



**Survival International**  
6 Charterhouse Buildings  
London EC1M 7ET  
United Kingdom  
T 020 7687 8700  
F 020 7687 8701  
info@survivalinternational.org  
[www.survivalinternational.org](http://www.survivalinternational.org)

**We help tribal peoples  
defend their lives, protect  
their lands and determine  
their own futures.**

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon  
United Nations Headquarters  
Secretary General's Office  
NL building  
New York  
NY 10017  
USA

London, 14 June 2011

**Re: Indigenous peoples and lands in Brazil**

Dear Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,

Survival International is a non-governmental organisation which has helped tribal people worldwide defend their rights for over forty years.

We are pleased to hear that you are currently visiting Latin America, and we ask if in your meetings with President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil, you would raise our concerns about the plight of some of Brazil's most vulnerable indigenous peoples.

The UN Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples visited Brazil and published his report on the situation of indigenous peoples in 2009. Unfortunately since

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no. 1056317  
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then, there has been almost no progress in implementing the recommendations in his report and many of his major concerns have yet to be addressed.

The survival of the **Awá** Indians of Maranhão state in the Amazon is at huge risk as their forest is being cut down at an alarming rate by illegal loggers, despite the tribe's land having been officially mapped out for their exclusive use. The Awá's land suffered more deforestation than any other indigenous territory in the Amazon in 2009.

The Awá, as one of the last remaining nomadic hunter-gatherer tribes in Brazil, rely entirely on their forest for game to sustain them.

It is crucial that the Brazilian authorities remove all illegal invaders from the Awá's land as a matter of urgency, and put in place an effective monitoring system to ensure that no future invasions occur.

The **Yanomami** Indians in Roraima state, also in the Amazon, are one of the largest relatively isolated tribes in Latin America. Their health is suffering as thousands of goldminers are operating illegally on their land, polluting their rivers and spreading diseases to which the Indians have little resistance.

The Yanomami are currently extremely angry and worried following the nomination of a new indigenous health coordinator, who has little connection with indigenous peoples, and who is thought to be favored for political reasons. The Yanomami have repeatedly asked for a meeting to discuss this with the Health Minister, Mr Alexandre Padilha, to no avail.

It is vital that experienced medical professionals, who are supported by the communities, should be able to deliver vital health care without being subjected to political influences. It is also crucial that the Indians' right to be consulted about their health care, enshrined in the Brazilian constitution and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, be upheld.

The **Guarani** Indians in Mato Grosso do Sul state, south of the Amazon, have seen almost all their land stolen from them, to make way for cattle ranching, soya, and sugarcane plantations for biofuels.

Thousands of Guarani have been evicted from their lands and live in appalling conditions, in overcrowded reserves or roadside camps with little access to food and clean water. They have an extremely high malnutrition rate and one of the highest suicide rates in the world.

The Brazilian government signed an agreement with the Attorney General's office, guaranteeing that Guarani territories would be mapped out and returned to the Indians by 2010. However, the land demarcation has come to a near-standstill and the Indians continue to live in a very precarious situation.

Attached is a report about the Guarani's land situation, sent from Survival International to the United Nations last year.

Survival is also concerned about the **uncontacted Indians** living near the Belo Monte and Madeira dams in the Amazon. Uncontacted Indians have very little resistance to outside diseases, and any contact with outsiders could be fatal for them. The dam projects have proceeded without the uncontacted Indians' land having been fully protected.

It is extremely important that the Brazilian authorities suspend the dam projects until a full study into the impacts on the uncontacted Indians has been carried out, and an effective programme to protect their land has been put in place. It is also essential that the authorities consult with and obtain the free, informed and prior consent of the other tribes that also stand to lose their forest land and livelihoods because of the dams.

The Indians' right to have their land and lives protected is enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the Brazilian Constitution and Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation, both of which have been approved by Brazil.

We call upon you as UN Secretary-General, to raise these issues with President Dilma, and to urge her government to uphold indigenous peoples' rights, and to consult with and involve them in decisions about infrastructural projects which are having such a profound and negative impact on their lands and livelihoods.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Corry', with a small 'pp.' to the left.

Stephen Corry  
Director