



Chief Raoni, Nobel Peace Prize nominee, calls for immediate end of illegal mining in Indigenous Lands

A manifest signed by the Kabu Institute, the Protected Forest Association, and the Raoni Institute warns of the explosion of deforestation and invasions in their indigenous territories

Known worldwide for his trajectory of fighting and defending the rights of indigenous peoples in Brazil, chief Raoni is one of the highly-rated contenders for the Nobel Peace Prize 2020 to be announced this Friday (10/9) in Oslo. Several national and international personalities have already declared their support for Raoni.

At the same time, the “cacique of peace”, as he is known, launches an urgent manifesto with the three main Brazilian Kayapó indigenous associations (Instituto Raoni, Associação Floresta Protegida, and Instituto Kabu) against the legalization of mining in indigenous lands. The manifest alerts to the unbridled increase in deforestation and of invasions in indigenous territories in recent years.

As the Kayapó people point out, the dismantling of official monitoring and the stimulus of mining by the government encourage invasions and predatory exploitation. In the last three years alone, mining has destroyed about 5,000 hectares of forest in the Kayapó Indigenous Land, one of the epicenters of illegal mining. All the deforestation caused by mining in this indigenous land between the 1980s and 2015 reached half of that: 2,500 hectares.

The increasing number of conflicts endangers the integrity of the indigenous people and enhances the advance of Covid-19 in the territory. There are already at least 16 deaths and 2,032 cases between the Kayapó, Menkragnoti, Badjokôre, Capoto Jarina and Baú Indigenous Lands.

“We repudiate the way the federal government has been encouraging the invasion of our territories, either by the rhetoric that strengthens organized crime or by the omission and weakening of the enforcement agencies responsible for the protection of indigenous territories and for the combat of illegal and predatory activities”, says the document.

In the manifesto, the associations recognize that there are indigenous people of the ethnic group who decided to join the mining chain, but stress that they do not represent the entire Kayapó people. “The increasing pressure on our communities has meant that a few leaders have been seduced by the quick and easy financial gains that mining provides. We do not allow them to speak on behalf of the Kayapó People (...) How could we be in favor of an activity that generates profound



environmental and social impacts on our territories and communities? How could we deprive our children and grandchildren of a preserved territory to continue living according to our uses, customs, and traditions, as guaranteed by the Constitution? ”, asks the text.

The year of 2020 has been a challenging year for Raoni. At the age of 90, the chief faced the death of his wife, Bepkwyjka, in June; an intestinal infection and contamination by Covid-19, from which he is still recovering. In January, about 600 leaders of riverines, forest collectors, quilombolas (communities of descendants of escaped slaves), and indigenous peoples answered the call of the chief and joined their voices in the Piraçu village, at Capoto Jarina Indigenous Land (Mato Grosso State). That gathering set the relaunch of the Alliance of the Peoples of the Forest.

At the meeting, Raoni, who seems to have foreseen the need for a joint effort to face a year marked by the destruction of the environment and threats to indigenous and traditional peoples, again echoed the message that characterizes his biography: “I will not give up, I will continue while my body resists. As long as the indigenous are threatened, I will ask for peace.”

Read the manifesto: <https://www.kabu.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Kayap%C3%B3-Declaration-Against-Mining.pdf>

Leaders Kayapó talking about their position in video:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/15dOzrJft6h8jITn9gAI9fYuP0L6HrzeY/view?usp=sharing>

Interviews scheduling, photos and mining footage:

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