

ARARA

www.survival-international.org

‘Our land is now an island and we are surrounded. I am very worried that the whites will invade more.’ Tojtxi, Arara man



BRAZIL: Arara Indians fight bullets and bulldozers

June 2004

Survival 

Arara Indians in Brazilian Amazonia are fighting for their survival against waves of armed loggers, ranchers and colonists who are destroying their forest homeland. The situation is so volatile that the Arara dare not hunt further than 10 kilometres from their village. Traditional hunting trips, where men go off for days in search of game, are impossible as the Indians will not risk sleeping in the forest at night. Imprisoned within their own land, one Arara described leading ‘a life of terror’ as the forest echoes to the constant roar of chainsaws felling mahogany and other valuable hardwoods.

Government officials have reportedly surveyed the Arara territory (called Cachoeira Seca) with the aim of reducing its size and handing out tracts of the land to loggers and settlers. It has not yet been demarcated (physically mapped out with markers) by the government. The Bannach logging company bulldozed a road through the territory in the 1980s and now land grabbers and loggers

are opening up feeder roads and penetrating deeper into Arara land.

The Arara (‘macaw people’) call themselves Ukarangma. They are avid hunters and fishers and grow cassava, sweet potato, corn, bananas and pineapple in communal gardens. When hunters return from a successful hunt, meat is exchanged for fermented drinks and the whole community celebrates together for several days. For feasts and rituals, the Arara paint themselves in stunning, bold designs using a black dye called genipapo.

The Arara once inhabited a large area, but due to disease and violent conflict with outsiders they now number about 200 people and live in two reserves along the Irixi river. The sixty Arara of Cachoeira Seca were the last group to be contacted, in 1987. The adjacent Arara indigenous area has been fully recognised by the Brazilian government in 1991 and is home to the larger Arara group.



The Arara’s recent history has been one of persecution and violent contact with jaguar skin hunters, rubber tappers, settlers and, latterly, loggers. For years they eluded contact and fought to defend their land. FUNAI, the government’s Indian affairs department, tried desperately to make contact with the tribe throughout the 1970s before the Transamazonia highway cut through the heart of their territory. Contact was finally made between 1981 and 1987. Tojtxi, an elderly leader, remembers that time, ‘We saw traces of the whites and fled into the forest. The whites saw our footsteps and followed us. We wanted to know why they kept following us. We went further and further away but the whites came to our village

and we left our plantations, our caxiri (manioc drink), and everything, to flee.’

The Arara are now fighting a battle for their survival. Legal recognition of their large, continuous territory is crucial as the Indians rely entirely on the land for their livelihood. As Tojtxi told Survival ‘We were born in the forest – it’s our home. We only hunt. That’s what we do. If our land is swallowed up, where will we go to hunt? Our land is now an island and we are surrounded. I am very worried that the whites will invade more.’

ACTION

IN BRIEF

Survival's action bulletins are issued when a tribe is under threat – and when you can help. Many times since 1969, Survival has shown how focused public support can help to save vulnerable peoples from destruction. By spending a few minutes writing to the addresses below you really can help the Arara Indians of Brazil. Every letter makes a difference.

Survival accepts no national government funds and depends on individual supporters to fund its work. You can, however, receive these bulletins free of charge by post or email. Just tick the box on the form.

This action bulletin is also available in French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish – please write for details or extra copies.

Please write a brief and polite letter. Use the following letter as a guide or write your own:

I write to express my deep concern over the future of the Arara Indians of Cachoeira Seca in the state of Pará. Their land has been invaded by loggers and colonists whose presence prevents the Indians from hunting and has made them fear for their lives. Under the Brazilian constitution the Arara have the right to live on and use all their ancestral land. Government decree no. 26 of 22 January 1993 declared 760,000 hectares as the Cachoeira Seca reserve. However this land has never been demarcated or ratified. I am alarmed to hear that the government proposes to reduce this area and hand over Arara land to outsiders. The Arara are totally opposed to any loss of their land, which is crucial to their survival. The longer the delay in demarcation, the more the forest is invaded and destroyed. I urge your government to expel all land grabbers from the Arara territory, to resettle the colonists, and to demarcate Cachoeira Seca urgently in order to prevent further invasions and conflict with the Arara.

Please send your letters to:

Exmo Sr Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva
Presidente da República Federativa do Brasil
Gabinete do Presidente, Palácio do Planalto
Praça dos Três Poderes
70150-900 Brasília DF
Brazil

email: pr@planalto.gov.br
fax: +55 61 411 2222 or 2243 or 1222

Exmo Sr Márcio Thomaz Bastos
Ministro da Justiça
Ministerio da Justiça
Esplanada dos Ministérios
Bloco T
70064-900 Brasília DF
Brazil

email: gabinetemj@mj.gov.br
fax: +55 61 224 2448 or 322 6817
or 224 0954



BOTSWANA: Bushmen take government to court

The court case that could decide the future of the Gana and Gwi 'Bushmen' will be held in July this year. Two hundred and forty-eight Bushmen and Bakgalagadi are taking Botswana to court over the government's forced eviction of them and their families from their ancestral land.

The case will begin on 4 July with an 'inspection' of the resettlement centres, and of the Bushman communities in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve to which nearly 200 Bushmen have returned despite government opposition. The Bushmen want the government to recognise their rights to return to their land and live there without fear of further eviction, and to hunt and gather freely.

Meanwhile, three Bushmen have been arrested and charged with 'unlawful hunting'. The three were hunting near the resettlement centre of New Xade. The arrests are the latest in a rising tide of persecution of Gana and Gwi Bushman hunters. The Bushmen were banned from hunting and gathering in the reserve after the evictions, and since then those hunting around the resettlement centres have faced harassment, arrest and heavy fines or imprisonment.

'I feel angry because I am a hunter and I'm not allowed to hunt. I have children but I don't know how to feed them,' says one man. In the resettlement centres, the Bushmen are dependent on government rations for the destitute.

Please send a polite letter or fax to:

The Hon F G Mogae
President of the Republic
Private Bag 001
Gaborone
Botswana
Fax: + 267 3956 086
Begin: 'Your Excellency'

expressing your concern at the persecution of the Gana and Gwi Bushmen in the name of 'development', and urging him to allow those Bushmen who wish to return to their land to do so without fear of further persecution.

Survival is a worldwide organisation supporting tribal peoples. It stands for their right to decide their own future and helps them protect their lives, lands and human rights.

Survival International,
6 Charterhouse Buildings, London EC1M 7ET, United Kingdom

T 020 7687 8700
F 020 7687 8701
info@survival-international.org
www.survival-international.org

© Survival. Photo: Arara girl with honey, Brazil © John Miles/Survival

I want to help tribal peoples

A banker's order of only £3 a month, or any donation you can give, will make a difference.

Supporters receive free information about tribal peoples.

Would you like to receive these free bulletins? Yes, by post: Yes, by email:

Forename	Last name
Address	
Postcode	Country
Email	

Banker's order form (UK only)

You can cancel a banker's order at any time by notifying us and your bank/building society.

Bank/building society name
Bank/building society address
Postcode

Please pay Survival (tick chosen amount or fill in amount):

£3	other £	each month	Account no.
£8	other £	each quarter	Sort code
£25	other £	each year	Signature
Starting on			Date

and/or I wish to make a gift of:

£100	£50	£25	£15	other £
------	-----	-----	-----	---------

Please make my gift go further (at no cost to me):

I am a UK taxpayer, and want Survival to reclaim the tax on this donation and any I make from now on (tick)*: Date

Please make cheques payable to 'Survival'. Survival accepts credit card donations in any currency online by secure method at www.survival-international.org/card.htm or by phone **+44 (0)20 7687 8700**

How did you hear of Survival?

Please detach this form and return it to:
Survival, Freepost PAM 5410, London, EC1B 1EE, United Kingdom
No postage required if posted in UK. Do not return to your bank/building society.

*You must pay an amount of income or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax we claim on your donation (currently 28p for every £1 you give).
For office use: To The Bank of Scotland, West End Office, St James' Gate, 14/16 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5BL Survival International Charitable Trust (12-11-03) a/c 00768011, quoting the customer's name and our reference.

Survival will not pass on any of your details to any other organisation.
Registered charity 267444

our ref.