MAAP #112: Mennonite Colonies – New Deforestation Driver in the Amazon

October 18, 2019

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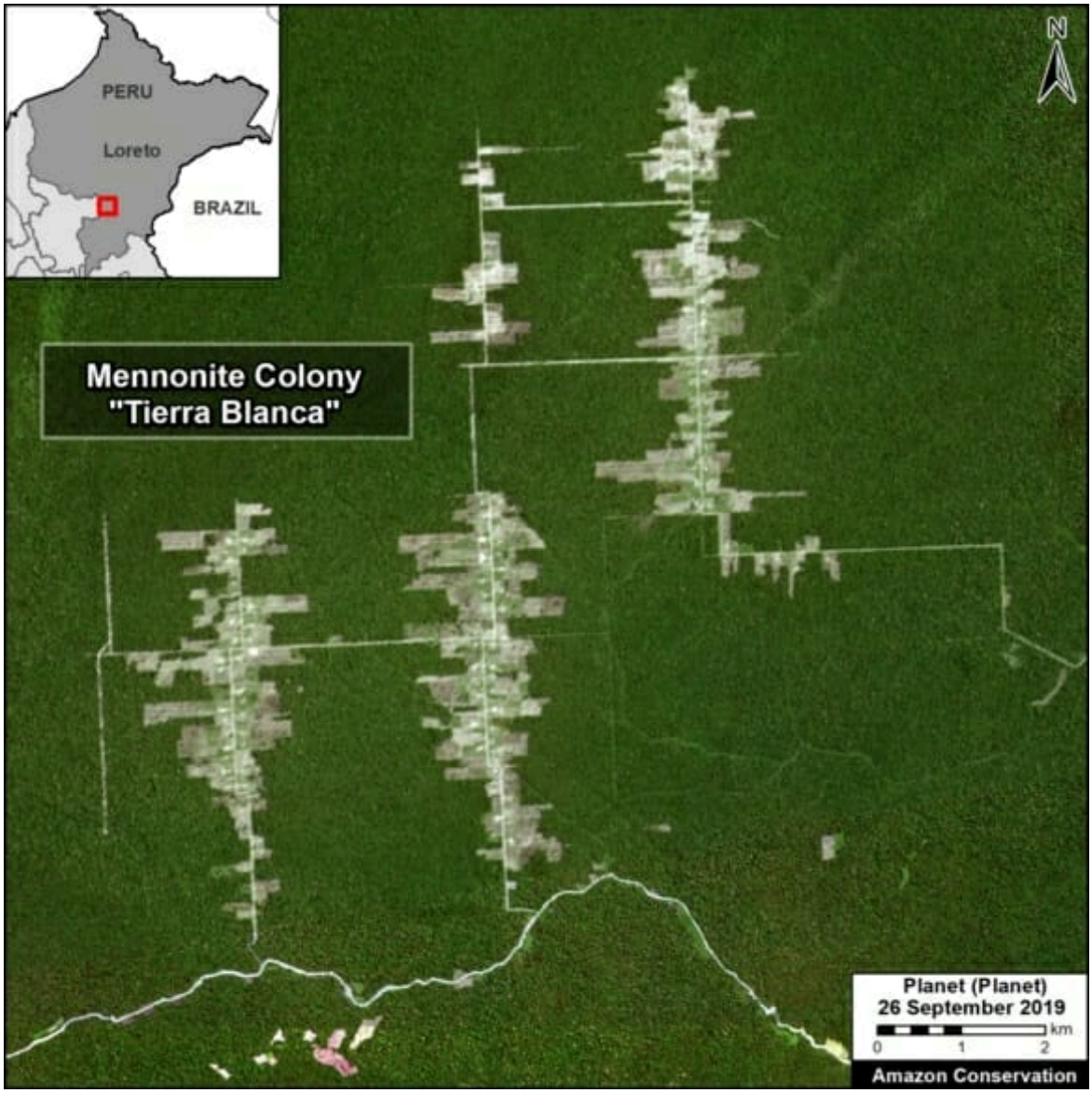

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Time-lapse deforestation in the "Tierra Blanca" Mennonite colony in Loreto, Peru. Data: Planet.

The **Mennonites**, a religious (Christian) group often dedicated to organized agriculture, are increasingly inhabiting the western **Amazon** (Peru and Bolivia).

Here, we reveal the recent deforestation of **18,500 acres** (7,500 hectares) in three Mennonite colonies (see the Base Map below).

The two colonies in **Peru** (**Tierra Blanca and Masisea**) are new, causing the deforestation of 6,200 acres since 2017 (including 3,500 acres in 2019) in the Loreto and Ucayali regions.

The colony in **Bolivia** (**Río Negro**) is older, but deforestation recently began to increase again, causing the deforestation of 12,350 acres since 2017 in the department of Beni.

Next, we present a series of **satellite image videos** showing the deforestation in the three Mennonite colonies.

Tierra Blanca (Perú)

The Mennonite colony referred to here as "**Tierra Blanca**" is located in southern Loreto region, near the town of Tierra Blanca.

Video A shows the deforestation of **4,200 acres** in the Tierra Blanca colony since 2017 (Planet link (https://www.planet.com/stories/mennonites-tierrablanca_2017-2019-hDPFUBpZg)). We note that 2019 experienced the most deforestation (2,470 acres).

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In the detailed map in the Annex, note that the deforestation has reached the limit of a protected area, Imiría Regional Conservation Area. In addition, deforestation has occurred within two native communities (Buenos Aires and Caimito) and a Conservation Concession managed by a Peruvian university.

Río Negro (Bolivia)

The Mennonite colony **Río Negro** is located in southeastern Beni department. There are several Mennonite colonies in southern Bolivia, but this is one of the first deeper in the Amazon (Kopp, 2015).

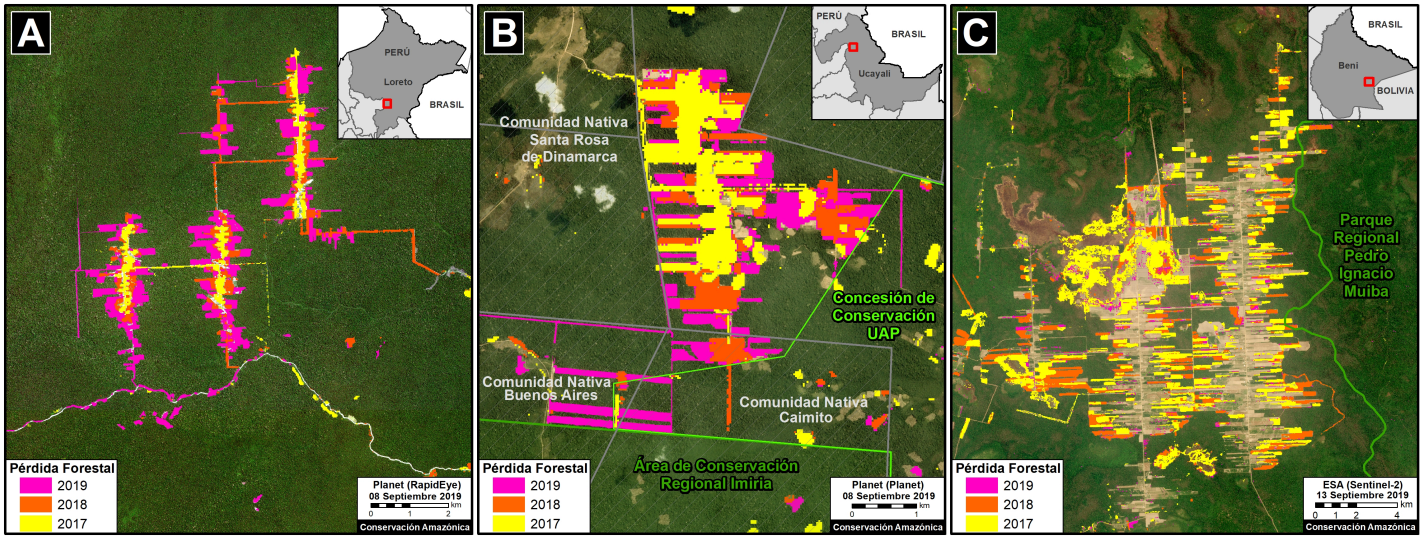
Video C shows the deforestation of 12,350 acres in the Río Negro colony since 2017 (Planet link (https://www.planet.com/stories/mennonites-rionegro_2017-2019-OVWk_BpWg)). Much of the deforestation occurred in 2017-18.

Annex 1: Base Map

(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/maaproject.org-maap-111-asentamientos-menonitas-nuevo-driver-de-deforestacion-en-la-amazonia-Location2-MennonitesPeru-Bol-Sep2019-200dpi.jpg)

Base Map of Mennonite colonies in Peru and Bolivia. Data: MAAP.

Annex 2: Detailed Maps



(https://www.maapprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/maaproject.org-maap-111-asentamientos-menonitas-nuevo-driver-de-deforestacion-en-la-amazonia-BM2-MennonitesPeru-Bol-toSep2019-200dpi.jpg)

Deforestation in the three colonies A) Tierra Blanca, B) Masisea y C) río Negro. Data: UMD/GLAD, Hansen/UMD/Google/USGS/NASA

References

Kopp Ad (2015) Las colonias menonitas en Bolivia. Tierra. http://www.ftierra.org/index.php/publicacion/libro/147-las-colonias-menonitas-en-bolivia (http://www.ftierra.org/index.php/publicacion/libro/147-las-colonias-menonitas-en-bolivia)

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Citation

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