

Leave isolated Amazon natives alone, Peru says

January 31 2012



Partial view of a handout picture released by Survival International organization, of what they describe as being uncontacted members of a family from the Mashco-piro tribe somewhere in the southeastern Peruvian jungle.

Peruvian officials on Tuesday urged outsiders to stay away from isolated Amazon basin rainforest natives after pictures of "uncontacted" tribe members were published online.

Mariela Huacchillo with the Peru's office for Natural [Protected Areas](#) (SERNANP) told AFP that even indirect contact with the [indigenous people](#) could spread [deadly viruses](#) that do not exist in the region. The natives could also be hostile, she warned.

Huacchillo urged outsiders "to never attempt to enter in contact with these (isolated) communities," whose people "are trying to remain apart

from the outside world."

The pictures, published on the website of pro-native NGO Survival International, shows a family of "uncontacted" Mascho-Piro people in the Manu National Park, in remote southeastern Peru on the border with Brazil.

The pictures were taken in late 2011 by an [archeologist](#) and Survival International sympathizer, the group said.

Huacchillo also urged people to not leave food, clothing or other gifts like locals or tourists sometimes do "with the goal of starting a contact with the isolated natives."

In October a park ranger was lightly wounded by a blunt arrow fired by a Mascho-Piro native for getting too close to the natives. "It was a warning," Huacchillo said.

A similar incident was recorded in 2010, when a teenager was wounded by a spear.

On their website, Survival International mentioned death late last year of one Nicolas "Shaco" Flores, a local resident who had been leaving food and gifts for a small group of Mashco-Piro natives for 20 years.

Flores was "shot by an uncontacted tribe's arrow," the group said.

The incident was never confirmed by Peruvian officials, including from Huacchillo's office.

One year ago Survival International published pictures of an isolated native groups living on the Brazilian side of the border in the same [Amazon rainforest](#) region.

There are some 15 uncontacted native groups in Peru's Amazon rainforest, according to government officials.

Survival International says there are 100 uncontacted native groups around the world.

Sightings of the Mashco-Piro have increased in recent months, according to Survival International.

"Many blame illegal logging in and around the park and low flying helicopters from nearby oil and gas projects, for forcibly displacing the indigenous [people](#) from their forest homes," the activist group said.

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