



## **OPEN LETTER TO NATIVE AMERICAN LEADERS, JOURNALISTS AND SCIENTISTS ATTENDING THE 2019 FRONTLINE OIL & GAS CONFERENCE IN PONCA CITY, OKLAHOMA**

The rights of the more than 300 indigenous peoples in Brazil are being violated and threatened every day.

Historically, Brazil's Native Peoples have suffered genocide and all kinds of violence that keep depriving our communities from living in our territories, speaking our languages and raising our children based on our culture. The attacks on our peoples are substantially growing since Brazil's new Government took office in January 2019. Executive Orders and bills that have the goal to suppress our constitutional rights are being enacted by the President and his allies in Congress.

President Jair Bolsonaro is known for his bigoted, hateful, homophobic and racially offensive statements. In the late 1990s, when he was a representative in Congress, he stated that, unfortunately, the Brazilian Cavalry was not as efficient as the American Cavalry, as the latter was able to decimate the Native People in the U.S.

During the 2018 Presidential Campaign, Mr. Bolsonaro said that he would not allocate a single additional centimeter for indigenous territories. However, the demarcation of indigenous lands is a constitutional right and there are hundreds of demarcation processes in a standstill. In his first speech after elections, he said that one of his goals would be to put an end to all kinds of activism in Brazil.

One of the first measures taken by the Federal Government was an Executive Order transferring the tasks related with demarcation from the National Foundation for Indigenous Peoples (FUNAI) to the Ministry of Agriculture. Historically, the Ministry of Agriculture has defended the interests of cattle ranchers, big farmers and the agribusiness sector. Fortunately, thanks to pressure from civil society, this policy is being challenged in Congress.

It is worth mentioning that there is a growing feeling of impunity for human rights violations and violence against minorities, social movements and traditional communities leaders. Invasions of indigenous territories, threats and crimes against environmental defenders have been on the rise.

Reports show that at least 14 indigenous lands are currently being invaded by miners, land grabbers, loggers and hunters. Leaders from the Indigenous Land Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau, in the Amazon state of Rondônia, reported that tens of people, riding motorcycles, entered the territory in the first week of May, threatening the natives and stealing timber and other natural resources. Similar reports are getting more common in different regions of Brazil.

Besides being flagrant constitutional and human rights violations, such invasions are also a serious threat against the environment. It is well known that, all over the world, especially in the Amazon region, indigenous peoples are the stewards of the forests, protecting water, biodiversity, rainfall regimes and clean air.

Indigenous peoples, activists, civil society organizations, the media, scientists, and decision-makers around the world must be made aware of the seriousness of the situation in Brazil concerning its indigenous peoples.

Sign this letter:

Almir Narayamoga Suruí – Leader of the Paiter Suruí People

Awapu Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau – Leader of the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau People

Heliton Gavião – Leader of the Gavião People

Ivaneide Bandeira Cardozo – Kanindé Association

Kleber Karipuna – Association of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB)

Leonice Tupari – Association of Indigenous Female Warriors of Rondônia

Val Karitiana – Leader of the Karitiana People

Walelasoetxeige Paiter Bandeira Suruí – Association Metareila of the Suruí People