.”⁵⁴

A 2025 UN report summarized the impact of the green energy transition for Indigenous peoples “as they are not only disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change, but they will also be severely affected by the extraction of the critical minerals required to support this transition.”⁵⁵ A Land is Life infographic highlighted eight major energy sectors threatening isolated Indigenous peoples of the Amazon and Gran Chaco regions of South America, including mining, oil and gas, as well as hydroelectric dams.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Ford Foundation, Forest Tenure Funders Group, Indufor, *Forging Resilient Pathways: Scaling up Funding in Support of Indigenous Peoples’ and Local Communities’ Tenure and Forest Guardianship in the Global South*, April 2023, <https://landportal.org/sites/default/files/library/resources/Indufor%2520FTFG%2520Pathways%2520Assessment.pdf>, p. 38.

⁵¹ Ana María Oyarce Pisani, *Panorama de la institucionalidad social de los Pueblos Indígenas y su aporte a la cohesión social de América Latina*, LC/TS.2025/31, UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025, <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/1ddef58b-fc72-4611-9729-a7d28c7f95ac/content>, p.10.

⁵² Arnim Scheidel et al., “Global impacts of extractive and industrial development projects on Indigenous Peoples’ lifeways, lands, and rights,” *Science Advances*, vol. 9, no. 23 (June 7, 2023), <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.ade9557>.

⁵³ Christina M. Kennedy et al., “Indigenous Peoples’ lands are threatened by industrial development; conversion risk assessment reveals need to support Indigenous stewardship,” *One Earth*, Volume 6, no. 8 (August 18, 2023), [https://www.cell.com/one-earth/fulltext/S2590-3322\(23\)00340-8](https://www.cell.com/one-earth/fulltext/S2590-3322(23)00340-8), p. 1035.

⁵⁴ Christina M. Kennedy et al., “Indigenous Peoples’ lands are threatened by industrial development; conversion risk assessment reveals need to support Indigenous stewardship,” *One Earth*, Volume 6, no. 8 (August 18, 2023), [https://www.cell.com/one-earth/fulltext/S2590-3322\(23\)00340-8](https://www.cell.com/one-earth/fulltext/S2590-3322(23)00340-8), p. 1035.

⁵⁵ United Nations Economic and Social Council, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, *International expert group meeting on the theme “The rights of Indigenous Peoples, including those in voluntary isolation and initial contact in the context of critical minerals,”* E/C.19/2025/4, January 30, 2025, https://documents.un.org/symbol-explorer?s=E/C.19/2025/4&i=E/C.19/2025/4_1740499021994, p. 2.

⁵⁶ Land is Life, “Map of Threats to Isolated Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon and Gran Chaco,” 2021, <https://www.easyzoom.com/embed/2b5a55e789a848f2ad2ea0b36e51a046>.

Biopiracy or the misappropriation of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge also threatens access to natural resources for Indigenous peoples. In May 2024, the member states of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) adopted the Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge.⁵⁷ The treaty defined “genetic material” as “any material of plant, animal, microbial or other origin containing functional units of heredity” and affirmed “that best efforts should be made to include Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as applicable, in implementing this Treaty.”⁵⁸ WIPO’s own magazine described the treaty as one that “creates a bridge between IP [intellectual property] law and environmental law” where “for the first time, Indigenous Peoples and local communities are explicitly acknowledged.”⁵⁹ Eleven countries from Latin America and the Caribbean signed the treaty; it would enter into force three months after 15 countries ratify the treaty.⁶⁰

Climate Change

Indigenous peoples are particularly affected by climate change; they are also adapting to it and participating in high-level policy discussions regarding climate change responses. According to the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC), the caucus for Indigenous participants in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, Indigenous peoples “are especially vulnerable to, and disproportionately impacted by, climate change.”⁶¹ Eighty percent of the world’s biodiversity can be found within Indigenous territories.⁶²

Global organizations are consulting Indigenous peoples about managing the impact of climate change on biodiversity. The 2015 UN Paris Agreement, Article 7, for example, established the “global goal on adaptation of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change,” which “should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge, knowledge of Indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems.”⁶³ The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted in December 2022 and stated that it “acknowledges the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity and as partners in its conservation, restoration and sustainable use. The Framework’s implementation must ensure that the rights, knowledge, including traditional knowledge associated with biodiversity, innovations, worldviews, values and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities are respected, and documented and preserved with their free, prior and informed consent, including through their

⁵⁷ World Intellectual Property Organization, “WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge,” accessed July 9, 2025, <https://www.wipo.int/en/web/traditional-knowledge/wipo-treaty-on-ip-gr-and-associated-tk>.

⁵⁸ World Intellectual Property Organization, “TRT/GRATK/001 WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge,” accessed July 9, 2025, <https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text/593055>.

⁵⁹ Wend Wendland, “The new WIPO Treaty 25 years in the making: what does it mean and what happens next?” *WIPO Magazine*, October 3, 2024, <https://www.wipo.int/en/web/wipo-magazine/articles/the-new-wipo-treaty-25-years-in-the-making-what-does-it-mean-and-what-happens-next-68223>.

⁶⁰ World Intellectual Property Organization, “WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge,” accessed July 9, 2025, <https://www.wipo.int/en/web/traditional-knowledge/wipo-treaty-on-ip-gr-and-associated-tk>.

⁶¹ International Indigenous Peoples’ Forum on Climate Change, “About the International Indigenous Peoples’ Forum on Climate Change,” accessed on October 18, 2023, <https://iipfcc.squarespace.com/who-are-we-1>.

⁶² United Nations, “Challenges and Opportunities for Indigenous Peoples’ Sustainability,” April 23, 2021, <https://social.desa.un.org/publications/challenges-and-opportunities-for-indigenous-peoples-sustainability>.

⁶³ United Nations, “Paris Agreement,” 2015, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf.

full and effective participation in decision-making.”⁶⁴ A key message advanced in the 2019 Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services was that the “Indigenous and local knowledge systems are locally based, but regionally manifested and thus globally relevant.”⁶⁵

In 2023, a UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report stated that “cooperation, and inclusive decision making, with Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as well as recognition of inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples, is integral to successful adaptation across forests and other ecosystems (*high confidence*).”⁶⁶ **Table A-3** lists resources about the lands, natural resources, and impacts of climate change on Indigenous peoples in Latin America.

Human Rights and Multilateral Instruments

Various international human rights mechanisms are designed to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples globally. In 2000, for example, the United Nations created the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Then, in 2001, it created the Special Rapporteurship on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which promotes the rights of Indigenous peoples across the globe.⁶⁷

Table A-4 provides additional resources about the work of international organizations with Indigenous peoples.

Several international organizations have adopted multilateral instruments on Indigenous peoples’ rights. **Table 1** identifies countries that have ratified or voted in favor of the following three multilateral instruments on Indigenous peoples:

International Labor Organization’s Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169).⁶⁸ The convention includes sections on consultation; land; recruitment and conditions of employment; vocational training, handicrafts and rural industries; and social security and health; education and means of communication.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).⁶⁹ The 2007 declaration covers topics such as self-determination or autonomy; land and environment; employment; religion; language and media; education; discrimination and violence; and health.

⁶⁴ Convention on Biological Diversity, “Decision Adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,” December 19, 2022, <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf>.

⁶⁵ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, 2019, https://zenodo.org/records/6417333/files/202206_IPBES%20GLOBAL%20REPORT_FULL_DIGITAL_MARCH%202022.pdf?download=1, p. 36.

⁶⁶ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, 2023, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/>.

⁶⁷ See UN Economic and Social Council, “Resolution 2000/22 Establishment of a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues,” E/RES/2000/22, July 28, 2000, <https://docs.un.org/en/E/RES/2000/22>. See also UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, “Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples,” <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/SRIndigenousPeoples/Pages/SRIPeoplesIndex.aspx>.

⁶⁸ International Labor Organization, “Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169),” 1989, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169.

⁶⁹ United Nations, “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” September 13, 2007, https://www.un.org/development/desa/Indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf.

American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (ADRIP).⁷⁰ The 2016 declaration approved by the Organization of American States includes sections on human and collective rights; cultural identity; organizational and political rights; and social, economic and property rights.

Table 1. Latin America and the Caribbean and Multilateral Instruments on Indigenous Peoples' Rights

Country	Ratified ILO No. 169 ^a	Voted in favor of adopting UNDRIP	Voted in favor of adopting ADRIP
Argentina	X	X	X
Belize	—	X	X
Bolivia	X	X	X
Brazil	X	X	X
Chile	X	X	X
Colombia	X	Abstained ^b	X ^c
Costa Rica	X	X	X
Dominican Republic	—	X	X
Ecuador	X	X	X
El Salvador	—	X	X
Guatemala	X	X	X
Guyana	—	X	X
Honduras	X	X	X
Jamaica	—	X	X
Mexico	X	X	X
Nicaragua	X	X	X
Panama	—	X	X
Paraguay	X	X	X
Peru	X	X	X
Suriname	—	X	X
Uruguay	—	X	X
Venezuela	X	X	X

Sources: Compiled by CRS using the following sources: ILO's web page "Ratifications of C169—Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169);" UN web page "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People;" and see footnotes of OAS' official publication of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Notes: "X" denotes yes or in favor and "—" denotes no or against.

⁷⁰ Organization of American States, "American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," June 15, 2016, <https://www.oas.org/en/sare/documents/DecAmIND.pdf>. For more information on the Organization of American States, see CRS Report R42639, *Organization of American States: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Peter J. Meyer.

- a. International Labor Organization, “Ratifications of C169—Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169),” https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:312314.
- b. From the region, only Colombia abstained from the UNDRIP vote. See United Nations Digital Library, “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People,” voting record, September 13, 2007, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/609197?ln=en>.
- c. In the ADRIP footnotes, Colombia “breaks with consensus” on paragraphs within Articles XXIII, XXIX, and XXX. See Organization of American States, “American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” June 15, 2016, <https://www.oas.org/en/sare/documents/DecAmlND.pdf>.

The Organization of American States (OAS) is a regional multilateral organization that comprises most of the independent countries of the Western Hemisphere.⁷¹ Within the OAS, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights are the organs charged with promoting and protecting human rights. The IACHR works to protect the human rights of all people although “special attention must be devoted to those populations, communities and groups that have historically been the targets of discrimination.”⁷² In a 2000 report, the IACHR wrote “concern for the human rights of Indigenous peoples and their members has been a constant feature in the work of the Commission.”⁷³ The IACHR hosts multiple sessions per year to hold hearings regarding human rights issues affecting a particular community, country, or subregion of the Western Hemisphere, including over 250 hearings since 1996 relating to the rights of Indigenous Peoples.⁷⁴ The IACHR created the Rapporteurship on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 1990 specifically to promote the rights of Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas.⁷⁵ **Table A-4** provides additional resources about the work of international organizations with Indigenous peoples.

⁷¹ Organization of American States, “Who We Are,” accessed July 8, 2025, https://www.oas.org/en/about/who_we_are.asp.

⁷² Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, “What is the IACHR?” accessed July 8, 2025, <https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/mandate/what.asp>.

⁷³ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, preface of *The Human Rights Situation of the Indigenous People in the Americas*, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.108, Doc. 62, October 20, 2000, <https://www.cidh.org/Indigenas/Preface.htm> <http://www.cidh.org/Indigenas/TOC.htm>.

⁷⁴ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, “Hearings,” accessed August 18, 2025, <https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/sessions/hearings.asp?Year=2025&Topic=17>.

⁷⁵ Organization of American States, “Rapporteurship on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” accessed July 8, 2025, <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/Indigenous/>.

Appendix A. Data Sources and Resources Lists

Below are notes on the data sources most cited for this report followed by resource lists regarding Indigenous languages; socioeconomics; land, natural resources and climate change; international organizations; and human rights.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and *Fundación para la Educación en Contextos de Multilingüismo y Pluriculturalidad* (the Foundation for Education in Multilingual and Multicultural Contexts or FUNPROEIB) gathered data in 21 Latin American and Caribbean countries in 2009 for its report in two volumes titled *Atlas Sociolingüístico de Pueblos Indígenas en América Latina*. The report notes the limitations of using national censuses.⁷⁶ While older, the report continues to be cited by more recent publications.

In 2015, the World Bank published data from 16 countries using national censuses and household surveys in *Indigenous Latin America in the Twenty-First Century: The First Decade*.⁷⁷ The report noted that the definition of Indigenous has become increasingly controversial and “underscores the complexity of identifying Indigenous people across the region and argues that the conditions of indigeneity vary over time and are, in some cases, context- and country-specific.”⁷⁸

In 2020, ECLAC and the Development Fund for the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y el Caribe) published *Los pueblos indígenas de América Latina—Abya Yala y la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible: tensiones y desafíos desde una perspectiva territorial*. The Spanish-language report focused on the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals and noted advances in including Indigenous peoples in official statistics and lists data from 17 national censuses.⁷⁹ Statistics from this report were cited in **Figure 1**, **Figure 2**, and **Figure 3**.

In 2019, the International Labor Organization presented multi-faceted statistics on the working conditions of Indigenous peoples with a special emphasis on gendered dimensions of labor in its *Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 Towards an Inclusive, Sustainable and Just Future*. The report noted the “continued ‘invisibility’ of Indigenous and tribal peoples in official data and statistics.”⁸⁰ The regional data was not disaggregated by country.

The 2025 edition of *Ethnologue* counted languages for each country and divided them into Indigenous and non-Indigenous categories. Indigenous languages counts were used in **Figure 4** as non-Indigenous is defined as “a language that did not originate in the country, but which is now established there either as a result of its longstanding presence or because of institutionally

⁷⁶ UNICEF and FUNPROEIB Andes, *Atlas Sociolingüístico de Pueblos Indígenas en América Latina Vol. I*, 2009, <https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/9791/file/PDF%20Atlas%20sociolingüístico%20de%20pueblos%20ind%C3%ADgenas%20en%20ALC-Tomo%201.pdf>, pp. vii-ix.

⁷⁷ World Bank, 2015, pp. 6, 9.

⁷⁸ World Bank, 2015, p. 10.

⁷⁹ ECLAC and the Development Fund for the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (Fondo para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas de América Latina y el Caribe), *Los pueblos indígenas de América Latina—Abya Yala y la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible: tensiones y desafíos desde una perspectiva territorial*, 2020, <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/7a735a11-beec-406d-ba2d-2dc1ee752834/content>, pp.151-155.

⁸⁰ International Labor Organization, *Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 Towards an Inclusive, Sustainable and Just Future*, 2019, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/%40publ/documents/publication/wcms_735607.pdf, p. 44.

supported use and recognition.”⁸¹ Only living languages were included in the count, not languages classified as extinct. *Ethnologue*’s “Methodology” webpage provides details on the methodology, language names, and status of usage.

The World Bank’s LAC Equity Lab provides national data on poverty (last updated in June 2025), as well as socio-demographics, access to services, education and labor (last updated in August 2021). Some subnational data is also available, although not covered in this report. The World Bank notes that ethnic identity is based on self-reported data. Statistics may vary from official statistics reported by Latin American governments as the World Bank uses SEDLAC (Socio-Economic Database for Latin America and the Caribbean or CEDLAS and the World Bank), “a regional data harmonization effort that increases cross-country comparability.”⁸² Statistics were cited in **Figure 1**, **Figure 2**, **Figure 3**, and **Figure 5**.

For each table below, sources are hyperlinked and listed in reverse chronological order with the publication year in parentheses following the title. Multiple sources from the same year are listed alphabetically as are sources without a publication date, such as websites. Some sources are global, with a section dedicated to Latin America.

Table A-I. Resources on Indigenous Languages in Latin America

Title (publication year)	Author	Resource Type
Languages of the World, Twenty-eighth edition (2025)	Gary F. Simons(editor), Ethnologue, SIL International	World language encyclopedia with maps
2022-2032 International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022)	United Nations	Website with global map, summary report and more
The International Year of Indigenous Languages: Mobilizing the International Community to Preserve, Revitalize and Promote Indigenous Languages (2021)	United Nations	A global report. See also the corresponding website International Year of Indigenous Languages.
Celebrating Indigenous Languages (updated 2020)	Google Earth	Interactive global website
Atlas Sociolingüístico de Pueblos Indígenas en América Latina, Volúmen I and Volúmen II (2009)	UNICEF and FUNPROEIB Andes	Regional report in Spanish only

Source: Compiled by CRS.

⁸¹ Gary F. Simons, (editor), *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, twenty-eighth edition*, SIL International, 2025, <https://www.ethnologue.com/methodology/>.

⁸² World Bank’s LAC Equity Lab, “Overview,” accessed July 9, 2025, at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/lac-equity-lab1>. See also National University of La Plata, “Socio-Economic Database for Latin America and the Caribbean,” updated August 2025, <https://www.cedlas.econo.unlp.edu.ar/wp/en/estadisticas/sedlac/>.

Table A-2. Resources on Indigenous Socioeconomics in Latin America

Title (publication year)	Author	Resource Type
Population, Development and Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean: second regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (2024)	UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	Report with one chapter dedicated to Indigenous peoples
Norte de Centroamérica y Nicaragua: Derechos económicos, sociales, culturales y ambientales de pueblos indígenas y afrodescendientes tribales (2023)	Organization of American States	Report on El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua (Spanish only)
Linking Indigenous Communities with Regional Development (2019)	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development	Report on OECD member countries including Chile and Mexico with some information on non-member countries
State of the World's Indigenous Peoples: Education, 3 rd volume (2017)	United Nations	Global report with a chapter on Latin America and the Caribbean
State of the World's Indigenous People: Indigenous People's Access to Health Services, 2 nd volume (2016)	United Nations	Global report with a chapter on Latin America and the Caribbean
Indigenous Latin America in the Twenty-First Century: The First Decade (2015)	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank	Regional report covers population, languages, migration, development, poverty, and education
LAC Equity Lab: A Platform for Poverty and Inequality Analysis	World Bank	Regional economic data and maps

Source: Compiled by CRS.

Table A-3. Resources on Indigenous Land, Natural Resources, and Climate Change in Latin America

Title (publication year)	Author	Resource Type
Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2024 (2025)	FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean	Regional report
State of the World's Indigenous Peoples: Climate Crisis, 6 th volume (2025)	United Nations	Global report
Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2023)	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	Global report with summary for policymakers, a longer report, figures, and annexes
Deforestation in the Amazon: past, present and future (2023)	Sibélia Zanon, Infoamazonia	Regional article with maps, tables, and graphs

Title (publication year)	Author	Resource Type
Who Owns the World's Land? Global State of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and Local Community Land Rights, 2 nd Edition, Recognition from 2015–2020 (2023)	Rights and Resources Initiative	Global report with regional and country statistics; updates findings from 2015 report
EcoCrime Data (2022)	Igarapé Institute and InSight Crime	Mapping tool of environmental crimes in the Amazon activities that degrade the forest, including deforestation, wildfires, illegal mining, attacks on environmental defenders, and cattle, soy, and oil production
The role of Amazonian Indigenous Peoples in fighting the climate crisis (2022)	Paulo Moutinho, et al., Science Panel for the Amazon, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network	Policy brief
Stolen Amazon: The Roots of Environmental Crime in Five Countries (2022)	InSight Crime and Igarapé Institute	Report
Amazon Assessment Report 2021 (2021)	Science Panel for the Amazon, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network	Global report
Forest governance by indigenous and tribal peoples. An opportunity for climate action in Latin America and the Caribbean (2021)	UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean	Regional report
State of the World's Indigenous Peoples: Rights to Lands, Territories and Resources, 5 th volume (2021)	United Nations	Global report
Environmental Governance Indicators for Latin America and the Caribbean (2020)	Inter-American Development Bank and World Justice Project	Regional report
Indigenous Peoples Living in Voluntary Isolation in the Amazon and Gran Chaco Regions Regional Report: Territories and Development (2020)	Land is Life	Regional report including information about Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela (Spanish)
Undermining Rights: Indigenous Lands and Mining in the Amazon (2020)	Patricia Quijano Vallejos, Peter G. Veit, Pedro Tipula, and Katie Reytar, World Resources Institute	Regional report
Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019)	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services	Global report including discussions of Indigenous peoples
Global Report on the Situation of Lands, Territories and Resources of Indigenous Peoples (2019)	Joji Carino, Loreto Tamayo, Indigenous Peoples Major Group for Sustainable Development	Global report with a section on Latin America and the Caribbean

Title (publication year)	Author	Resource Type
Situation of Human Rights of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Pan-Amazon Region (2019)	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights	Regional report covers threats to Indigenous peoples and their rights, and provides policy recommendations
RAISG (<i>Red Amazónica de Información Socioambiental Georreferenciada</i>) Cartographic Data	Amazon Network of Georeferenced Socio-Environmental Information, a consortium of civil society organizations from several countries	Website with maps about the Amazon's protected areas, Indigenous territories, deforestation and more (English, Spanish, Portuguese)
Global Atlas of Environmental Justice	Created by and managed by a team principally based at the Autonomous University of Barcelona's Institute of Environmental Science and Technology	Global map with information about conflicts, communities, commodities, companies, and governmental agencies involved, including reference links
International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change	United Nations	Website for global caucus of Indigenous peoples participating in UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
LandMark Map	World Resources Institute, International Land Coalition and others	Global maps, data, country profiles

Source: Compiled by CRS.

Table A-4. Resources on International Organizations and Indigenous Peoples in Latin America

Title (publication year)	Author	Resource Type
Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 Towards an inclusive, sustainable and just future (2019)	International Labor Organization	Global report on income and employment with regional statistics and a focus on gender differences
State of the World's Indigenous Peoples: Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 4 th volume (2019)	United Nations	Global report covers Declaration implementation, official statistics, challenges and priorities
Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Portal	World Intellectual Property Organization	Website provides access to global resources
Indigenous Peoples	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	Website provides access to global resources, experts, and Indigenous Peoples' Forum
Indigenous Peoples	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Website provides access to global resources

Title (publication year)	Author	Resource Type
Indigenous Peoples	United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Website provides access to the global Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, expert group meetings, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples and more
Indigenous and tribal peoples	International Labor Organization	Website provides access to global resources
Rapporteurship on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Organization of American States	Website provides access to hearings, reports, jurisprudence, and more
Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	Website provides access to reports, activities, and comments on laws and policies

Source: Compiled by CRS.

Table A-5. Resources on Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights in Latin America

Title (publication year)	Author	Resource Type
The Indigenous World 2025 (2025)	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs	Annual global reports since 1986 on issues affecting Indigenous peoples, organized by country
Panorama de la institucionalidad social de los Pueblos Indígenas y su aporte a la cohesión social de América Latina (2025)	Ana María Oyarce Pisani, UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	Spanish-language report on Latin American governmental institutions and Indigenous peoples
Annual Report 2022/23: The State of the World's Human Rights (2023)	Amnesty International	Global report, see "Americas Regional Overview"
Front Line Defenders Global Analysis 2022 (2023)	Front Line Defenders	Global report about physical, digital, legal and social attacks against human rights defenders with section on the Americas
Indigenous Women and Their Human Rights in the Americas (2017)	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights	Regional report with hearings, cases, thematic and country reports that document violations of the human rights of Indigenous women
Civic Freedoms & HRD Data	Business & Human Rights Resource Centre	Global database of attacks on human rights defenders from 2015 to present, which specifies Indigenous victims
Country Reports on Human Rights Practices	U.S. State Department	Annual reports on developments in countries worldwide, which may mention Indigenous peoples
Indigenous Navigator	Community-generated data, website supported by the European Union	Website and global database

Source: Compiled by CRS.

Appendix B. National Agencies of Indigenous Affairs

Table B-I. National Agencies Overseeing Indigenous Affairs

Country	Parent Agency	Indigenous Affairs Agency
Argentina	Jefatura de Gabinete de Ministros, Vicejefatura de Gabinete del Interior	Instituto Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas
Belize		Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs
Bolivia		Ministerio de Culturas, Descolonización y Despatriarcalización
Brazil	Ministério dos Povos Indígenas	Conselho Nacional de Política Indigenista
		Fundação Nacional dos Povos Indígenas
Chile	Ministerio de las Culturas, las Artes y el Patrimonio	Subdirección Nacional de Pueblos Originarios
	Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Familia	Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena
Colombia	Ministerio del Interior	Dirección de Asuntos Indígenas, Rom y Minorías
Costa Rica		Comisión Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas
Ecuador		Consejo Nacional para la Igualdad de Pueblos y Nacionalidades
El Salvador	Ministerio de Cultura ^a	Dirección General de Multiculturalidad
Guatemala	Ministerio Público	Secretaría de Pueblos Indígenas ^b
	Presidencia de la Republica	Defensoría de la Mujer Indígena
Guyana		Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
Honduras	Secretaría de Desarrollo Social	Coordinación Nacional de Pueblos Originarios y Afrohondureños
Mexico	Secretaría de Cultura	Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas
		Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas
Nicaragua	Asamblea Nacional	Comisión de Asuntos de los Pueblos Originarios, Afrodescendientes y Regímenes Autonómicos
		Comisión Nacional de Demarcación y Titulación
Panama	Ministerio de Gobierno	Viceministerio de Asuntos Indígenas
		Consejo Nacional de Desarrollo Integral de los Pueblos Indígenas
	Ministerio de Salud	Dirección de Asuntos Sanitarios Indígenas
Paraguay		Instituto Paraguayo del Indígena

Peru	Ministerio de Salud	Dirección de Pueblos Indígenas u Originarios
Uruguay	Institución Nacional de Derechos Humanos y Defensoría del Pueblo	Unidad Étnico-racial
Suriname	Ministerie van Regionale Ontwikkeling	Duurzame Ontwikkeling Inheemsen
Venezuela		Ministerio del Poder Popular para los Pueblos Indígenas

Source: Compiled by CRS.

- a. El Salvador's Ministry of Culture mentions Indigenous peoples in its list of responsibilities "Ejercer la rectoría de los procesos relacionados con el desarrollo socio cultural de los pueblos indígenas."
- b. Found under the tab "Administrativo" towards the bottom of the web page.

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