



INTERFAITH  
RAINFOREST  
INITIATIVE

# IRIbulletin

*Feb/***2026**



## EARLY TALKS WITH CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE HELP LOCK IN AMAZON COMMITMENTS

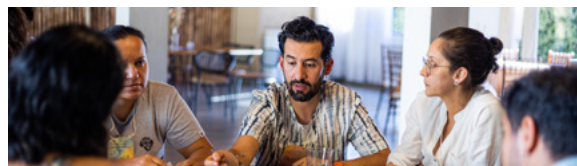


IRI Colombia continued building a legislative agenda for the Amazon ahead of the 2026 congressional elections through strategic dialogues with candidates for the Chamber of Representatives in Amazonian departments where it has 45 local chapters. Following earlier meetings in Caquetá, February engagements in Mocoa and Puerto Asís brought together candidates and campaign teams from different political groups. The conversations created direct channels for dialogue, shared technical and ethical perspectives on deforestation, climate action, and water security, and encouraged more informed, long-term public governance. IRI Colombia also invited candidates to join the Parliamentary Alliance for the Amazon 2026–2030 and explore a permanent national coordination roundtable linking Congress, scientists, Indigenous Peoples, territorial communities, and other key actors. By engaging candidates before campaign positions harden, IRI Colombia is increasing the chances that forests and Amazon governance stay central in future legislative debates.



## THE AMAZON NETWORK OF NETWORKS SETS ITS 2026 COURSE

After a year of advocacy in Pan-Amazonian and global forums, the Amazon Network of Networks resumed joint work to strengthen a shared Pan-Amazonian vision able to influence decisions on climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development. The network brings together 12 regional platforms representing hundreds of civil society organizations and members of the scientific community committed to defending the biome. On 11 February, the technical secretariat convened partner networks to review governance issues and begin setting priorities for the year. It also launched bilateral meetings to identify each organization's priorities and opportunities for collaboration as part of the 2026 work plan. During a meeting with IRI Colombia on 18 February, participants reviewed IRI Colombia's work in training, communications, and advocacy and identified shared priorities for coordinated action. By reconnecting the network around common goals, IRI Colombia is helping strengthen regional coordination at a time when Pan-Amazonian advocacy needs greater alignment.



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## AN ALLIANCE FOR INDIGENOUS SELF-GOVERNMENT IN PUTUMAYO

IRI Colombia and the Etnollano Foundation formalized a strategic alliance to strengthen the autonomy and self-governance of Indigenous Peoples in Putumayo. Finalized after a key meeting in Bogotá on 19 February, the partnership is built around a roadmap focused on reducing deforestation, restoring hydrological and biodiversity connectivity, and strengthening territorial governance in the face of threats such as mining. The alliance also seeks to turn lessons from earlier training processes with IRI Colombia's local chapters, including Villagarzón, into a longer-term political and organizational model. Planned work includes trust-building, mapping of biocultural connectivity, and technical and legal strengthening for territorial defense, while linking spirituality and ancestral knowledge with monitoring and control tools. By supporting Indigenous governance as both a rights issue and an ecological strategy, **IRI Colombia is reinforcing one of the strongest local foundations for long-term forest protection.**



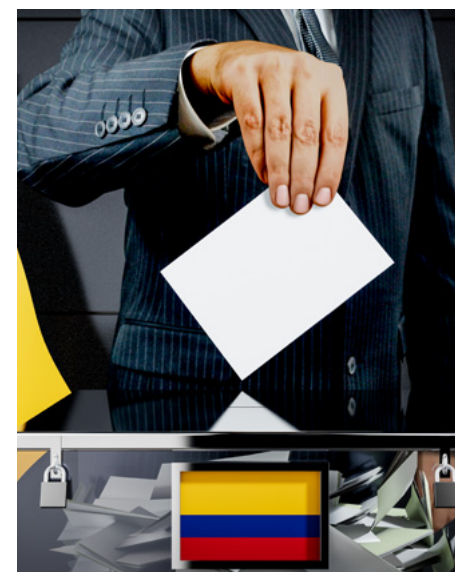
## DEEPENING COORDINATION WITH UNEP IN COLOMBIA

On 20 February, IRI Colombia held a high-level bilateral meeting with UNEP Colombia in Bogotá to strengthen cooperation on Amazon protection, climate action, and environmental governance. The meeting reviewed program progress and IRI Colombia's strategic priorities for its 2026 work plan, a year seen as critical for consolidating ongoing efforts, scaling results, and deepening advocacy with legislators and other decision-makers. The discussion also highlighted the role of religious leaders and faith-based organizations as strategic allies in mobilizing society, increasing the legitimacy of public policies, and promoting climate action rooted in ethical and spiritual values. By strengthening coordination with UNEP, **IRI Colombia is expanding the institutional partnerships needed to turn forest protection into stronger public policy and wider social action.**



## “LISTEN TO THE AMAZON” PREPARES FOR THE 2026 PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Through the Escucha la Amazonía alliance, where IRI Colombia is a lead partner, work advanced in February to prepare advocacy inputs for the 2026 presidential elections. The alliance developed strategic materials to guide public advocacy once the candidates for the 31 May first round are confirmed. One key product is **Coordinates to Prevent Crossing the Point of No Return in the Colombian Amazon and Understanding the Challenges and Opportunities for the 2026–2030 Government Term**, a document designed to shape debates and public discussion so candidates put forward long-term proposals for protecting the Amazon and supporting territorial well-being. The alliance also drafted a concept note for a workshop with journalists focused on the Amazon in the electoral context, including analysis of presidential proposals on the environment, human rights, and territorial planning. By preparing clear advocacy tools and media engagement early, **IRI Colombia is helping make it harder for candidates to avoid concrete positions on the Amazon.**



## PARTNER PLANNING HELPS TURN PHASE 3 INTO A SHARPER STRATEGY

From 9–11 February in Jakarta, IRI Indonesia convened a three-day workshop with partners to align on its Phase 3 vision, strategy, program direction, and theory of change. The workshop brought together Advisory Council members from major religious and institutional bodies, civil society organizations, government institutions, youth groups, and mainstream media. Across the three days, discussions moved from Advisory Council consolidation and vision alignment to policy strategy, theory of change review, governance arrangements, and follow-up priorities. Key outcomes included agreement on IRI Indonesia’s Phase 3 role as a faith-based moral movement seeking to influence public policy, a stronger vision and mission centered on Indigenous Peoples’ rights, a more practical and measurable draft theory of change, and a 3–6 month action agenda to finalize planning for 2026. By bringing diverse partners into one shared process, IRI Indonesia is sharpening the direction and structure needed to move from broad ambition to coordinated action.



## “NO FORESTS, NO FUTURE” MOVES FROM IDEA TO IMPLEMENTATION



On 4–5 February in Jakarta, IRI Indonesia held a workshop to develop the strategy for its “No Forests, No Future” campaign. The meeting brought together the secretariat team, communication partners, and a representative from EcoNusa to translate the Phase 3 vision and theory of change into practical campaign architecture.

Through presentations, group discussions, and collaborative drafting, participants refined key messages, identified priority issues, mapped target audiences, and agreed on communication channels and collaboration pathways for 2026. The workshop produced a draft 2026–2029 campaign strategy, strengthened a core narrative linking faith-based moral values, forest protection, and Indigenous Peoples’ rights, and developed initial audience segmentation for the two halves of 2026. By moving from broad messaging to concrete planning, IRI Indonesia is laying the groundwork for a stronger public campaign in the year ahead.

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## BUILDING BROADER MOMENTUM FOR THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES BILL



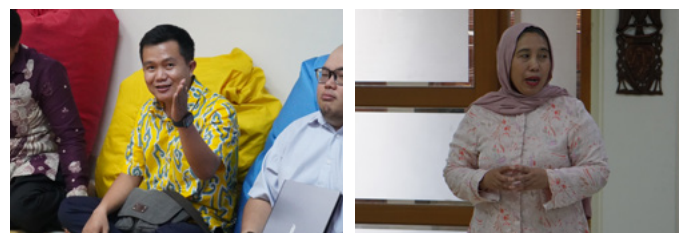
On 18 February in Bogor, IRI Indonesia joined a coalition coordination meeting on the Indigenous Peoples Bill alongside Kaoem Telapak, AMAN, Sawit Watch, Kemitraan, BPAN, PPMAN, and other coalition members. The meeting reviewed advocacy progress, assessed political opportunities and constraints, and prepared for a West Java regional consolidation planned for 25–26 February in Bandung. Discussions focused on building a shared position on the bill, widening the movement's support base, and designing broader

mobilization beyond policy circles. Planned outreach included campuses, cultural spaces, public discussions, film screenings, seminars, and engagement with Indigenous Peoples communities, students, farmers, workers, academics, artists, religious groups, women's organizations, and wider civil society. By helping expand the coalition's reach beyond insiders, **IRI Indonesia is supporting the wider public pressure needed to advance one of the country's most important forest and rights protections.**

## A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION MUST ALSO PROTECT INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES

On 2 February in Jakarta, IRI Indonesia joined a workshop on the Just Energy Transition organized by AMAN and Indigenous Peoples Rights International. The gathering brought together Indigenous community representatives and partner NGOs to examine how Indonesia's energy transition is unfolding in practice and how so-called low-emission projects can still lead to land dispossession and rights violations. IRI Indonesia contributed to the discussion by stressing that a just transition must be judged not only by technology, but also by governance, including recognition of Indigenous territories, safeguards against coercive land acquisition, and accountability for environmental and social harm. Participants also raised concerns about biodiversity damage, pollution, and the criminalization of communities defending their lands. By helping frame the transition around rights and territorial protection, **IRI Indonesia is pushing back against climate solutions that risk reproducing old patterns of harm.**

## INTERFAITH YOUTH STEP INTO THE PHASE 3 AGENDA



On 27 February in Jakarta, IRI Indonesia held an interfaith youth gathering and Ramadan iftar to introduce the "No Forests, No Future" theory of change and build youth support for its programs and campaign implementation. The event brought together 26 participants, including youth delegated by religious institutions represented on the Advisory Council, as well as partner organizations and the IRI Indonesia youth chapter. Through presentations, group discussions, and reflection sessions, participants reviewed the theory of change, shared perspectives from their organizations, and discussed initial roles and follow-up actions. Key outcomes included stronger shared understanding, greater readiness among youth delegates to support IRI Indonesia's work, and early ideas for youth-led and interfaith-based activities. By investing early in youth engagement, **IRI Indonesia is expanding the next generation of messengers and organizers who can carry the forests agenda further.**



## A HIGH-LEVEL FAITH CONVERSATION ON LAUDATO SI'

On 13 February, IRI Peru organized the conference **Challenges for Faith Communities in Light of Laudato Si'** in Lima, featuring Cardinal Michael Czerny, Prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, together with Apostolic Nuncio Paolo Rocco Gualtieri. The event brought together Catholic, evangelical, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Jewish, Bahá'í, Brahma Kumaris, and Muslim representatives, as well as church leaders, Indigenous voices, and environmental experts. With 106 participants in person, social media and radio transmission, and coverage by Catholic and regional media, the conference became a major platform for positioning faith communities as moral actors on environmental protection, deforestation, and public responsibility. As the only event in Cardinal Czerny's private agenda in Peru, it also strengthened IRI Peru's visibility and convening power at the intersection of faith, ecology, and public engagement. By creating a

high-profile public space for faith-based environmental leadership, **IRI Peru is helping move forest protection further into national moral and civic debate.**



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## ETHICAL VOTING TRAININGS HELP CITIZENS PREPARE FOR ELECTIONS

From 24 to 27 February, IRI Peru held four training workshops titled **Ethical Criteria for Choosing** in Quillabamba, Cusco, and Checacupe, along with one virtual session for communities connected to the National University of San Marcos and the DECOS network. Together, the sessions reached 55 participants from different ages and faith backgrounds. The workshops created space to reflect on the relationship between Amazon protection, democratic responsibility, and the need to elect authorities committed to life and the common good. Facilitators also addressed the emotional impact of the political climate before introducing practical tools for civic discernment, including the **Electoral Traffic Light methodology**. By equipping participants with a clearer and calmer way to assess candidates, **IRI Peru is strengthening informed voting as both a democratic responsibility and a moral practice.**



## LOCAL CHAPTERS ALIGN AROUND 2026 PRIORITIES

Between 24 and 27 February, IRI Peru visited its local chapters in Quillabamba, Cusco, and Puerto Maldonado to review 2025 progress and define priorities and work plans for 2026. The meetings helped organize a shared agenda of interreligious activities and socio-political advocacy focused on rainforest protection and ethical civic participation, especially through the promotion of IRI Peru's ethical criteria for responsible voting. Planned actions include interfaith prayer gatherings, conferences on the theology of nature aimed at engaging more denominations, and public conversations on ethical discernment in the electoral process. By translating broad environmental and democratic concerns into concrete territorial plans, IRI Peru is helping local chapters move into 2026 with clearer priorities and stronger coordination.



## MEDIA OUTREACH EXPANDS THE REACH OF ETHICAL VOTING AND FAITH-BASED ADVOCACY

In February, IRI Peru expanded media outreach around its “Grade Your Candidate” campaign and the conference with Cardinal Michael Czerny through interviews and cross-platform broadcasting across regional and national outlets. National Facilitator Laura Vargas was interviewed by Radio y TV Oriente in Yurimaguas, Radio Onda Azul, and Radio y TV Quillabamba, helping position the campaign with audiences reaching hundreds of thousands of listeners and viewers. The Czerny conference was also broadcast by a wide network of radio, television, and digital outlets across Amazonas, Loreto, Lima, Quillabamba, Madre de Dios, and Jesuit social media channels. By extending its message beyond in-person events, IRI Peru is strengthening its role as a credible faith-based voice on ethical elections, environmental responsibility, and action against deforestation.



## NEW CAMPAIGN MATERIALS SUPPORT “GRADE YOUR CANDIDATE”



IRI Peru developed a new set of audio, video, web, and print materials to support its “Grade Your Candidate” campaign under the broader No Forests, No Life framework. The campaign package includes an interactive Electoral Traffic Light webpage, flyers on ethical criteria and voting tools, radio spots, digital brochures, printed materials, and short videos featuring faith leaders and young Amazonian voices. These products are designed to help communities evaluate candidates through an ethical, environmental, and civic lens, while also making the campaign usable across churches, radio stations, community groups, and digital platforms. By turning advocacy into practical communication tools, IRI Peru is making electoral discernment more accessible ahead of the 12 April general elections.



## BUILDING THE PARTNERSHIPS NEEDED FOR 2026

In February, IRI Brazil focused on strengthening the partnerships needed to advance its 2026 agenda. Meetings with the Ambassador of Norway, RFN, REPAM, CLUA, UNEP, and the Pan-Amazonian Institute helped deepen diplomatic backing, institutional alignment, and collaboration around joint campaigns, environmental education, and regional network-building. Resource-mobilization efforts also moved forward, with discussions involving IRI global leadership and partners opening new funding pathways. At the same time, IRI Brazil expanded communications and public-engagement opportunities through partnerships connected to the publication *Tempo de Cuidar*, the *Amazônia Viva* film, and a proposed virtual reality pilot with Bemol in Manaus. Additional meetings with

public authorities and technical partners also advanced planning for scientific immersions and stronger faith-based engagement on climate governance in the Amazon. By reinforcing the relationships that make scale possible, IRI Brazil is helping position forest protection and climate action for stronger reach in 2026.



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The Interfaith Rainforest Initiative plays a fundamental role in shaping public opinion in favor of environmental protection and sustainable development—especially in safeguarding the Amazon.

Religious leaders help shape the principles and values that guide decision-making, from public policies to corporate practices, and ultimately, the choices that impact the future of our planet.

**Marina Silva**

Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Brazil



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