

# **Manifesto of the Alliance among the Kayabi, Apiaká, Munduruku and Rikbaktsa Indigenous Peoples**

Teles Pires Village, Kayabi Indigenous Territory, 24th of April of 2015

We, the Kayabi, Apiaká, and Munduruku indigenous peoples from the lower Teles Pires River and Rikbaktsa from the lower Juruena River, gathered in Teles Pires village between the 21st and 24th of April 2015, reaffirm our alliance and unity in defense of the rivers Teles Pires, Juruena, and Tapajós. We will continue to fight for our collective rights, for the constitutional right guaranteeing exclusive use of natural resources on our land, for permanent ownership of territories that we have traditionally occupied, and for these lands to continue to provide for our physical and cultural survival, which is today gravely threatened by hydroelectric dams built by the Federal Government, led by President Dilma [Rousseff] together with large construction firms.

The hydroelectric dams of Sinop, Colíder, Teles Pires and São Manoel are radically changing the Teles Pires River and affecting our traditional way of life. The Teles Pires and Colider dams already killed tons of fish and thousands of animals. Below the dams, the fish are already dying on our territory due to the sudden floods and dry spells on the uncontrolled river, which has also taken many canoes. Because the dams have dirtied the water we cannot fish with bow and arrow; meanwhile our health problems continue to increase due to contaminated water, especially in the villages nearest to the dams. Even the flow of the lower Juruena River has suddenly reduced, affecting Apiaká villages, when the dam dries out the waters of the Teles Pires River.

We who live in the Kayabi, Apiaká and Munduruku indigenous lands of the Teles Pires, the Apiaká indigenous territory, and the *Pontal dos Isolados*, are responsible for the conservation of thousands of hectares of forest and of biodiversity, which is considered World Heritage, and for which the non-indigenous people have proved to be incapable of governing and stewarding. In these areas there are indigenous people living in voluntary isolation, who have already been seen by members of the community, however the measures to preserve the survival of these peoples, who are increasingly threatened by dams and other mega-projects, remain unclear.

The government builds dams with hastily-prepared and incomplete environmental studies, without seeking to understand the consequences of the destruction of nature for our lives, authorizing the operation of dams without providing a response to indigenous people about how they will continue their lives without fish, without water, without hunting. It tries to hide their negative impacts on our lives, our rivers and our territories. The government doesn't bring information that we understand, in our villages and in our languages, nor does it offer alternatives for our physical and cultural survival.

The Federal government has not respected our right to free, prior, and information consultation and consent, guaranteed by the Federal Constitution and by International Labor Organization Convention 169, prior to making political decisions concerning the construction of dams on the

Teles Pires River. We were never consulted, nor have we given our consent to the destruction of our rivers, our forests and our sacred places, such as the Sete Quedas waterfalls and the Morro do Macaco.

Several judges have already perceived that our rights are being violated in their rulings on lawsuits filed by the Federal Public Prosecutor against these illegalities, but the Presidents of the Federal Regional Court, Supreme Court of Justice and Federal Supreme Court suspend these decisions, using a dictatorship-era legal maneuver, known as "Security Suspension". These orders all originate from the Executive Branch. We denounce that such decisions by court presidents are denying the Judiciary of its independence, allowing projects to proceed that privilege powerful economic and political groups, when the defense of human life, human rights, and human dignity should come first. In this way, they compromise democracy, the Republic, and disgrace the law created by non-indigenous people.

We have lived in the region of the lower Teles Pires River and the Juruena River since time immemorial. Our grandparents, great-grandparents and those who came before them, were already here. In 1988, when a new Brazilian Constitution was approved, we were already here. Even so, the Federal Supreme Court has refused to finalize the demarcation of our territories, such as in the case of the Kayabi indigenous territory.

The São Manoel hydroelectric dam is being built a few meters from the margins of the Kayabi indigenous territory, very close to several of our villages, likewise without any accompanying process of prior consultation. This additional dam will not only kill more fish and ruin the water of our river, but people may die as well.

Thus, the government is assuming the risks of genocide. What will the government tell the world if indigenous peoples must leave their villages for lack of minimum conditions for survival? Or even if they perish? Will it say that it did not respect the Brazilian Constitution and international law meant to defend human rights? That it approved projects without following Brazil's environmental laws, using the people's money? That what was intended was not to generate energy, but instead to feed corruption schemes with contractors and political parties, as investigations of Federal Public Prosecutors and the Federal Police of the Operation *Lava Jato* have revealed?

**To summarize, we inform every office of the State that we were NEVER consulted, and that we NEVER gave our CONSENT for the construction of hydroelectric dams on the Teles Pires River.**

**We demand that the government bring us quality information, as required by environmental legislation, concerning the risks of building a cascade of dams on Teles Pires, Juruena and on the other rivers of the Tapajós River basin, and that it respect our right to free, prior and informed consultation and consent.**

**Considering the serious violations of our rights that have already occurred, we demand the immediate suspension of the construction of the São Manoel dam, and that our rights be fully respected.**

**We want the government to fulfill its duty to demarcate and legally register our territories, to guarantee quality public policies for our health and education, taking our reality into consideration. That it support our plans for managing of our territories. And finally, that it commit itself to respecting our rights and all that is needed to guarantee our true survival, with autonomy and auto-determination for our present and our future.**

Signed by representatives of the Kayabi, Apiaká, Munduruku and Rikbaktsa indigenous peoples

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*Translation from the Portuguese: Diana Oliveira / Amazon Watch*