



INTERFAITH
RAINFOREST
INITIATIVE

IRIbulletin

Jan/2026

AMAZON SCIENCE, CLIMATE CRASH COURSES FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS

IRI Brazil brought senior Catholic, evangelical, Afro-Brazilian, and civic leaders into hands-on learning at the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) and the National Center for Monitoring and Early Warning of Natural Disasters (CEMADEN) that connects what's happening in the forest to everyday health, safety, and livelihoods. Across three recent scientific immersions, **31 Catholic leaders** (from six Amazon states), **53 evangelical leaders**, and **26 evangelical leaders** plus agribusiness representatives took part. These cohorts generated concrete commitments (from distributing thousands of water filters to a one-million-tree pledge over

10 years) and helped religious leaders use public tools that track drought, fires, landslides, and health risks. By equipping high-trust leaders with clear facts and practical actions (and measuring impact with a control-group evaluation), IRI Brazil is turning influence into sustained momentum for policies and behaviors that keep forests standing.



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CLEAN AIR AND SAFE WATER CAMPAIGN SPREADS ACROSS THE AMAZON

The "Right to Breathe Clean Air, Safe Water, and Climate Security" campaign grew across multiple states, translating forest loss into a clear public-health story about smoke, unsafe water, and extreme-weather risks. In a single month, local chapters hosted screenings and events that directly engaged **1,000+ people**, with messages amplified through faith and community partners. A strategic partnership with Empresa Brasil de Comunicação (EBC) will expand the 2026 campaign through Rádio Nacional, TV Brasil, and digital platforms, including remote, low-connectivity communities. By building broad public understanding and urgency at scale, IRI Brazil is strengthening the social push religious leaders need to defend forests and reduce preventable harm.



REACHING MILLIONS THROUGH RADIO, IMMERSIVE MEDIA

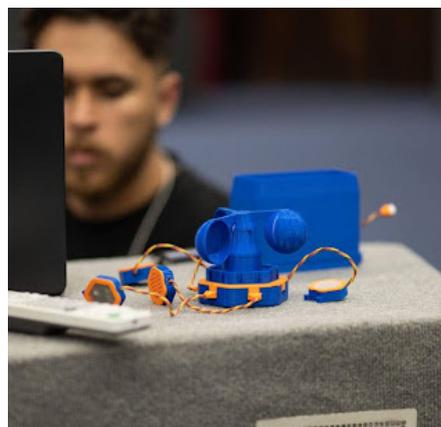


Weekly programming on Rádio Transmundial reaches about **80,000 listeners per month**, linking faith, science, justice, and practical steps people can take. IRI Brazil also placed **2,400 1-minute radio spots** across 13 stations, with an estimated reach of over 4 million people across the Amazon states. IRI Brazil has been active and visible in major cultural and institutional spaces, including festivals, exhibitions, and film screenings that have used the Amazonia Viva virtual reality film to make the Amazon feel immediate. By meeting people where they already are (radio, culture, community spaces), **IRI Brazil is keeping forests in the daily conversation, so protection becomes a mainstream priority.**



MINI WEATHER STATIONS, POWERED BY RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

IRI Brazil launched the Inter-Religious Network of Meteorological Mini-Stations of the Amazon (RIMME), distributing **30 low-cost mini weather stations** to religious institutions and houses of worship and training local leaders to install and use them. Public dashboards make local conditions visible in real time to support early warning, education, and community risk planning. The direct audience is religious leaders and congregations who are often first responders when floods, storms, or extreme heat hit. By putting timely local data into trusted local hands, **IRI Brazil is strengthening readiness that protects communities and supports smarter land decisions that reduce forest loss.**



FROM ADVOCACY TO ACTION, GOVERNORS URGED TO PREPARE FOR FIRE SEASON

IRI Brazil sent formal letters to the governors of all nine Amazon states calling for stronger action on fires and deforestation, better protection for people exposed to smoke and heat, and expanded safe-water measures. The program also engaged justice institutions by screening “Amazonia Viva” at the 40th National Meeting of Federal Prosecutors (ENPR), prompting invitations for follow-up dialogues. This work targets the officials who can turn warnings into budgets, protocols, and enforcement before crises peak. By pushing concrete steps ahead of the 2026 fire-season planning cycle, **IRI Brazil is helping move forest protection from statements to real-world implementation.**

DEFENDING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES LAND RIGHTS AT BRAZIL’S TOP COURT

In December 2025, IRI Brazil coordinated an **open letter to Brazil’s Supreme Court** urging justices to uphold Indigenous land-demarcation rights and not revive “Marco Temporal.” Faith and interfaith networks mobilized signatures quickly and amplified the appeal through institutions and social media. The target audiences were judicial decision-makers and the wider public whose attention shapes political space for demarcation. By activating moral leadership at scale, **IRI Brazil is widening support for land rights, one of the strongest proven shields against deforestation.**



BIG SAFE-WATER DELIVERY FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES COMMUNITIES

IRI Brazil delivered 7,500 household water filters across over 80 Indigenous Peoples territories, paired with training for health agents and community leaders. Additionally, IRI Brazil led a broader safe-water effort reaching 8,400 Indigenous families (around 42,000 people) across 23 health districts (DSEIs) and training over 230 Indigenous Peoples health and sanitation agents. The focus is both

immediate protection and long-term capacity, so safe water access continues beyond the initial distribution. By backing Indigenous Peoples communities (often the strongest forest guardians) with practical health support and skills, IRI Brazil is strengthening resilience and territorial defense where forests are most intact.



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NEW PUBLISHING PARTNERSHIPS TO HELP CHURCHES ACT FOR FORESTS, CREATION

IRI Brazil advanced a potential collaboration with the Pontifical Commission for Latin America to expand scientific immersion trainings for religious leaders beyond Brazil, alongside a developing proposal with the Porticus Foundation. In parallel, a partnership with Our Daily Bread Ministries will publish a Creation Care devotional with audio distribution (including Spotify) and launches in multiple Brazilian cities. The audience is broad (pastors, small-group leaders, and everyday congregants) who can act even if they never attend an IRI Brazil immersion. By turning forest care into repeatable, week-by-week faith practice, IRI Brazil is expanding the base of people and institutions driving forest protection.

ACRE CLIMATE SUMMIT ENDS WITH A SHARED PUBLIC MANIFESTO

With support from IRI Brazil, Acre hosted its first Ecumenical Climate Summit, convening public managers, experts, faith leaders, and civil society to address recurring floods and governance challenges. A key outcome was a signed "Sovereignty of the Earth" manifesto that commits to protection, disaster prevention, and stronger public governance. The summit also used Amazonia Viva, the virtual reality film, to make urgency and shared responsibility tangible. By helping translate shared commitments into public accountability, IRI Brazil is keeping forests and climate resilience on the agenda long after the event ends.

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, LAWMAKERS SUPPORTED TO SEE DEFORESTATION UP CLOSE: ON THE GROUND AND FROM THE AIR

IRI Colombia launched its first Amazon immersion for decision-makers in Guaviare, convening more than 80 participants across Congress, the judiciary, public agencies, science, multilateral actors, faith communities, media, and the IRI Colombia local chapters. Site visits and an aerial flyover offered a clear living diagnosis of what's being lost, followed by expert briefings and strong media coverage. The target audience is the people who shape budgets, enforcement, and development choices. By grounding leaders in shared, firsthand evidence, IRI Colombia is closing the gap between policy debates and conservation measures on the ground.



EARLY TALKS WITH CANDIDATES FOR OFFICE LOCK IN SHARED COMMITMENTS



IRI Colombia engaged 64 candidates for office from Caquetá, Guaviare, Putumayo, and Meta early to improve decision-making upstream and secure commitments in advance of the upcoming election. Dialogues produced shared commitments, including forming an Amazon Parliamentary Alliance (2026-2030), working across parties, creating a permanent coordination space for

better oversight, and joining future scientific immersions. This targets future lawmakers and the voters who need clearer accountability. By shaping commitments before the campaign noise hardens into policy, IRI Colombia is strengthening the chance that forests stay central in governance, not sidelined.

PUSHING FOR JUSTICE THAT REPAIRS FORESTS AND LIVES

IRI Colombia partnered with peace and church spaces, including dialogue connected to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), to promote restorative justice that includes environmental repair like reforestation and water protection. It also supported training to strengthen Indigenous Peoples territorial governance in Putumayo, focusing on pathways to recognition and self-government. The target audience includes peace-process institutions and communities harmed by conflict and environmental destruction. By linking peacebuilding with land and water recovery, IRI Colombia is advancing a forests agenda that treats restoration as part of lasting stability, not an optional add-on.



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LOCAL CHAPTERS BUILD CONFIDENCE AND SKILLS TO SPEAK UP



Extensive trainings by IRI Colombia in recent months strengthened local faith leaders' ability to connect forest-and-water realities with civic action and public communication. Through capacity building workshops, IRI Colombia trained over 60 select leaders in Curillo, 60 in San Vicente del Caguán, 44 in Cartagena del Chairá, 50 in Puerto Rico/Bajo Riecito/La Soledad, 35 in Solano, plus 49 leaders in Puerto Guzmán and a multi-chapter gathering in Puerto Asís. In Cartagena del Chairá, IRI Colombia chapters finalized an Environmental Pastoral Action Plan and a roadmap toward an environmental festival centered on forest and water defense. By building confident, informed and organized local leadership, IRI Colombia is strengthening a durable forest constituency that can influence day-to-day decisions where deforestation needs to be stopped.



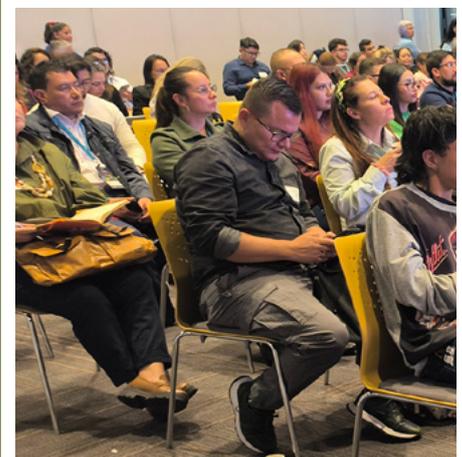
“LISTEN TO THE AMAZON” ALLIANCE SETS THE 2026 ROADMAP

Within an alliance of nine organizations, IRI Colombia helped shape a plan to keep the Amazon central in the 2026 presidential debate. Priorities include training journalists, meeting campaign teams, producing a public “what changed / what didn’t” check on the national development plan, and coordinating rights-based communications grounded in science. The target audiences are voters, journalists, and campaigns, especially amid election-season risks of civic backsliding and stigmatization. By backing clear public benchmarks and coordinated messaging, IRI Colombia is making it harder for candidates to dodge forests and easier for citizens to demand real commitments.



MAKING THE BUSINESS CASE THAT THE AMAZON IS EVERYONE'S LIFE-SUPPORT SYSTEM

At the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce forum (an audience of over **34,000 people**), IRI Colombia helped reframe conservation as a shared responsibility across science, faith, and business. A follow-up corporate seminar with the Bogota Chamber of Commerce focused on Amazon water risk as “invisible infrastructure” for agriculture, energy, and market stability, and how disruption already affects costs and supply chains. The target audience is private-sector leaders who shape investment and operational choices. By bringing business into the forests agenda with clear risk-and-responsibility messaging, IRI Colombia is helping make forest protection a mainstream economic priority.



A NEW LAND-USE LAW, NOW PUSHING FOR INCLUSIVE ROLLOUT

IRI DRC and civil-society partners are advocating for inclusive implementation of Law No. 25/045 on land-use planning. A delegation met the Minister of State for Land-Use Planning, pressing for real participation by faith communities and locally useful public-awareness tools. The target audience is national decision-makers and community leaders who translate policy into practice. By pushing for fair, participatory land planning, **IRI DRC is helping reduce conflict and protect forests that are often lost when governance is top-down or unclear.**



CALL TO LAUNCH THE NATIONAL LAND-USE COUNCIL

A broad coalition is urging the government to sign and publish the decree to operationalize the National Land-Use Council (CNAT-RDC). While the draft decree was adopted on October 17, 2025, it has not been promulgated, delaying implementation of the July 2025 land-use law and leaving overlapping land, mining, forest, and agricultural claims unresolved. The audience includes authorities and stakeholders who need coordination to prevent destructive contradictions. By pressing for the council that can align land decisions, IRI DRC is helping ensure forests aren't the default loser when competing claims collide.

IRI LOMAMI MOBILIZES TO SLOW FOREST LOSS

In Lomami Province, IRI DRC's chapter is rallying faith leaders and communities in response to nearly **8,700 hectares of forest** lost in 2024. On January 27, 2026, an interfaith delegation met provincial leadership to present an action agenda and offer technical and social support focused on prevention, conflict resolution, reforestation, and stronger

enforcement. The target audience is provincial authorities and local communities positioned to act quickly. By organizing local leadership around concrete steps, **IRI DRC is turning alarming forest-loss numbers into coordinated action that can slow clearing and restore what's been damaged.**



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AFTER 16 YEARS, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES BILL GAINS NEW MOMENTUM



IRI Indonesia has joined a coalition of 47 civil-society organizations to accelerate passage of the long-delayed Indigenous Peoples Bill, now back on the 2026 priority agenda. The coalition aligned on a shared timeline and roles, while IRI Indonesia focuses on mobilizing cross-faith networks and clear public messaging about rights and

stewardship. The target audiences are lawmakers, faith communities, and the broader public needed to sustain pressure for progress. By strengthening faith-backed momentum for Indigenous Peoples rights, **IRI Indonesia is supporting one of the most effective long-term defenses against deforestation: secure customary territories.**



FROM SYMBOLIC GESTURES TO MEASURABLE RESULTS

Advisory Council consultations helped sharpen IRI Indonesia's next phase, emphasizing practical, evidence-based work that religious leaders can explain and lead. Recommendations included anchoring IRI Indonesia chapters in priority landscapes with governance structures and measurable outcomes, plus exploring religious guidance that supports reforestation and stewardship. The audience is Religious Councils with the reach to sustain long-term action, not just one-off events. By focusing IRI Indonesia chapters on place-based results people can track, **IRI Indonesia is moving the forests agenda from broad commitments to visible outcomes that can grow over time.**



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AN ETHICAL CHECKLIST FOR ELECTION SEASON

IRI Peru amplified ethical voting criteria for the 2026 elections through a public op-ed by Cardinal Pedro Barreto and rolled out an easy “traffic-light” scorecard built with youth, faith leaders, and Amazon journalists. The tool gives communities a shared, simple way to “grade” candidates beyond slogans. The audience is voters facing high distrust and noisy campaigns, especially outside Lima. By linking integrity and public responsibility to forest protection, IRI Peru is raising the political cost of enabling illegal deforestation and environmental rollbacks.



La República

Elecciones 2026: elijamos el cuidado de la vida y la naturaleza, por cardenal Pedro Barreto Jimeno

A poco de las elecciones 2026, la Iniciativa Interreligiosa para los Bosques Tropicales propone criterios éticos para seleccionar líderes comprometidos con la **conservación** y la justicia social en el país.

Por cardenal Pedro Barreto Jimeno SJ, arzobispo emérito de Huancayo y presidente de la Conferencia Episcopal de la Amazonía (CEAMA).

En el Perú atravesamos uno de los momentos más decisivos de nuestra historia republicana reciente. Llegamos a las elecciones generales de 2026 con un clima social cargado de preocupación: instituciones tutelares debilitadas, inseguridad ciudadana, economías ilegales que avanzan depredando los territorios, la pérdida acelerada de bosques, la violencia contra defensores ambientales y una ciudadanía cansada de la corrupción, angustiada por la incertidumbre.

Pero es en este escenario donde pareciera que no hay salidas; sin embargo, el país demuestra cada día su alta resiliencia porque conserva una reserva profunda de esperanza. Esta nace de la convicción de que el Perú —su gente, su cultura, su espiritualidad y su naturaleza extraordinaria— puede reconstruirse.



“NO FORESTS, NO LIFE” LAUNCHES ACROSS KEY AMAZON HOTSPOTS



The campaign launched in Iquitos and expanded to San Martín and Madre de Dios, pairing youth storytelling with public dialogues and strong local media pickup. The IRI Peru campaign was featured at a Water Summit with over 300 delegates and used in a workshop for Methodist youth leaders from 11 regions, helping participants create



mobile-first content to share widely. The audience is both the general public and youth networks that spread messages quickly peer-to-peer. By tying forests directly to water safety and health, IRI Peru is growing public urgency and pressure for stronger forest protection where deforestation pressure is highest.

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LEARNING IN THE FIELD, THEN SPEAKING TO THE PUBLIC

IRI Peru convened 25 select leaders from faith communities, Indigenous Peoples, and social organizations for field learning in and around Iquitos. The scientific field immersion included site visits and learning with key Amazon institutions, and it ended with clear public messaging condemning illegal mining and calling for stronger forest defense. The target audiences are community leaders and the wider public reached through congregations and civic spaces. By creating credible, informed messengers, IRI Peru is strengthening local leadership that can challenge illegal drivers of deforestation with evidence and moral clarity.



CHAPTERS GROW, AND ALIGN AROUND 2026 PRIORITIES

IRI Peru expanded and reactivated chapters across multiple regions and launched new ones to strengthen local engagement with authorities where illegal mining and deforestation are rising. A national gathering of all 16 IRI Peru chapters set shared 2026 priorities and aligned messages and tools across territories. The audience is IRI Peru local chapter leaders who can coordinate across regions instead of working in isolation. By building a connected movement, IRI Peru is helping local forest action add up to stronger influence on public debate, enforcement, and election accountability.



TRAINING SURGE REACHES HUNDREDS OF LEADERS

IRI Peru workshops trained 126 leaders in October 2025 and 167 more in November, blending in-person and virtual sessions across regions and faith networks. A new "Cusco nucleus" launched to deepen coordination and add topics like climate data, agriculture, and fire prevention. The audience is teachers, pastoral agents, and faith leaders who carry messages into schools and communities. By rapidly expanding trusted messengers, IRI Peru is widening the base of people equipped to advocate for forests and act early during high-risk seasons.



SPEAKING UP AGAINST ROLLBACKS AND ILLEGAL-MINING LOOPHOLES



IRI Peru publicly urged Congress to shelve Bill 09653 and opposed extending the Integral Registry of Mining Formalization (REINFO), warning these moves would weaken protections and reward noncompliance. It paired advocacy with practical capacity-building through a legal course that 27 select participants completed over a five-week program (15 instructional hours) practicing enforceable complaints and monitoring tools. The target audience includes policymakers and local defenders who need usable legal pathways, not just statements. By combining public pressure with on-the-ground legal skills, IRI Peru is strengthening forest defense against both policy backsliding and illegal destruction.



HELPING JOURNALISTS TELL THE AMAZON STORY, ACCURATELY AND CONSISTENTLY



IRI Peru brought journalists from major national outlets into an Amazon immersion designed to support sustained, evidence-based coverage (not only disaster headlines). It also convened nine Amazon multimedia outlets with combined potential reach of over 1 million people to align election-season coverage themes like water safety, Indigenous

Peoples rights, and action against illegal economies. The audience is the wider public, because media narratives shape what leaders feel pressured to address. By strengthening accurate, consistent storytelling, IRI Peru is keeping deforestation drivers and accountability failures visible long enough to force real responses.

MAKING NEW POLITICAL RULES UNDERSTANDABLE FOR VOTERS

With Proética, IRI Peru hosted a webinar for 15 Amazon regional media outlets on how Peru's new bicameral Congress works. The goal was to help journalists explain what each chamber can and can't do, so communities can judge promises against real power and responsibility. The audience is regional reporters who translate politics for voters outside Lima. By improving civic understanding, IRI Peru is helping forest-related pledges get tested against budgets, enforcement authority, and the decisions that actually shape forest outcomes.

KEEPING ILLEGAL MINING ON THE NATIONAL AGENDA

IRI Peru deepened work with the Illegal Mining Observatory and prepared for a March electoral dialogue on party proposals, hosted at the College of Engineers of Peru. Ten Amazon media outlets issued a joint statement committing to investigative coverage of illegal mining and trafficking. The audience includes political parties, voters, and institutions that respond to sustained public attention. By keeping illegal mining in the spotlight through coordinated media and convenings, IRI Peru is pressuring leaders to address one of the biggest drivers of forest loss with real plans.

Fortaleciendo el periodismo regional para un voto informado

Webinar de IRI Perú con exposición de Proética





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I have accompanied IRI Colombia since its creation and it has been a very transformational experience. We have been to the most remote regions of the country and I have been able to see up close the movement group, which is now spreading to the cities. Every time we leave a municipality, I leave thinking, I have to do more.

Reverend Edgar Castaño,
Pastor of the Central Baptist
Church, Former President of
the Evangelical Confederation
of Colombia

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