

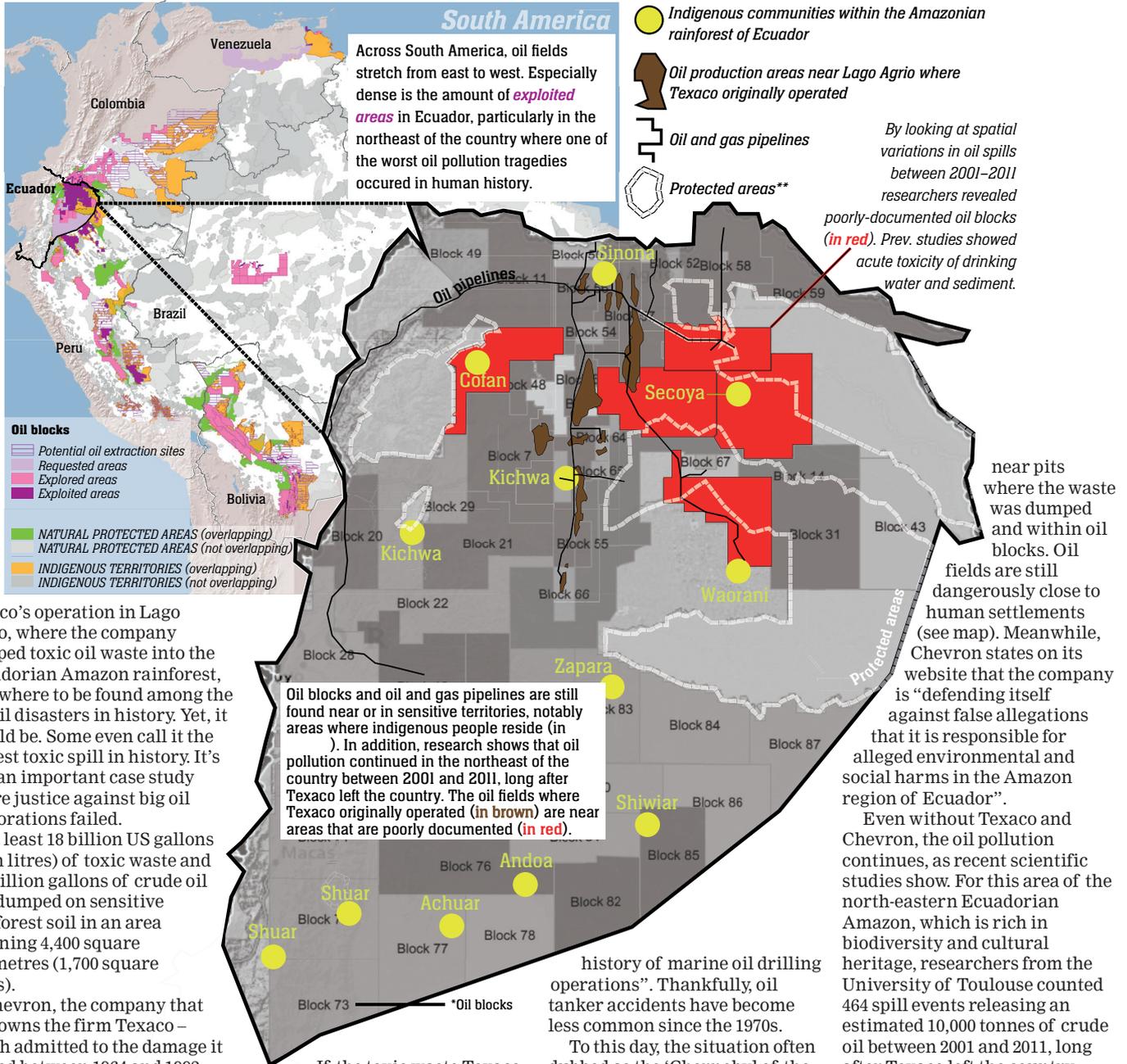
A devastating historic oil spill in Ecuador remains a cause of concern. With data, E&T shows why. By **Ben Heubl**

The Graphic

Oil pollution in Ecuador

No end in sight for the Chernobyl of the Amazon

Maps that show how oil still dominates sensitive areas



Texaco’s operation in Lago Agrio, where the company dumped toxic oil waste into the Ecuadorian Amazon rainforest, is nowhere to be found among the top oil disasters in history. Yet, it should be. Some even call it the biggest toxic spill in history. It’s also an important case study where justice against big oil corporations failed.

At least 18 billion US gallons (68bn litres) of toxic waste and 17 million gallons of crude oil was dumped on sensitive rainforest soil in an area spanning 4,400 square kilometres (1,700 square miles).

Chevron, the company that now owns the firm Texaco – which admitted to the damage it caused between 1964 and 1992 – was cleared of responsibility by the international tribunal of The Hague in 2018. This means charges of billions of dollars for indemnity that could have set a precedent in holding big oil accountable was lost and sends a strong signal to the rest of the industry.

If the toxic waste Texaco dumped is compared to the amount of oil released in other major oil disasters it’s about 85 times the size of the pollution for BP’s Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, which the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) called the “largest spill of oil in the

SOURCES: MICROSOFT; ACADEMIC PAPER “SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF ACCIDENTAL OIL SPILLS USING HETEROGENEOUS DATA: A CASE STUDY FROM THE NORTH-EASTERN ECUADORIAN AMAZON” BY JUAN DURANGO-CORDERO ET AL. UNIVERSITY OF TOULOUSE, 2018; RAISG, AMAZONIASOCIOAMBIENTAL (2018); ECUADOR’S OIL BLOCKING, SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY, JAMES BURGESS, 2016; NOTE: *OIL BLOCKS SHOWN IN THE GRAPHIC OWNED BY PETROAMAZONAS EP, RONDA SURORIENTE, ANDES PETROLERO, ENAP SIPEC, PETROAMAZONAS EP, PETRORIENTAL BEING NEGOTIATED, IN PROCESS, PENDING, REBSOL YPF AND OTHERS; **PROTECTED ACCORDING TO IUCN PROTECTED AREA CATEGORIES OF I TO VI