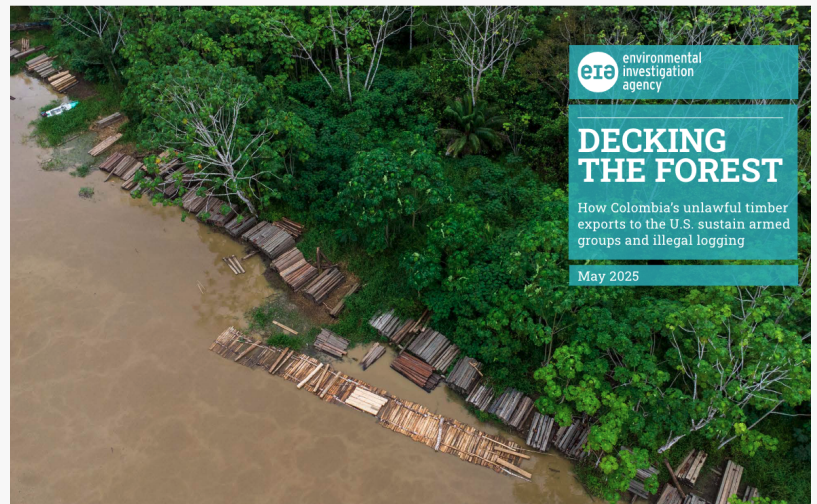


Colombia's Timber Decking Exported with Evidence of Illegality: Some Linked to Conflict, Reaching U.S. and EU Markets

Decking the Forest: How Colombia's unlawful timber exports to the U.S. sustain armed groups and illegal logging

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA, May 6, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A multi-year investigation by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA US) has uncovered extensive evidence of timber exports from Colombia entering U.S. and other international markets without the required legal documents. Some of these exports are linked to the funding of illegal armed groups, contributing to forest degradation and the exploitation of local communities in conflict-hit regions.



Decking the Forest cover page of the investigation

The report, [Decking the Forest](#), reveals how between 2020 and 2023, approximately 94% of Colombia's wood decking and flooring exports – amounting to approximately US\$24 million – appear to have lacked the mandatory certification required to prove legal origin. Many of these exports reached U.S., European and Canadian markets, all with laws that prohibit illegal timber imports.

“The findings of this investigation also lay bare how some Afro-Colombian communities in Colombia's Pacific region are coerced into logging their forests under abusive arrangements that leave them in debt, with some claiming they suffer conditions akin to slavery. This is a problem driven by timber traders - known as intermediaries - who apparently operate free of scrutiny, profiting from the harvest and laundering of timber at the expense of forest peoples” said Susanne Breitkopf, Deputy Director of the Forest Campaign at EIA US. “Colombia urgently needs legal reform to hold these actors accountable and to ensure they cannot continue exploiting communities and the forests they rely upon.”

Key findings from Decking the Forest include:

- A prominent timber exporter, Los Cedros Hardwood Flooring, that sources timber from the Colombian Pacific, admitted to EIA investigators paying illegal armed groups in Chocó and



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*Susanne Breilkopf, Deputy
Director of the Forest
Campaign, EIA US*

Antioquia—areas deeply affected by narco-trafficking and conflict—to facilitate its logging business. EIA found that 93% of its exports to the U.S, Canada and the EU, between 2020 and 2023 lacked the required certificate validating their legal origin, according to official information.

- Another top exporter which sources from the Colombian Pacific, Maderas Santa Rita, was found to have none of its required certificates validating the timber’s legal origin, between 2020 and May 2023.

- In the Colombian Amazon, timber linked to the exporter C.I. Casa en Madera was traced to concessions where no logging appears to have occurred, raising concerns of

possible timber laundering. EIA also found evidence that the regional environmental authority Corpoamazonia may have falsified supervision reports of those concessions. None of its exports were found to have the required certificates, either.

- 16 U.S firms imported timber without the mandatory certificates including Cedro Rojo, Amazon Hardwoods, Brazilian Lumber, and Sabra International, amongst others.

- The report highlights enforcement failures by Colombian authorities, despite legal requirements under paragraph 1 of article 7 of [Resolution 1367 of 2000](#), from Colombia’s Ministry of Environment, to issue the certificates for export. In parallel, U.S. and EU firms importing these products appear to have failed to conduct proper due care under the Lacey Act or the due diligence required by the European Union Timber Regulation (EUTR) respectively - laws that prohibit the entry of illegal timber.

On March 27, 2025, the U.S.-Colombia Secretariat for Environmental Enforcement Matters, which was established under the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement, [determined](#) that: the concerns raised [by EIA] about non-compliance with environmental legislation..., particularly regarding the enforcement of Resolution 1367 of 2000, remain unresolved, as the Party's response [the Colombian government] confirms the potential inadequacy in complying with the issued legal resolution...

EIA urges the proper enforcement of laws in Colombia, the EUTR and the Lacey Act, as well as for the Colombian government to enhance traceability by making timber supply chain data accessible to the public and verifiable, including information on timber harvesting, transports, processing and export of wood products. These steps are essential to prevent illegal timber from entering both national and international markets and to build accountability throughout the supply chain.

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