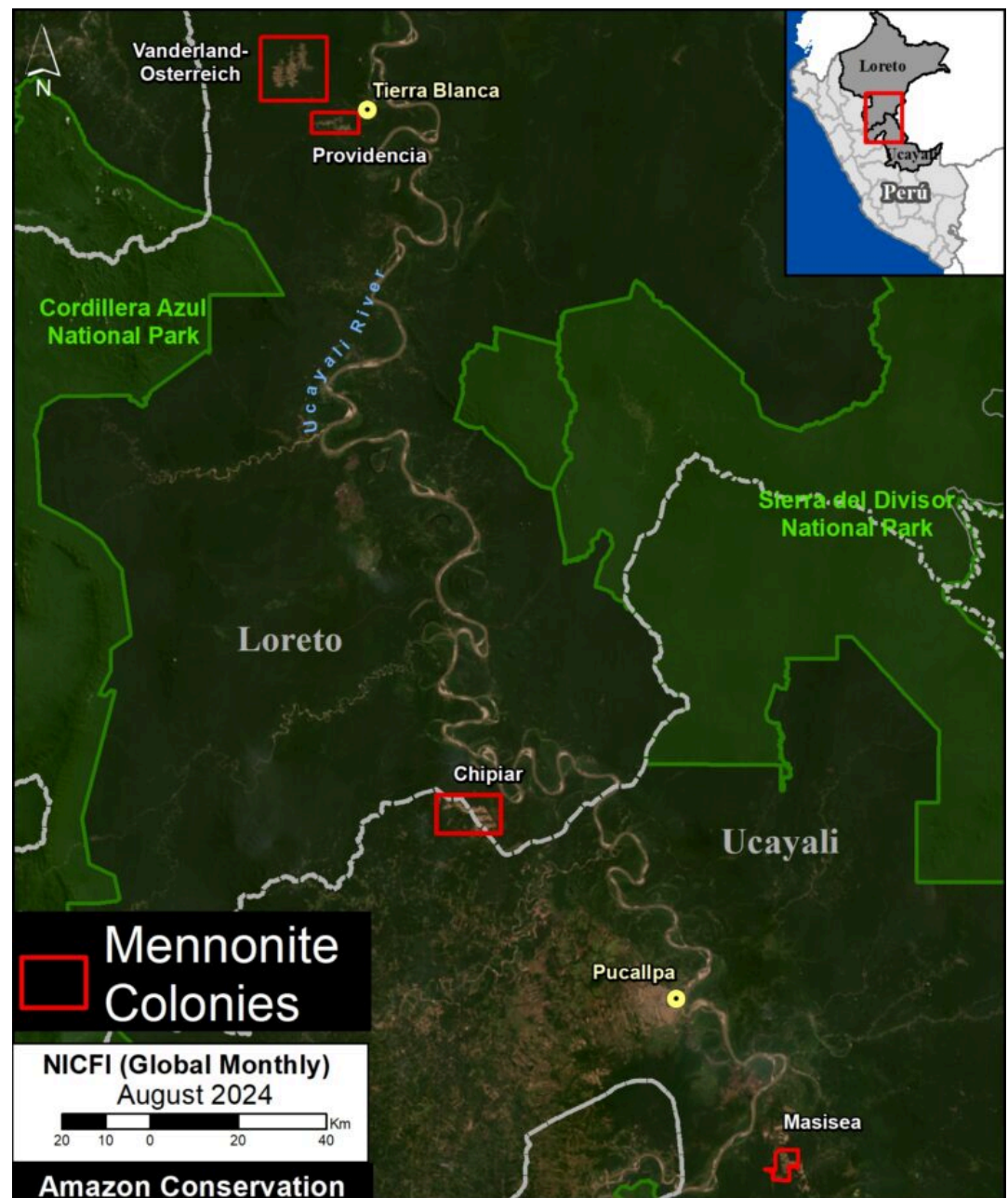


MAAP #222: Mennonite Colonies Continue Major Deforestation in Peruvian Amazon

October 23, 2024

In a series of reports



Base Map. Mennonite Colonies in the Peruvian Amazon. Data: ACA/MAAP.

(<https://www.maaprogram.org/digital-library/>)

_ftr_country=peru&_ftr_agriculture=mennonites), we have demonstrated that the **Mennonites** have become a leading cause of large-scale deforestation in the **Peruvian Amazon**.

The Mennonites, a global religious group dating back to the 1600s, often require vast tracts of land to support their characteristic **industrialized agricultural activity**. As such lands have become scarce in other parts of Latin America, new Mennonite colonies began appearing in the Peruvian Amazon as of 2017.

In October 2019, we first reported on the deforestation of 2,500 hectares across three colonies (Masisea, Vanderland, and Osterreich; MAAP #112 (<https://www.maaprogram.org/mennonite/>)). A year later, in October 2020, this deforestation increased to 3,440 hectares (MAAP #127 (https://www.maaprogram.org/mennonites_peru/)).

By the end of 2021, two new colonies (Providencia and Chipiar) had appeared, and the total deforestation had reached 3,968 hectares (MAAP #149 (https://www.maaprogram.org/mennonites_peru-update/)).

Deforestation across all five colonies increased to 4,819 hectares by October 2022 (MAAP #166 (<https://www.maaprogram.org/mennonites-peru-4800/>)) and 7,032 hectares by August 2023 (MAAP #188 (<https://www.maaprogram.org/mennonites-peru/>)).

Here, we update our findings, showing that deforestation across all five colonies has increased to **8,660 hectares** (21,400 acres), as of October 2024.

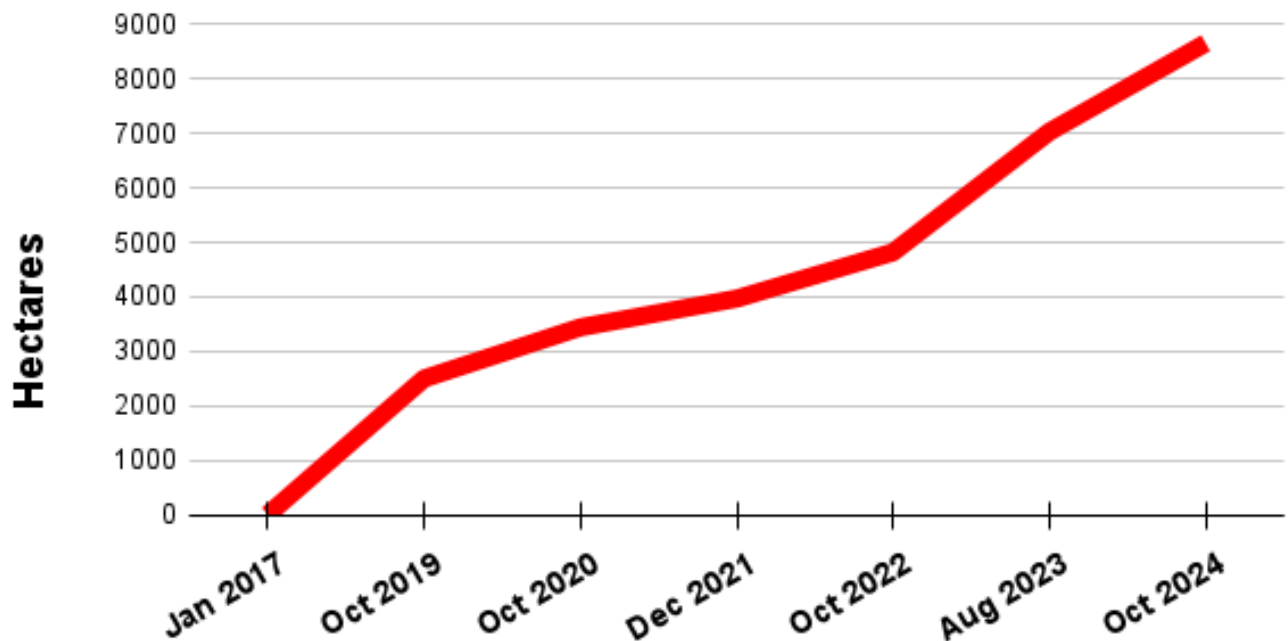
Below, we illustrate the increase in Mennonite deforestation over the past eight years and show the pattern in each colony with **satellite images**.

In addition, there is mounting evidence that this massive deforestation is **illegal**, with numerous ongoing investigations by the Peruvian government (see the **Legal Summary**, below).

The increasing deforestation of the Mennonites in Peru

Graph 1 illustrates the rapid increase in Mennonite deforestation in the Peruvian Amazon, from zero in 2017 to over 8,660 hectares in 2024.

Menonite deforestation in the Peruvian Amazon 2017 - 2024



Graph 1. Deforestation caused by Menonites in the Peruvian Amazon from 2019 to 2024. Data: ACA/MAAP.

It is the clearest evidence yet that **authorities need a more effective strategy** to avoid continued escalating deforestation.

Deforestation in Menonite Colonies (Peruvian Amazon)

Chipiar Colony

This colony is located on both sides of the border between the departments of Ucayali and Loreto, originating in the district of Padre Marquez on the Loreto side.

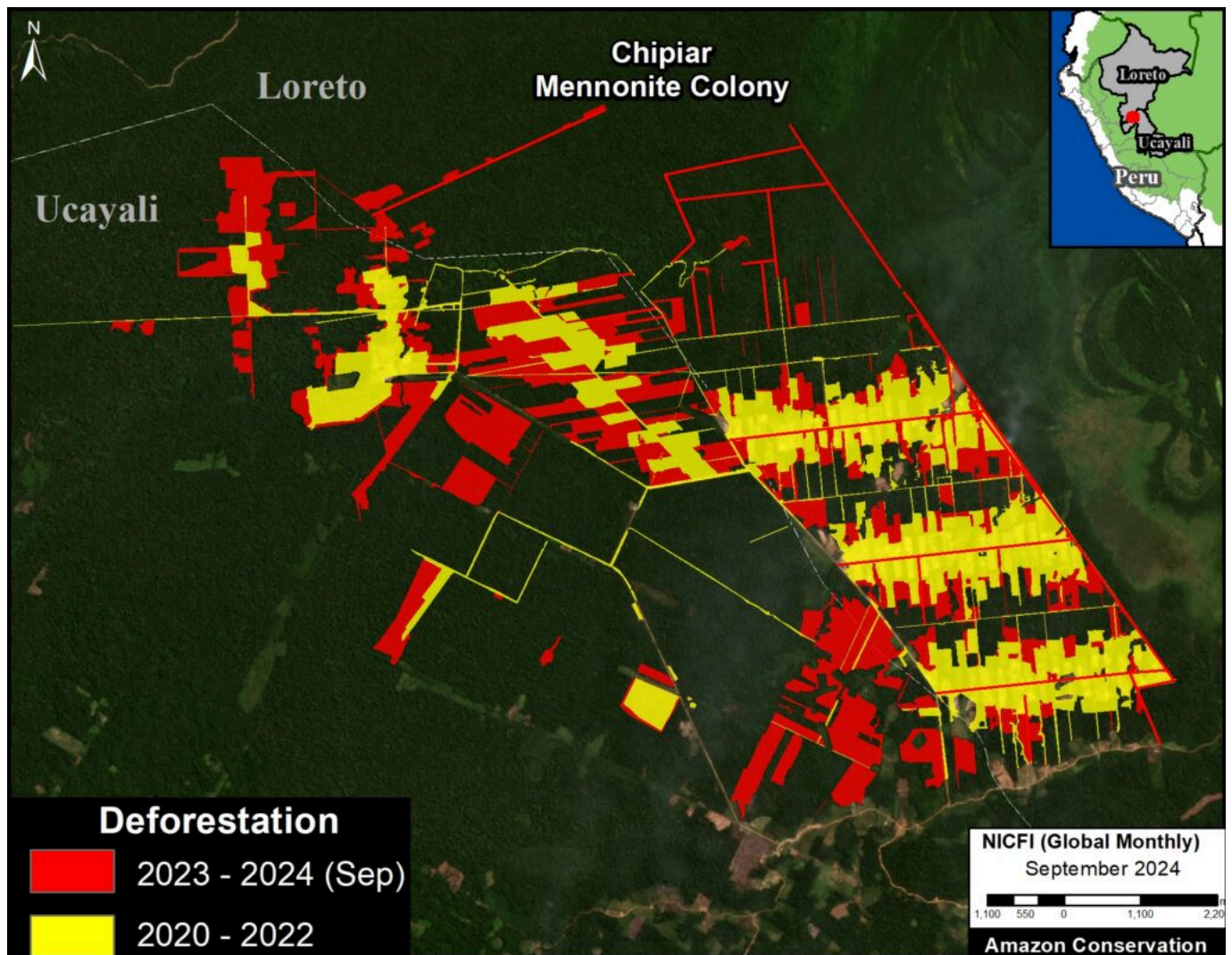


Figure 1. Deforestation in the Chipiar Mennonite colony. Data: ACA/MAAP, Planet.

It is the newest colony, where deforestation began in 2020.

This deforestation escalated in 2021, peaked in 2022, and continues to expand in 2023 in 2024.

We document the deforestation of 2,708 hectares in the Chipiar colony since 2020.

Vanderland, Osterreich & Providencia Colonies

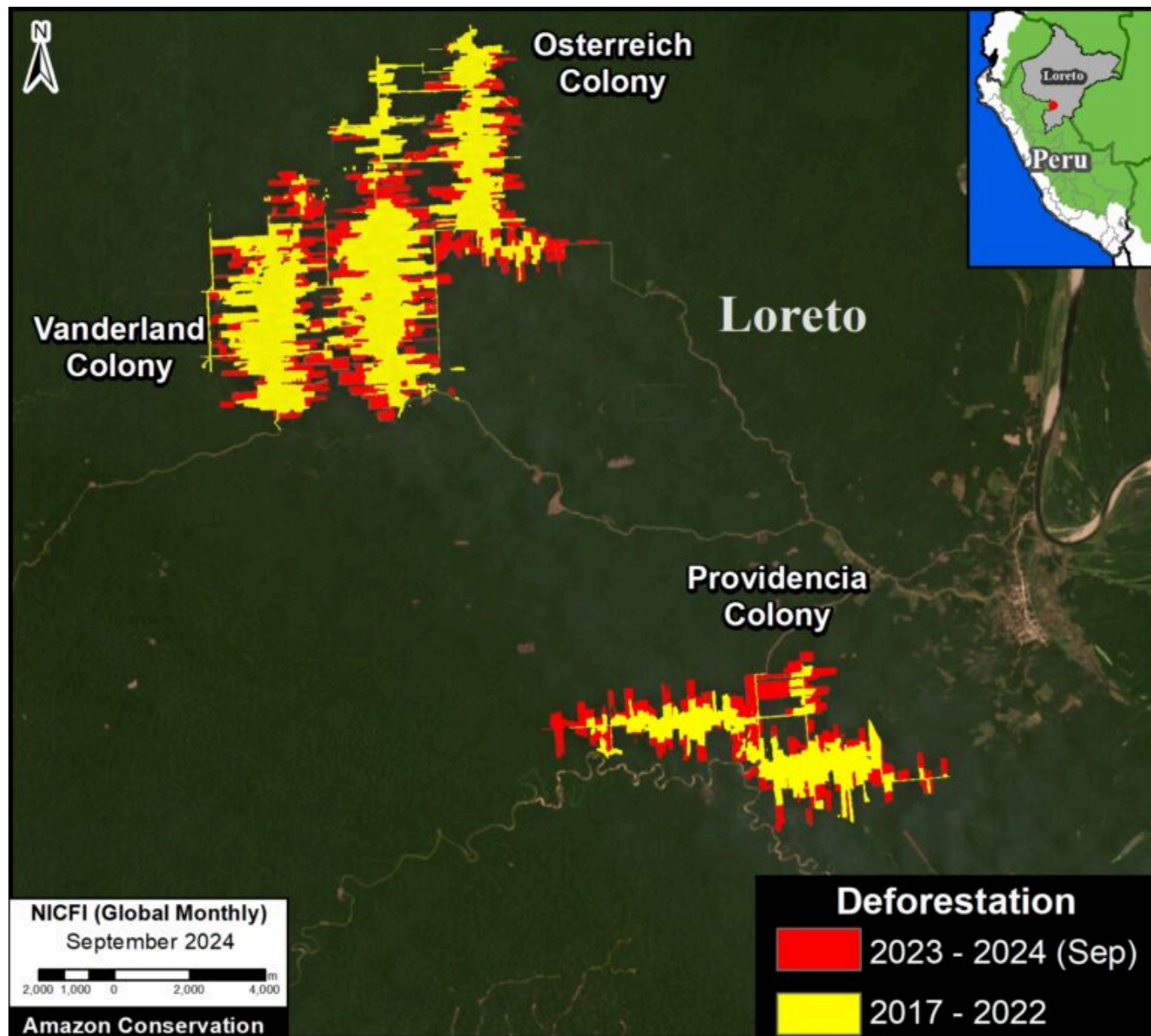


Figure 2. Deforestation in the Vanderland, Osterreich & Providencia Mennonite colonies. Data: ACA/MAAP, Planet.

These three colonies are located near the town of Tierra Blanca, in the Loreto region.

We have documented the deforestation of 4,824 hectares since 2017.

Masisea Colony

This colony, located in the Ucayali region, was the first to be established in Peru (2017) and was occupied by settlers who arrived from Bolivia.

Deforestation of 963 hectares has been documented in the Masisea colony since 2017.

Deforestation was most intense between 2017 and 2019, with a small expansion between 2022 and 2024.

Legal

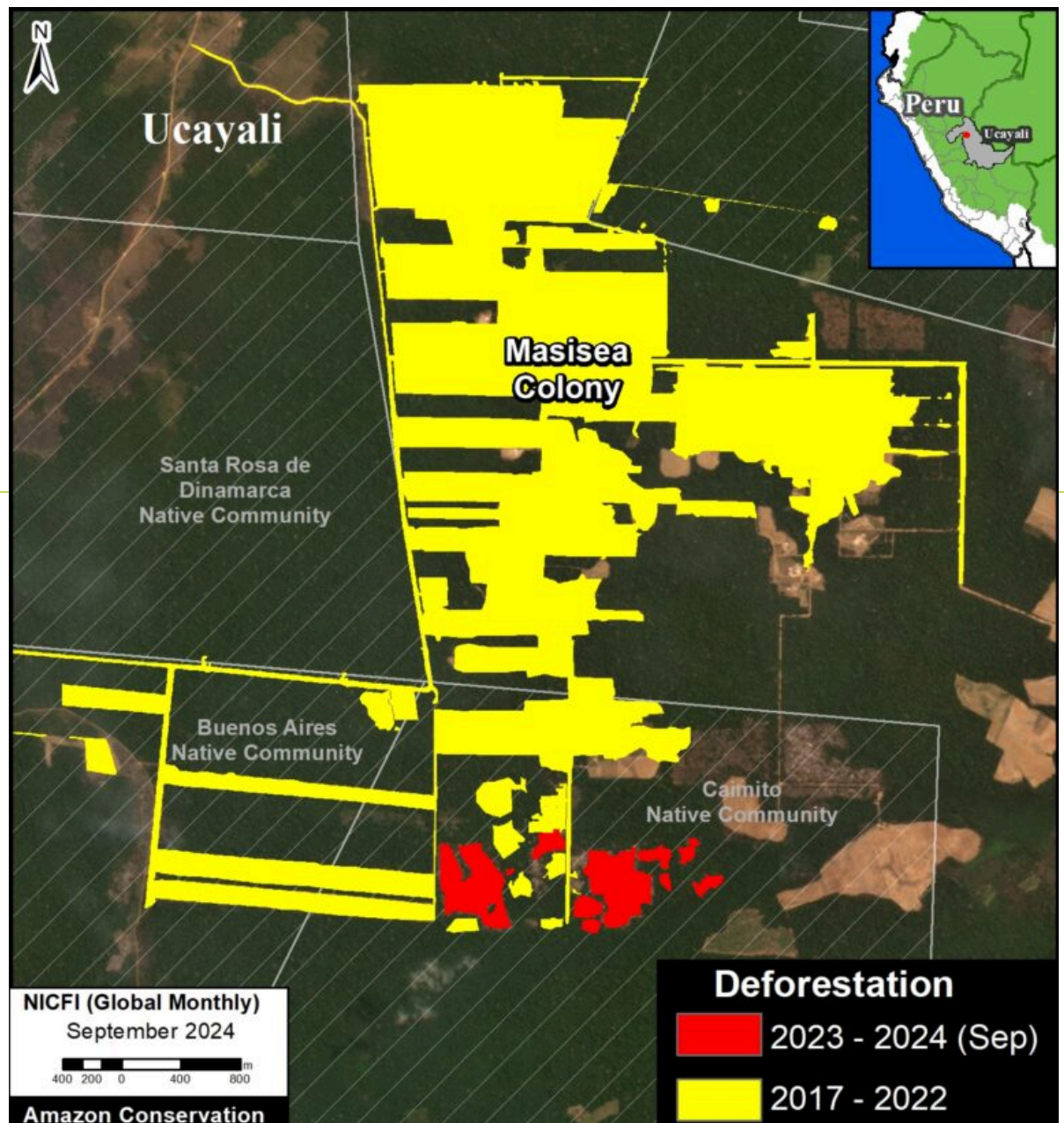


Figure 3. Deforestation in the Masisea Mennonite colony. Data: ACA/MAAP, Planet.

Summary

MAAP #188 (<https://www.maaprogram.org/mennonites-peru/>) details the legal actions taken by the Peruvian government. The Specialized Prosecutor's Office for Environmental Matters (FEMA in Spanish) is conducting ongoing investigations against all five Mennonite colonies.

In addition, National Forestry and Wildlife Service (SERFOR in Spanish) has received five complaints for deforestation activities without authorizations for clearing, which have been referred to the competent entities.

Likewise, through a judicial process, before the Second Criminal Appeals Chamber of the Superior Court of Justice of Ucayali, it ratified the suspension of predatory deforestation and logging activities by the colony in July 2023.

Since August 2024, the Regional Forestry and Wildlife Management of Ucayali – GERFFS, especially the Illegal Logging Directorate, has been coordinating prioritization actions for this case with other competent actors such as the Specialized Prosecutor’s Office for Environmental Matters – FEMA and the National Police of Peru – PNP.

Citation

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