

## **Letter on behalf of the Munduruku of Upper and Middle Tapajós and Lower Teles Pires Rivers**

September 14, 2022

We, the chiefs, warriors, teachers, and women's groups of the Munduruku people, represented here through our community associations Pariri, Wakoborün, Aro, Arikico, Da'uk, Ipereg Ayũ Movement, CIMAT, gathered together on September 14, 2022 in the Sawre Muybu village, where we organized a public meeting to discuss the results of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation's recent research on the high levels of mercury in our bodies and in the fish that we eat on a daily basis. All that we've already felt, all the terrible symptoms, we see clearly in the studies' results. We are gathered to find a solution. First, we want the mining activity within our territory to stop immediately. We blame the current government for neglecting its duty, leaving us to get sick from mercury contamination. Mining only brings disease. In addition to mercury, there is also an outbreak of malaria in our region, as well as diarrhea, hunger, and skin lesions. Our rivers are being destroyed, our streams are dying and our fish are going extinct. Today we are drinking dirty water, our children are bathing in mud-polluted rivers and we are fishing in water that is the color of milk. We were very sad when we saw the results – who wants their children sick? In addition to diseases, our community leaders are under threat and have already suffered serious violence, have had their houses burned and the headquarters of associations and resistance organizations in Jacareacanga vandalized.

While we were meeting to discuss the contamination and a solution for the health of our people, we received news of a meeting on the subject of carbon credits, organized by the Pusuru Association in Karapanatuba village, with the presence of municipal bodies. At that meeting, the company offered money to the association, money that only deceives our relatives and sows division among our people. The sack of money is offered to invade the territory. Where does this

money come from? We have known since January 2022 that the company [Carbonext](#) and the company Mapel Marochi Agricultura e Pecuária LTDA are trying to implement carbon credit projects in the Crepori National Forest. This place, which the federal government calls a “Conservation Unit,” is in fact traditionally occupied by the Munduruku people, mainly by the 25 villages along both banks of the Tropas River. We have already reported this to the Federal Public Ministry since we were contacted by email by these companies.

In the same area, the Flona do Crepori, the Brazilian Forest Service and ICMBio are willing to auction parcels allowing companies to remove wood via forest concession projects. We have gone on the record before the Federal Public Ministry so that all Brazilian society and beyond would know that we are against these projects.

First, everyone should know that Flona-Crepori is Munduruku territory. Second, we fully understand that all these projects are presented with false justifications. They say they are for the preservation of the forest, to put an end to illegal activities, but we know that these “solutions” coming from outside do not respect our ways of life and our autonomy to think about and care for the territory. We don’t need any company to control the use of our territory and tell us how to preserve the forest. We know that when companies make these “concessions” it is because they want to continue destroying other places and they want to make money from what we have always done in our land, for thousands of years.

This Mapel Marochi company is represented by Leonel B. Marochi. He also owns the company Indussolo, which wanted to steal the lands of our neighbors and allies, the riverside communities of Montanha and Mangabal. Now they say that a large area of the Flona-Crepori belongs to them too? Our ancestral territories need to be respected, both those of the Munduruku and those of our *beiradeiro* allies. Why don’t companies ask what solutions we have? We are constantly discussing and developing our ideas for protecting the lands that we have always cared for, and yet the *pariwat* comes in to destroy the forest and to deceive our own kin.

We have our own community associations, and we coordinate regularly with indigenous peoples across the country. Our leaders and our chief have already heard from other indigenous peoples about how carbon credit projects caused so much division among them. All because of these promises of money from outside companies.

We already have our *plano de vida* – our strategies that support life and growth for all our relatives. Our resistance organizations and the alternatives that we envision for generating income with traditional products must be strengthened. And all this in the support of increasing our autonomy and our management over our lands, and not the other way around.

We know very well that we have a right to free, prior and informed consultation (FPIC), a right recognized in ILO Convention 169. This meeting held by Pusuru is worthless. That's why we made our Consultation Protocol. There it is written that a consultation only works if it is carried out with all the people, both from the upper and middle Tapajós. We confirm that Pusuru has already been denounced by our chiefs for having allowed pariwat to enter our territory. Purusu is Daydu, a traitor to the people. It may well be that Pusuru is an association, but it does not represent the Munduruku people. In addition, it is useless for companies to want to talk to a leadership by contacting them on social networks. By doing this, they try to bypass our Consultation Protocol, and will have to answer to the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office for this violation. Two letters against this Carbon Credit project have already been published: one from the leaders of the Cururu River and another from the Dace Association. With this letter, we join seven more Munduruku organizations to these voices and reiterate that the Munduruku people already have their Consultation Protocol and must be consulted accordingly on any project neighboring our lands that will impact us. We will repeat our denunciations until you learn to respect our rights.

We do not negotiate our territory and the lives of our children. Our children's lives are priceless. There's no kind of money in this world

that could buy us off. We'll keep fighting, keep teaching our children with neither greed nor disease through Karodaybi and Wakoborün's self-government.

We are here to demand that:

- the Carbonext and Mapel companies immediately stop trying to negotiate our territory with the Pusuru Association
- the sale of mercury be prohibited in the shops and gold-purchasing companies in the municipalities of Jacareacanga and Itaituba
- the immediate cancellation of PLGs in Indigenous Lands and around our territory in the municipalities of Jacareacanga and Itaituba
- Funai provide security and monitoring of threatened forest defenders in their villages
- the Government supervise airstrips within indigenous territories in Itaituba and Jacareacanga, where mercury and gold are transported
- Sawre Muybu and Sawre Bapim Indigenous Lands are immediately demarcated. The longer this demarcation takes, the more invasions, mercury contamination and all the ills of mining, logging and palm heart extraction, fishing and illegal hunting will increase.

We also ask:

- that the Federal Public Ministry (MPF) demand the annulment of any contract or signed document, for not having followed our Consultation Protocol
- that the Federal Public Defender's Office (DPU) finds the State and Federal Governments responsible for encouraging the invasion of mining in our territory. It's their fault we're sick from mercury.

- that Fiocruz and other organizations and doctors continue the studies on mercury contamination.
- that a public hearing be organized with the DPU, MPF and all the socio-environmental agencies responsible for protecting the forest, rivers and indigenous lands (such as Funai, Ibama, and ICMBio), so that the complaints we have already made are followed up and so these agencies work together to support the solutions that we are already implementing.