

## Yanomami

### Profile

The Yanomami inhabit the Orinoco and Sierra Parima region of southern Venezuela as well as the Amazonian region of Brazil. Arguably the most remote indigenous groups in the world, numbering over 7,000, the Yanomami have been able to preserve many of their traditions and maintain a symbiotic relationship with the environment.

### Historical context

Although the Yanomami had developed economic and social systems that allowed for self-sustenance, contact with non-Yanomami has been detrimental to their traditional lifestyles. In 2001, a book was published showing that American anthropologists may have acted negligently in the 1960s by administering a deadly measles immunization to hundreds of Yanomami.

### Current issues

Venezuelan Yanomami are threatened by inadequate health services, political violence, economic exploitation, and tourism. They have lost a lot of their population in recent decades mainly due to diseases introduced by gold miners invading Yanomami land. Because of the lack of health services in southern Venezuela, hundreds of Yanomami have crossed over to the Brazilian border looking for medical attention. In 1992 the Brazilian government began expelling miners off Yanomami land within Brazilian territory; however this has resulted in the invasion of Yanomami land in Venezuela. Addressing another concern of the Yanomami, in 2006 the Supreme Court in Venezuela ruled for the expulsion of US-based New Tribes Mission who worked heavily in their territory.