



London, 3 February 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

We indigenous people from Brazil have travelled across the world to condemn our President's attempts to destroy our lands and lives. We have an important message to deliver to you.

President Jair Bolsonaro's racist talk is encouraging the invasions of our territories, theft of our natural resources and violence against our communities. Attacks and invasions have increased dramatically since he took office just over a year ago. Brazil has one of the highest rates of killings of indigenous people.

FUNAI, the indigenous affairs department responsible for demarcating and protecting indigenous territories, including those of uncontacted tribes, is being manipulated and used as a tool by politicians who want to use our land for agribusiness, mining exploration and other destructive activities.

We are deeply worried about the future of the Amazon, the lungs of the earth and home to hundreds of tribes and the majority of the world's uncontacted Indians. We are angry that the Brazilian government refuses to consult us and obtain our consent to projects on our land.

We are the true guardians of the forest – we have cared for the animals, the birds, the fish, the rivers, the mountains since time immemorial. Our knowledge is not only essential for the future of our children and grandchildren, but for yours too because the Amazon plays a vital role in mitigating climate change.

We call on you to support us. Will the UK commit to ratifying ILO Convention 169? This is the only international law which upholds indigenous and tribal peoples' land rights and right to be consulted about development on our lands. Each country that ratifies ILO 169 strengthens its weight and signals support for indigenous rights and environmental protection.

The UK will host the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in November. This is an opportunity to put tribal peoples centre stage and recognise our key role in conserving some of the most biodiverse and threatened regions of the world for the benefit of humanity. We believe that the most efficient, just and cheapest way to conserve these areas is for governments to recognise our collective land rights and to work with us to safeguard biodiversity.

Projects such as creating protected areas, which have forced the violent eviction of many tribal peoples from their ancestral lands, and carbon offsetting are invariably imposed without our free, prior and informed consent, violate our land rights, deprive us of our livelihoods and threaten our very survival.

President Bolsonaro wants to open up our territories to large scale corporate mining and to legalise small-scale placer mining which, although illegal, is blighting many indigenous communities who are suffering the appalling impacts of mercury contamination and violence at the hands of goldminers. They bring diseases, prostitution, alcohol, and firearms. They are responsible for all this devastation.

We are deeply opposed to any form of mining on our lands and reject the government's recent assertion to EU ambassadors that the majority of indigenous peoples are pro mining. The UK is the international centre of the mining industry and the second largest importer of gold from Brazil. We call on you to ensure that no gold, other minerals or agricultural products from our lands comes to the UK. Please stand in solidarity with us. Don't stand by as President Bolsonaro attacks us – we need you to stand with us to defend the Amazon for the benefit of all on our planet. We need international support.

We send you our best wishes,

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