

Electric Vehicle Transition Challenges

Two articles from very different sources shed light on the complex issues at the heart of efforts to address greenhouse gas emissions and global climate change. One of the high profile changes underway today is the transition from vehicles with internal combustion engines to those powered by electricity. Electric vehicles do not emit carbon dioxide and are seen as a way to significantly reduce the emissions responsible for global warming.

However, as [a recent Vatican News article](#) points out, the supply chains that mine, process, and export the minerals needed to make electric vehicles leave a trail of environmental degradation and human rights abuses. The article cites a report from the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre which looked at the impact of nickel supply chains operating in Indonesia and the Philippines.

According to the report, companies operating in these two Southeast Asian countries have directly harmed the health and well-being of local Indigenous communities. Negative impacts include lack of prior informed consent, loss of food security, deforestation, water contamination, and pollution-related health issues.

“Disregard of the link between supposedly ‘green’ EVs and the ecological destruction wrought by the mining of transition minerals such as nickel, is negligent at best. At worst, it is active participation in greenwashing,” *Business and Human Rights Resource Centre*

While the move to electric cars is seen as a positive trend in the industrialized world, [a recent CNN article](#) looked into the flip side of this phenomenon: what happens to all the gas-guzzling vehicles that are no longer in use? CNN reporters discovered that many of these cars are shipped to various countries in Africa where there is a growing market for used cars. Many of these cars, however, are old, in poor repair and highly polluting.

The UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) is beginning to look into the need for stronger environmental regulations for these vehicles. As one UNEP official said, “Today with climate change, it doesn’t really matter where the emissions are taking place, whether in Washington, DC, or Lagos, it makes no difference.”