

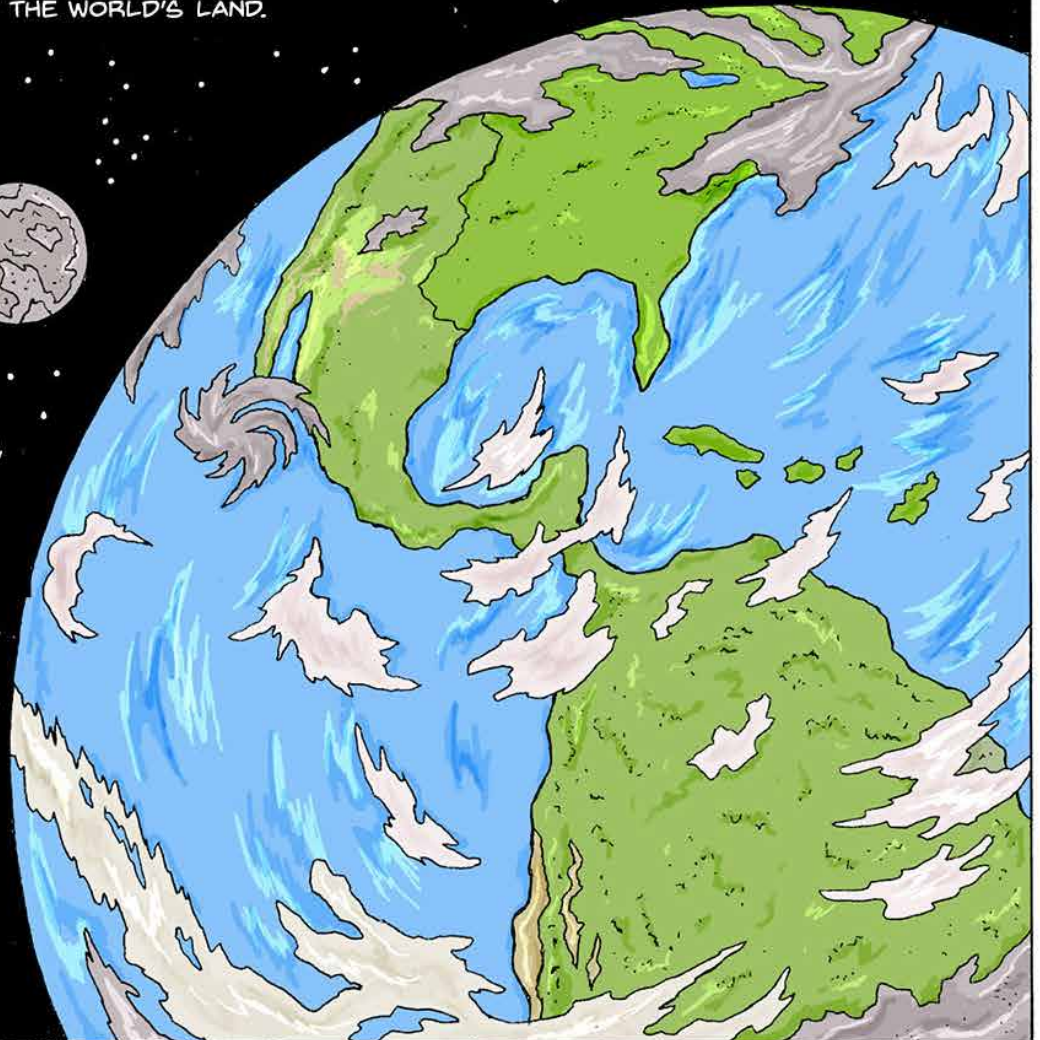
FORTRESS CONSERVATION

A LEGACY OF VIOLENCE



TO CONSERVE EARTH'S **BIODIVERSITY**, MANY COUNTRIES ARE PUSHING TO PROTECT MORE LANDS AND OCEANS. PROTECTED AREAS, A GEOGRAPHICALLY DEFINED AREA WHICH IS DESIGNATED OR REGULATED AND MANAGED TO ACHIEVE SPECIFIC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES," COMPRISE ROUGHLY **16 PERCENT** OF THE WORLD'S LAND.

THAT NUMBER IS EXPECTED TO DOUBLE UNDER **30X30**, A GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO PROTECT 30 PERCENT OF THE PLANET'S LAND AND OCEANS BY 2030.



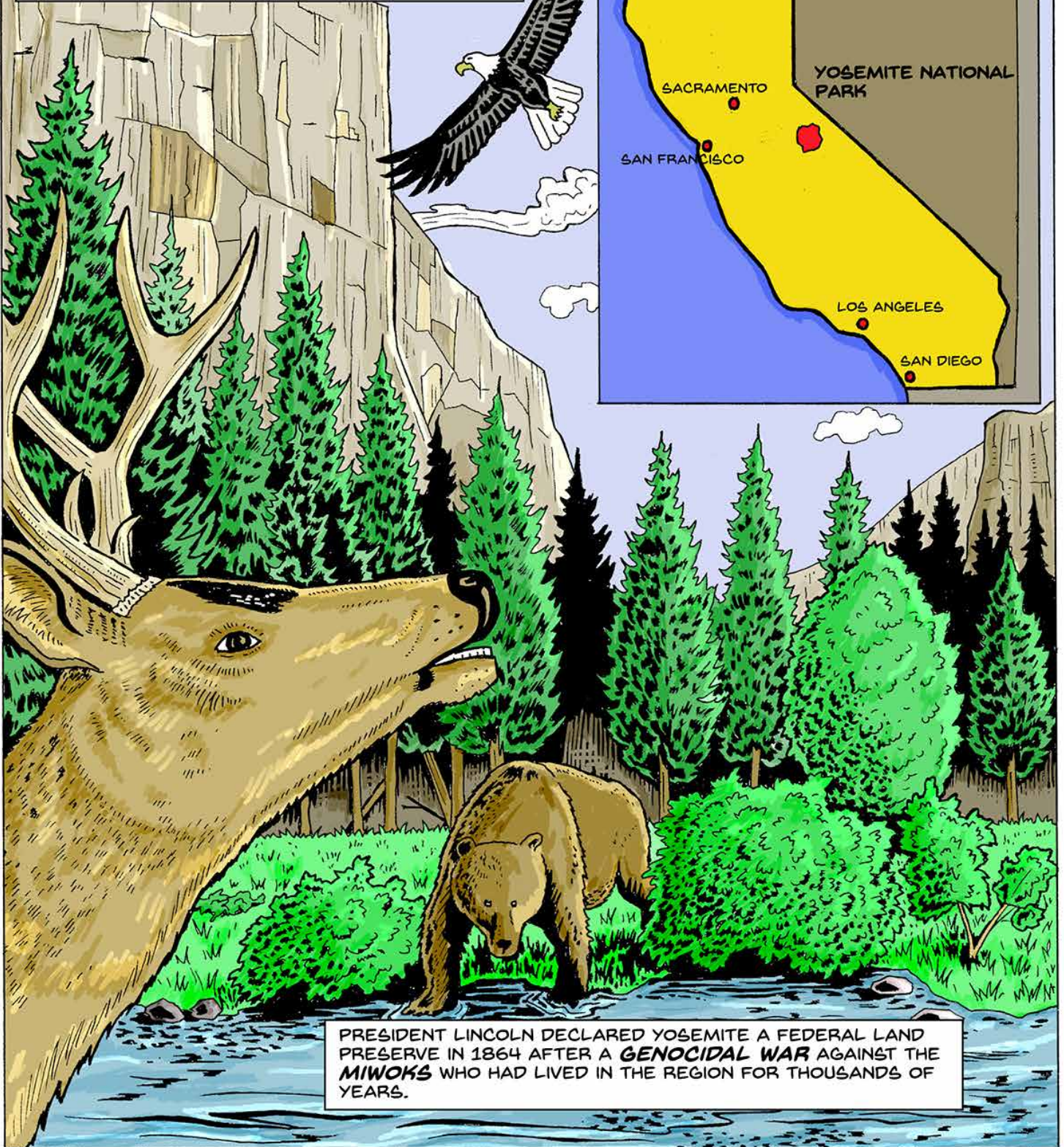
MANY PROTECTED AREAS UTILIZE A MODEL CALLED **FORTRESS CONSERVATION**, WHICH IS BASED ON THE BELIEF THAT SUCH LOCATIONS ARE BEST CREATED WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF HUMANS.



ONCE ESTABLISHED, NEWLY PROTECTED AREAS FORCE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES TO FACE EVICTIONS AND VIOLENCE AT THE HANDS OF ECO-GUARDS. SINCE 1990, UP TO **250,000** PEOPLE WORLDWIDE HAVE BEEN EVICTED FROM THEIR HOMES FOR CONSERVATION PROJECTS. IN THE LAST CENTURY, CLOSE TO 20 MILLION.

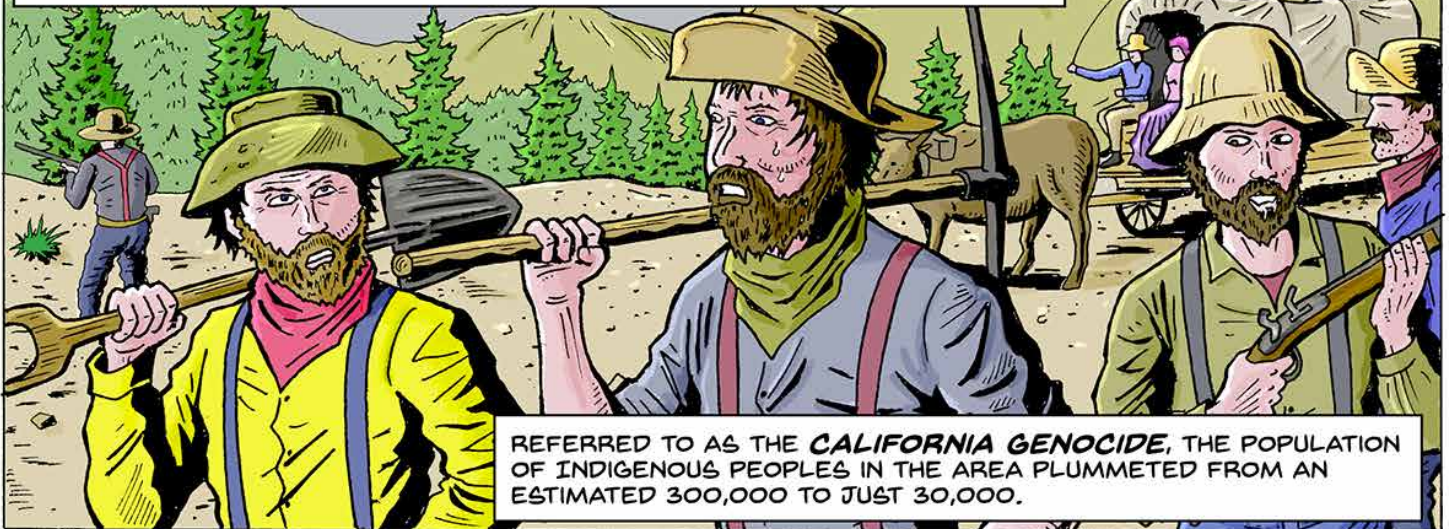
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK IN CALIFORNIA WAS ONE OF THE FIRST NATIONAL PARKS CREATED AND A MODEL FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM IN THE U.S. AND GLOBALLY.

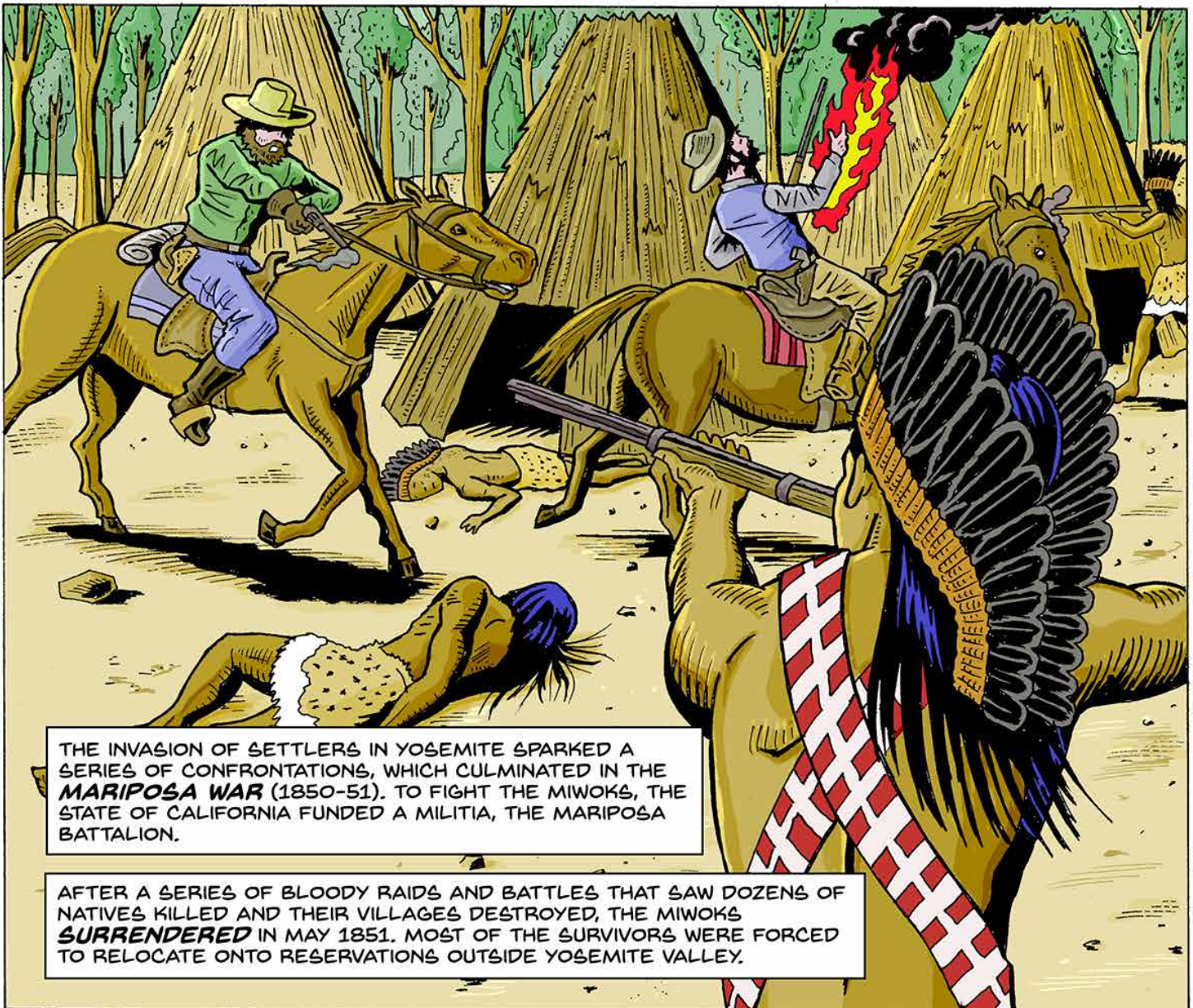


PRESIDENT LINCOLN DECLARED YOSEMITE A FEDERAL LAND PRESERVE IN 1864 AFTER A **GENOCIDAL WAR** AGAINST THE **MIWOKS** WHO HAD LIVED IN THE REGION FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

THE WAR IN YOSEMITE VALLEY HAD ITS ORIGINS IN THE **CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH** (1849-1851), WHEN TENS OF THOUSANDS OF SETTLERS INVADDED THE REGION IN SEARCH OF RICHES.



REFERRED TO AS THE **CALIFORNIA GENOCIDE**, THE POPULATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE AREA PLUMMETED FROM AN ESTIMATED 300,000 TO JUST 30,000.



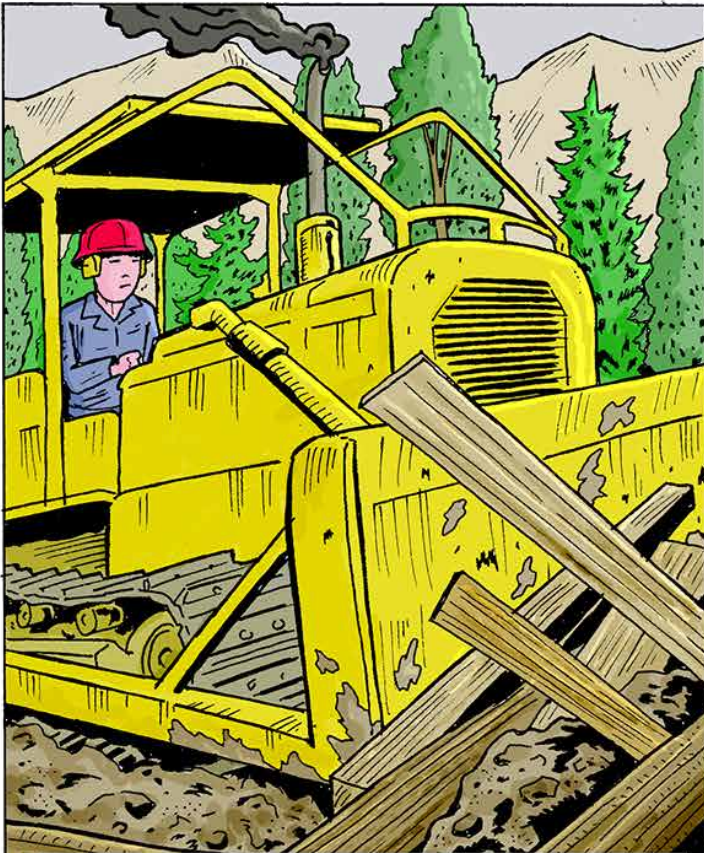
THE INVASION OF SETTLERS IN YOSEMITE SPARKED A SERIES OF CONFRONTATIONS, WHICH CULMINATED IN THE **MARIPOSA WAR** (1850-51). TO FIGHT THE MIWOKS, THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FUNDED A MILITIA, THE MARIPOSA BATTALION.

AFTER A SERIES OF BLOODY RAIDS AND BATTLES THAT SAW DOZENS OF NATIVES KILLED AND THEIR VILLAGES DESTROYED, THE MIWOKS **SURRENDERED** IN MAY 1851. MOST OF THE SURVIVORS WERE FORCED TO RELOCATE ONTO RESERVATIONS OUTSIDE YOSEMITE VALLEY.

IN 1890, CONSERVATIONIST **JOHN MUIR** LED A MOVEMENT THAT ESTABLISHED YOSEMITE VALLEY AS A NATIONAL PARK, PAVING THE WAY FOR THE ENTIRE U.S. NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.

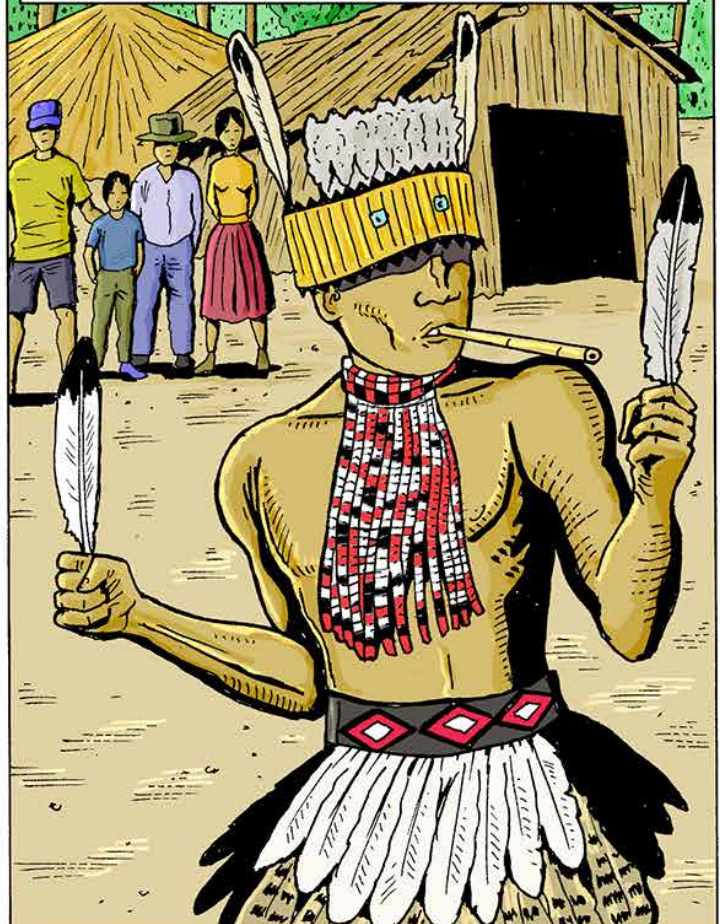


HAILED AS A NATIONAL HERO, MUIR WAS A **RACIST** WHO VIEWED THE MIWOKS AS "MOST UGLY, AND SOME OF THEM ALTOGETHER HIDEOUS." FOR A WILDERNESS AS PURE AS HIS HOLY YOSEMITE, "THEY SEEMED TO HAVE NO RIGHT PLACE IN THE LANDSCAPE, AND I WAS GLAD TO SEE THEM FADING OUT OF SIGHT DOWN THE PASS."



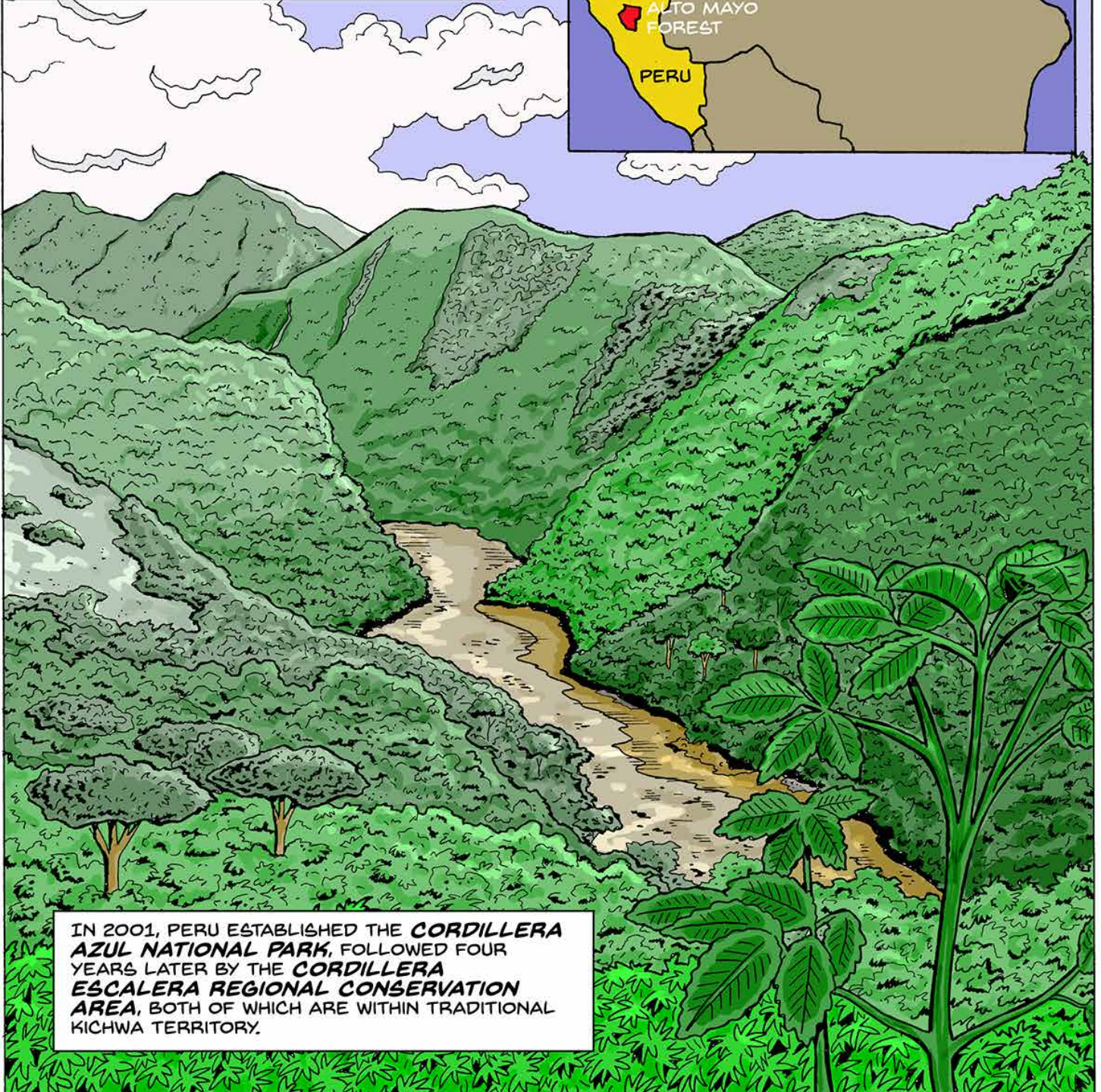
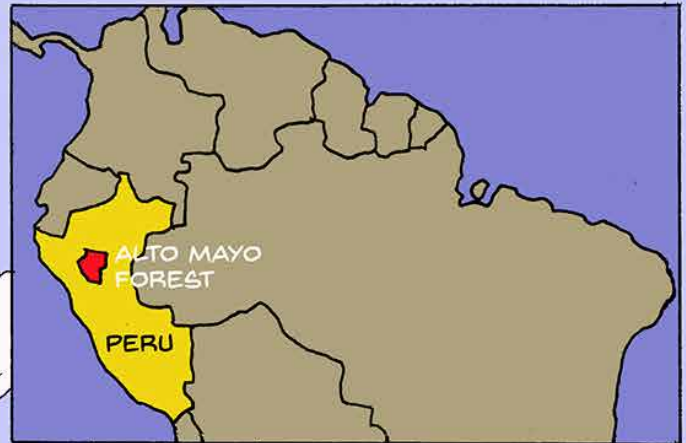
DESPITE THEIR FORCED RELOCATION, SOME MIWOKS REMAINED IN YOSEMITE VALLEY OR LATER RETURNED, WITH MANY WORKING IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY. STILL, THEY FACED SUBSEQUENT EVICTIONS IN 1906, 1929, AND 1969, WHEN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE **DISMANTLED** THEIR LAST HOMES.

IN 2018, THE PARK SERVICE GRANTED MIWOK TRIBAL MEMBERS ACCESS TO THEIR ANCESTRAL HOME INSIDE THE PARK, WHERE THEY'VE BUILT A TRADITIONAL ROUNDHOUSE AND LODGES FOR **CULTURAL CEREMONIES**.

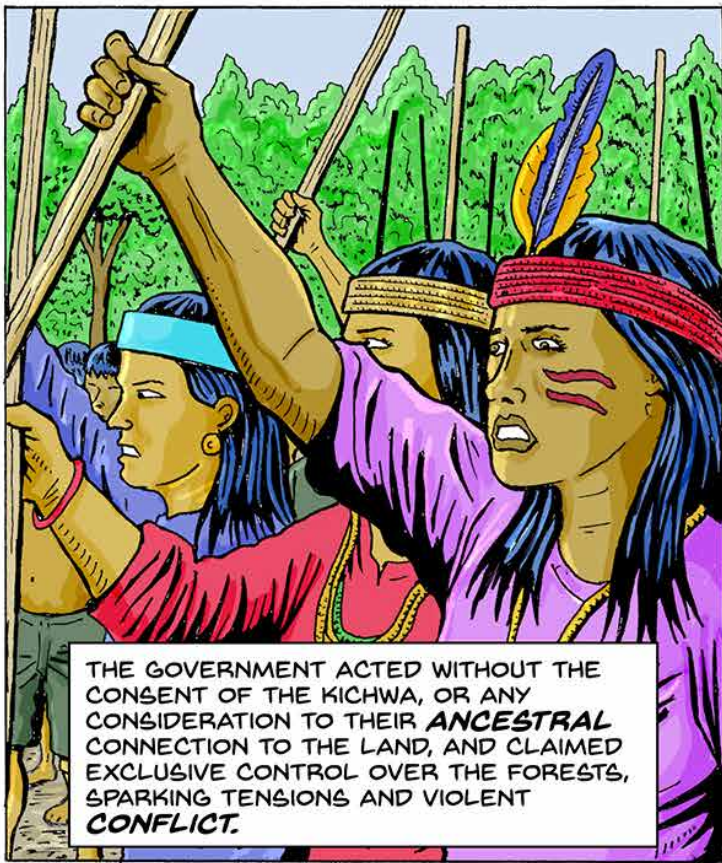


ALTO MAYO FOREST

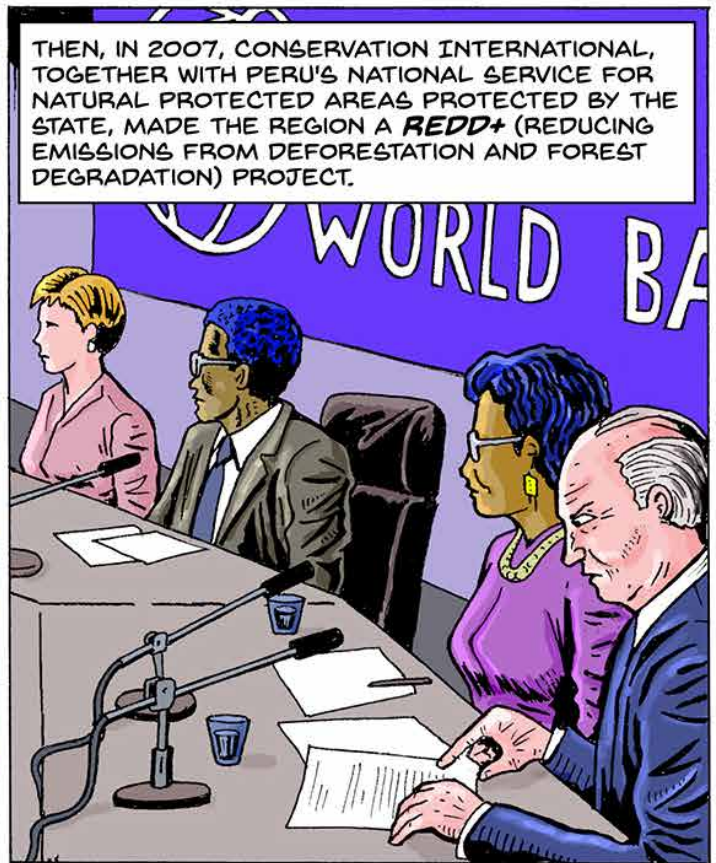
ALTO MAYO FOREST IN NORTHERN PERU'S AMAZON RAINFOREST REGION COVERS ABOUT 700 SQUARE MILES AND IS HOME TO 72 **KICHWA** INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES. FOR THE KICHWA, THE FOREST REMAINS AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE FOR HUNTING, FISHING, AND GATHERING MEDICINES.



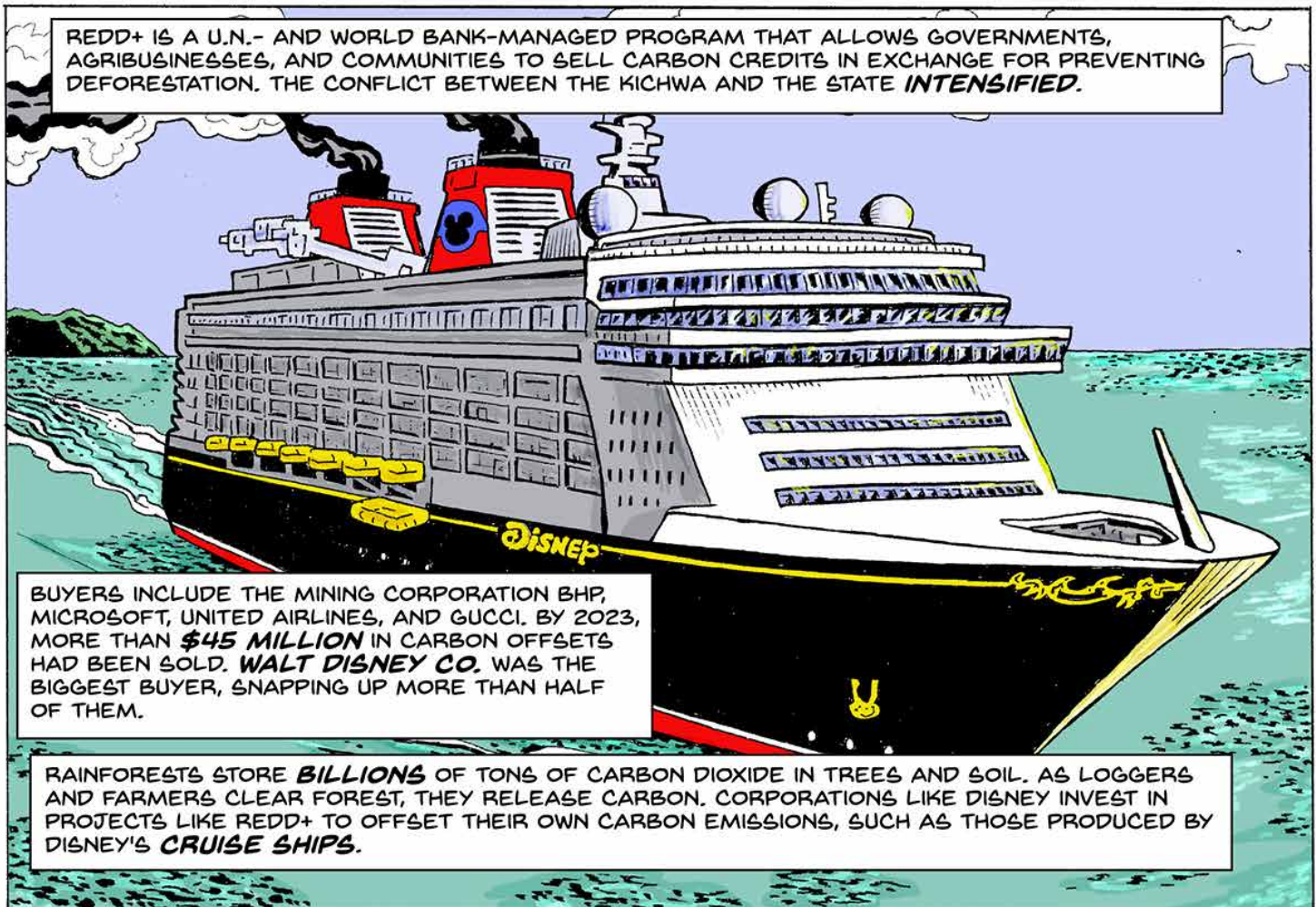
IN 2001, PERU ESTABLISHED THE **CORDILLERA AZUL NATIONAL PARK**, FOLLOWED FOUR YEARS LATER BY THE **CORDILLERA ESCALERA REGIONAL CONSERVATION AREA**, BOTH OF WHICH ARE WITHIN TRADITIONAL KICHWA TERRITORY.



THE GOVERNMENT ACTED WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE KICHWA, OR ANY CONSIDERATION TO THEIR **ANCESTRAL** CONNECTION TO THE LAND, AND CLAIMED EXCLUSIVE CONTROL OVER THE FORESTS, SPARKING TENSIONS AND VIOLENT **CONFLICT**.



THEN, IN 2007, CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL, TOGETHER WITH PERU'S NATIONAL SERVICE FOR NATURAL PROTECTED AREAS PROTECTED BY THE STATE, MADE THE REGION A **REDD+** (REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION) PROJECT.



REDD+ IS A U.N.- AND WORLD BANK-MANAGED PROGRAM THAT ALLOWS GOVERNMENTS, AGRIBUSINESSES, AND COMMUNITIES TO SELL CARBON CREDITS IN EXCHANGE FOR PREVENTING DEFORESTATION. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE KICHWA AND THE STATE **INTENSIFIED**.

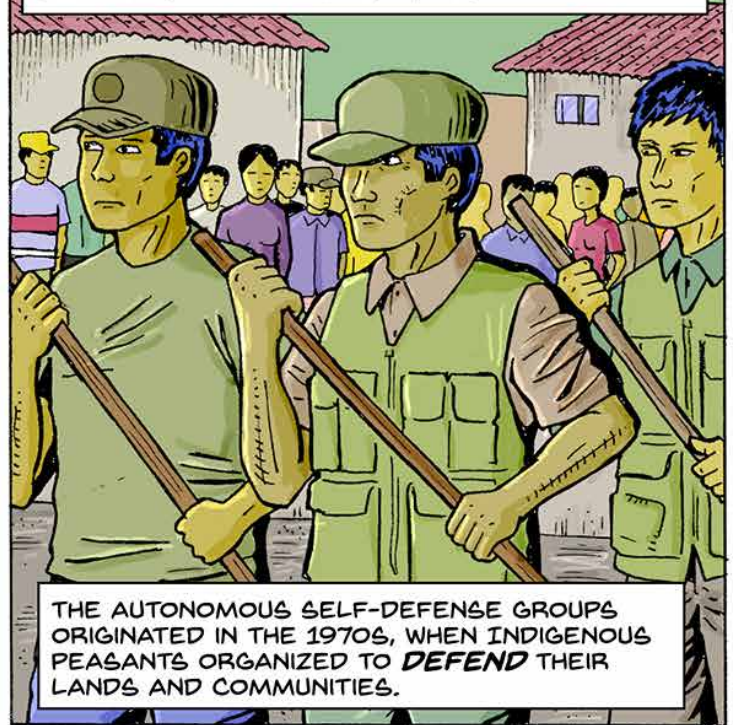
BUYERS INCLUDE THE MINING CORPORATION BHP, MICROSOFT, UNITED AIRLINES, AND GUCCI. BY 2023, MORE THAN **\$45 MILLION** IN CARBON OFFSETS HAD BEEN SOLD. **WALT DISNEY CO.** WAS THE BIGGEST BUYER, SNAPPING UP MORE THAN HALF OF THEM.

RAINFORESTS STORE **BILLIONS** OF TONS OF CARBON DIOXIDE IN TREES AND SOIL. AS LOGGERS AND FARMERS CLEAR FOREST, THEY RELEASE CARBON. CORPORATIONS LIKE DISNEY INVEST IN PROJECTS LIKE REDD+ TO OFFSET THEIR OWN CARBON EMISSIONS, SUCH AS THOSE PRODUCED BY DISNEY'S **CRUISE SHIPS**.

TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE NOT TO CLEAR-CUT LAND, CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL OFFERS RESIDENTS "CONSERVATION AGREEMENTS," SOME OF WHICH INCLUDE SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE COFFEE OPERATIONS.



THE **RONDAS CAMPESINAS** ARE LEADING THE RESISTANCE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROPRIATION OF KICHWA LAND.



THE AUTONOMOUS SELF-DEFENSE GROUPS ORIGINATED IN THE 1970s, WHEN INDIGENOUS PEASANTS ORGANIZED TO **DEFEND** THEIR LANDS AND COMMUNITIES.

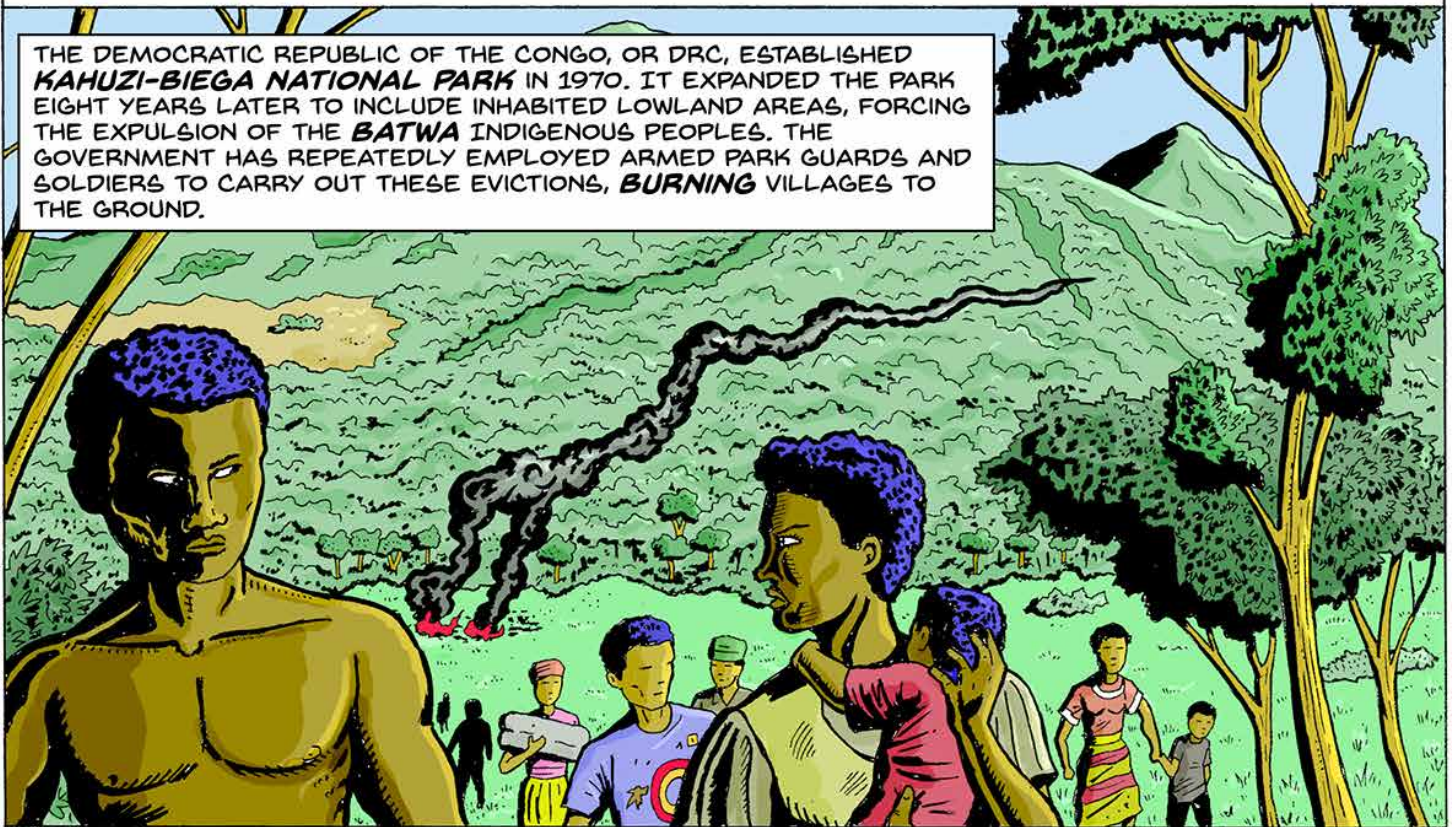
AS PART OF THEIR SELF-DEFENSE CAMPAIGN, RONDAS HAVE **DETAINED** AND BEATEN POLICE AND RANGERS WHO ATTEMPTED TO EVICT PEOPLE. IN 2018, THE REGIONAL HEAD OF CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL WAS FORCED TO FLEE.



TODAY, THE KICHWA CONTINUE THEIR STRUGGLE TO DEFEND THEIR CULTURE AND LANDS.

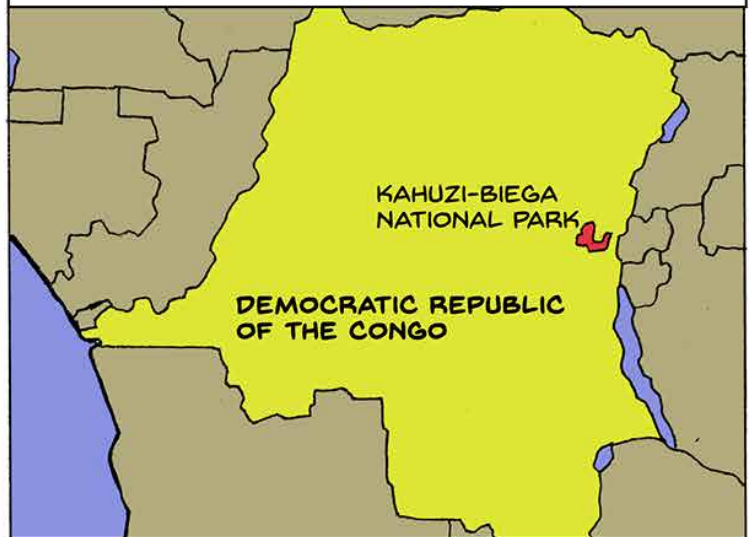
KAHUZI-BIEGA NATIONAL PARK

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, OR DRC, ESTABLISHED **KAHUZI-BIEGA NATIONAL PARK** IN 1970. IT EXPANDED THE PARK EIGHT YEARS LATER TO INCLUDE INHABITED LOWLAND AREAS, FORCING THE EXPULSION OF THE **BATWA** INDIGENOUS PEOPLES. THE GOVERNMENT HAS REPEATEDLY EMPLOYED ARMED PARK GUARDS AND SOLDIERS TO CARRY OUT THESE EVICTIONS, **BURNING** VILLAGES TO THE GROUND.



THE **BATWA**, A SEMI-NOMADIC FOREST-DWELLING PEOPLE, FACED **DECADES** OF DISPOSSESSION, POVERTY, MALNUTRITION, DISEASE, AND SKYROCKETING MORTALITY RATES AS A RESULT OF EXPULSION FROM THEIR HOMELAND.

THE PARK WAS DESIGNATED A WORLD HERITAGE SITE BY THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO), & BEGAN RECEIVING FUNDING & SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. & GERMANY AS WELL AS NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, PRIMARILY THE **WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY**.

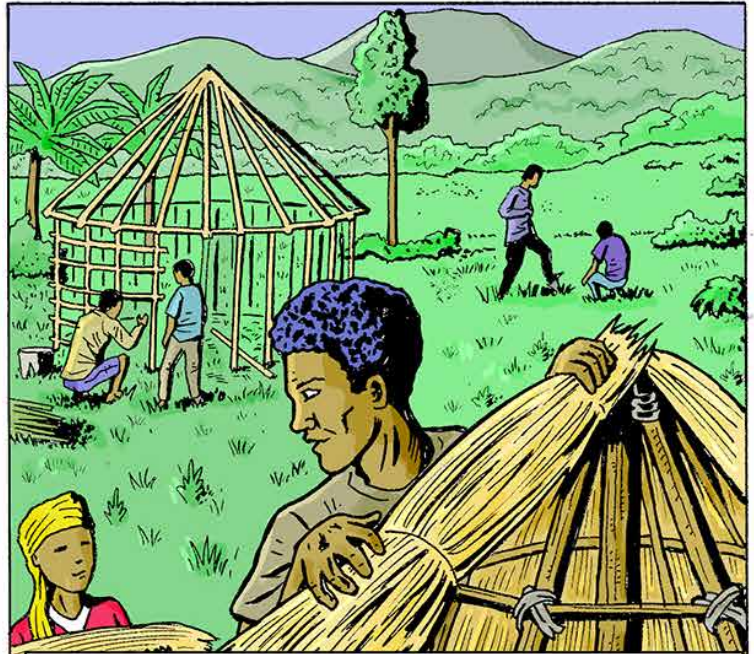


OVER TIME, THE PARK BECAME A **MILITARIZED** PROTECTED AREA AND TOURIST DESTINATION, RENOWNED FOR ITS WIDE DIVERSITY OF PLANT, BIRD, AND ANIMAL SPECIES.

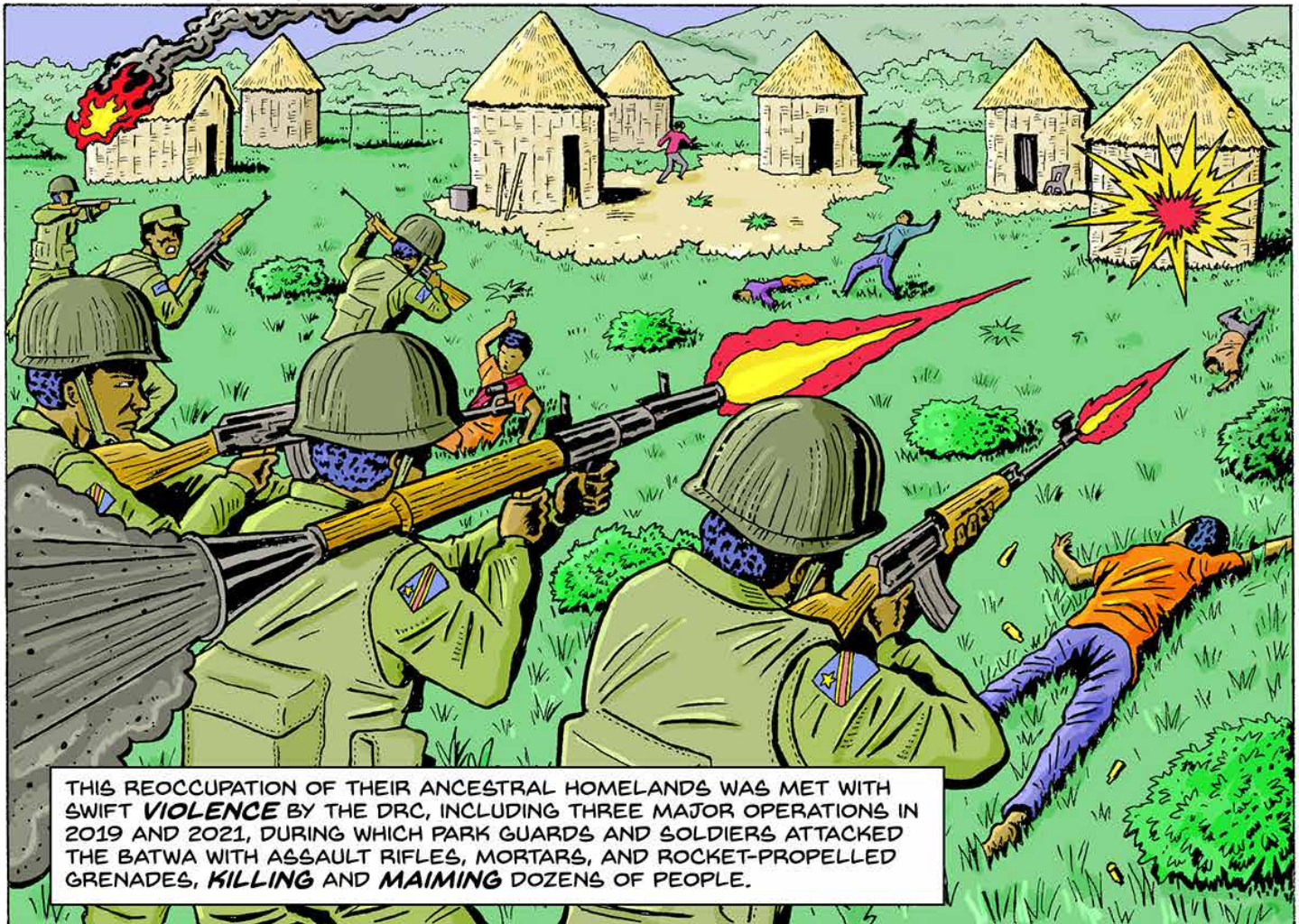
TO ENSURE THAT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DID NOT RETURN TO THE PARK, THE DRC AND PARK AUTHORITIES ESTABLISHED A "RAPID INTERVENTION UNIT" -- A MILITARIZED FORCE FUNDED & EQUIPPED IN PART BY THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY & PROVIDED WITH UNIFORMS, RADIOS, TENTS, RATIONS, & OTHER NON-LETHAL AID.



CONTRIBUTING TO THE MILITARIZATION IN THE REGION IS THE PRESENCE OF **ARMED** REBEL GROUPS FIGHTING THE STATE FOR CONTROL.



AFTER YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS THAT RESULTED IN LITTLE CHANGE, SEVERAL DOZEN BATWA FAMILIES **RETURNED** TO THE FORESTS AND REESTABLISHED VILLAGES ALONG WITH AGRICULTURAL AND CULTURAL CENTERS IN OCTOBER 2018.



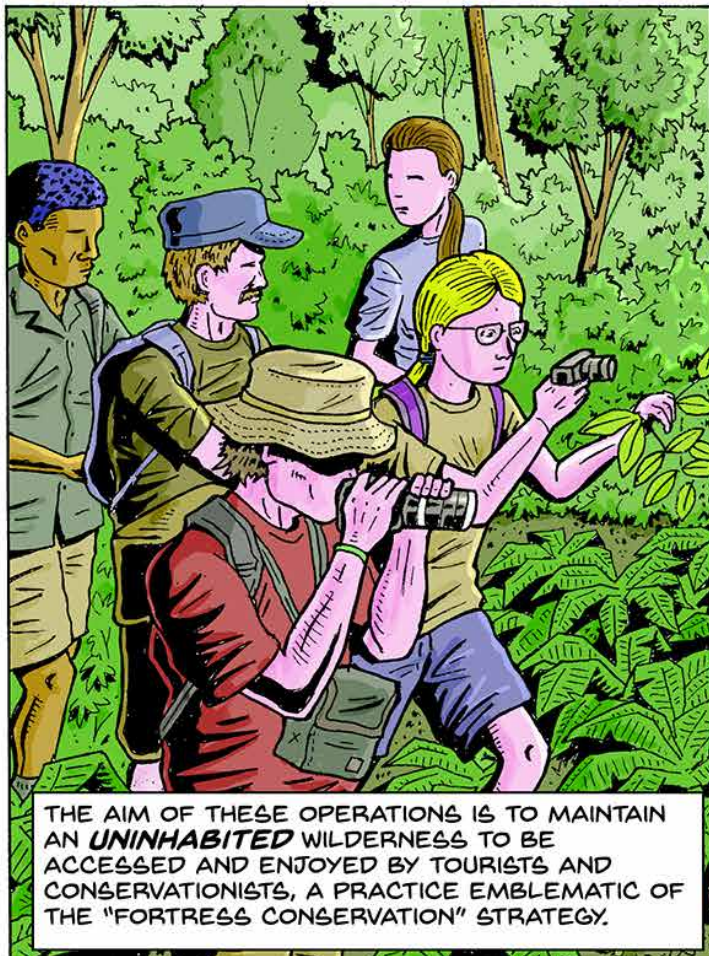
THIS REOCCUPATION OF THEIR ANCESTRAL HOMELANDS WAS MET WITH SWIFT **VIOLENCE** BY THE DRC, INCLUDING THREE MAJOR OPERATIONS IN 2019 AND 2021, DURING WHICH PARK GUARDS AND SOLDIERS ATTACKED THE BATWA WITH ASSAULT RIFLES, MORTARS, AND ROCKET-PROPELLED GRENADES, **KILLING** AND **MAIMING** DOZENS OF PEOPLE.



BATWA WOMEN WERE SUBJECTED TO GROUP RAPE AND CHILDREN WERE BURNED ALIVE IN THEIR HOMES AS GOVERNMENT FORCES BURNED THEIR VILLAGES TO THE GROUND.

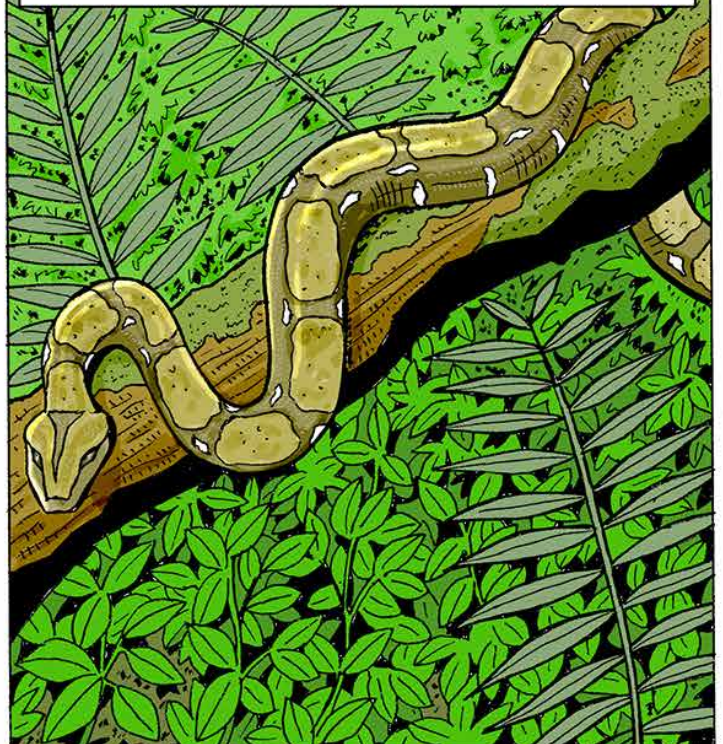


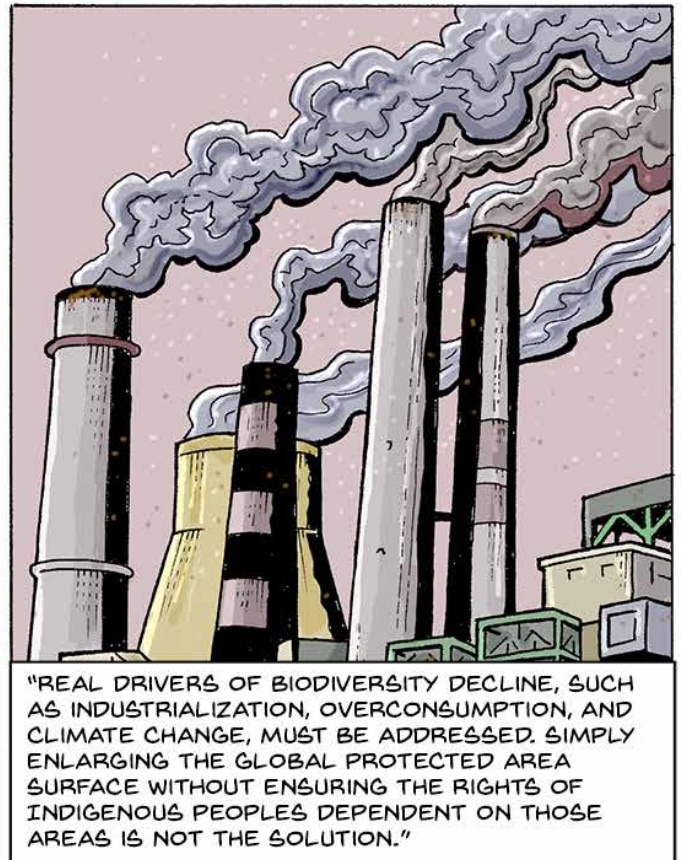
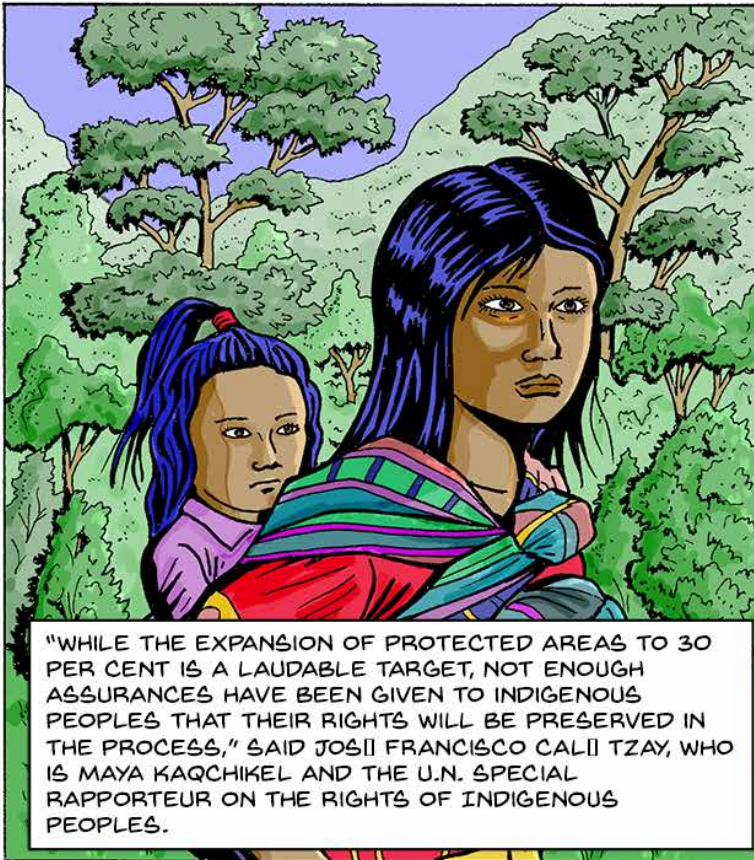
HUNDREDS OF BATWA WERE EXPELLED, BUT MANY ARE RETURNING TO REBUILD THEIR VILLAGES AND FACE ONGOING REPRESSION BY PARK AUTHORITIES AND MILITARY FORCES.



AND WITH A SEVEN-YEAR DEADLINE TO PROTECT ANOTHER 14 PERCENT OF THE WORLD'S LANDS AND OCEANS, INDIGENOUS LEADERS ARE WORRIED: NEARLY **80 PERCENT** OF THE PLANET'S REMAINING BIODIVERSITY IS LOCATED WITHIN INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES, WHICH MAKE UP A QUARTER OF EARTH'S SURFACE AREA.

THE AIM OF THESE OPERATIONS IS TO MAINTAIN AN **UNINHABITED** WILDERNESS TO BE ACCESSED AND ENJOYED BY TOURISTS AND CONSERVATIONISTS, A PRACTICE EMBLEMATIC OF THE "FORTRESS CONSERVATION" STRATEGY.





Author and artist: Gord Hill is the author of three graphic novels, *The 500 Years of Indigenous Resistance Comic Book*, *The Antifa Comic Book*, and *The Anti-Capitalist Resistance Comic Book*. He is a member of the Kwakwaka'wakw nation whose territory is located on northern Vancouver Island and adjacent mainland in the province of British Columbia. He has been involved in Indigenous people's, anti-fascist and anti-globalization movements since 1990. He lives in Alert Bay, BC.

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