
U.S. Court Rules in Favor of Chevron in Ecuador Pollution Case

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A U.S. federal appeals court has ruled in favor of the oil giant Chevron in a case that dates back more than 20 years, blocking one of Ecuador's indigenous communities from collecting a judgment of nearly \$8.6 billion for environmental damage to the Amazon rain forest.

The decision from the U.S. 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan dismissed claims by lawyer Steven Donziger on behalf of Ecuador's Lago Agrio region, that is most impacted by the dirty legacy of Chevron's Amazon drilling. Donziger had requested that the court enforce an earlier ruling by an Ecuadorean court awarding the plaintiffs nearly \$9 billion in damages for water and soil contamination to the Amazon between 1964 and 1992 when Texaco, acquired by Chevron in 2001, drilled in the region.

But instead, the U.S. court let stand a lower court decision which concluded that Donziger corrupted the Ecuadorian case by submitting fraudulent evidence, coercing the judge, bribing an expert witness, and paying a Colorado consulting firm to write the expert's report, all in an effort to mislead the U.S. courts.

Chevron no longer has assets in Ecuador, forcing the plaintiffs to petition the U.S. to collect damages. The court ruling applies only to the multinational corporation's holdings in the U.S., and do not apply to the plaintiff's efforts to collect on the judgment in other countries where Chevron has extensive holdings, including Canada, Argentina, and Brazil.

Billions of gallons of toxic waste left behind by Chevron in in the oil-rich area of Lago Agrio in Ecuador's Amazon — one of the world's largest environmental disasters — has impacted as many as 30,000 people, mostly Indigenous. Ecuador's Supreme Court ordered Chevron in 2013 to pay 9.5 billion in damages and cleanup costs, but the oil giant has refused to comply, dragging out the lengthy court battle