Media Contact: Lisbet Portman
Project Manager, Digital Democracy
lportman@digital-democracy.org

June 29, 2021

Launch of Earth Defenders Toolkit
New platform supports frontline communities
defending land against environmental threats

Today, the non-profit Digital Democracy, in collaboration with Amazon Conservation Team, Amazon Frontlines, ECA Amarakaeri, Forest Peoples Programme, and Open Development Initiative, Raks Thai and founding supporter the Patrick J. McGovern Foundation, launched Earth Defenders Toolkit, a collaborative space for earth defenders and their allies. The Toolkit provides a growing collection of resources and training materials for communities on the frontlines of the struggle to defend critical ecosystems around the world, and community networks for users to connect and share their experiences.

Why is such a toolkit needed? Indigenous territories cover 28% of Earth's terrestrial surface; account for 40% of global protected areas; and overlap with areas that contain 80% of the planet's biodiversity (Garnett et al, 2018). Despite their critical role in protecting some of the earth's most important ecosystems, earth defenders remain under threat. In 2020 alone, at least 331 earth defenders were killed globally (Front Line Defenders, 2021).

"Under the cover of the Covid-19 pandemic, illegal logging, mining and other forms of resource extraction have increased, threatening the lives of Indigenous peoples and the future of the entire planet. Despite this, frontline groups around the world are risking their lives to protect their territories, and they need support to access the best tools and methods for documenting and responding to threats. We developed the Earth Defenders Toolkit to respond to the most critical needs we hear from frontline groups," said Emily Jacobi, Founder and Executive Director of Digital Democracy.

In addition to providing resources for communities to use and adapt, the online platform will provide a community forum for earth defenders and their allies. The community section of the website will help connect earth defenders across the globe to discuss issues with technology and project design, provide support, build relationships, and share information to help improve projects and gather resources from a wide range of experience in a variety of environmental and political contexts.

"Earth Defenders Toolkit presents vital learnings from our work on the ground with our Indigenous partners and highlights the innovative strategies of Indigenous peoples on the frontlines of the battle to protect their territories, cultures, and ways of life. From territorial mapping to environmental monitoring, Indigenous communities are pairing technology with their ancestral wisdom to strengthen their resistance against natural resource extraction and to

bolster self-governance for the permanent protection of their mega-biodiverse rainforest territories and our climate." said Mitch Anderson, Executive Director & Founder of Amazon Frontlines.

The toolkit prioritizes co-creation and will grow over time with contributions from partners and communities, featuring new resources and insights for earth defenders around the globe. The website is currently available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, but the tools featured can be translated into any language.

The Earth Defenders Toolkit can be accessed online at https://earthdefenderstoolkit.com.

Earth Defenders Toolkit is a project of Digital Democracy and being co-created by Alianza Ceibo, Amazon Conservation Team, Amazon Frontlines, ECA-Amarakaeri, Forest Peoples Programme, Open Development Initiative and Raks Thai with support from the Patrick J McGovern Foundation.

About Digital Democracy

Founded in 2008, Digital Democracy is a nonprofit organization that works in solidarity with marginalized communities around the globe to use technology to defend their rights. Learn more by visiting digital-democracy.org.