

# URGENT ACTION

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLE THREATENED IN BRAZIL

**There are concerns for the safety of some 60 Indigenous people, including children, who occupied a sugar cane plantation they say is their ancestral land in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul on 15 September. They have been threatened by armed private security guards working on the plantation.**

Around **60 Guarani-Kaiowá people** from the Apyka'i community and other villages occupied the land, currently farmed for sugar, on 15 September 2013. They were first evicted from the land in 1999 after having lived there since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and have been living beside a highway since then. Since occupying the land, the community has reported that armed private security guards working on the sugar plantation have threatened to kill them.

The National Indigenous Foundation (FUNAI) were meant to have designated the Apyka'i community its ancestral land by 2010. This is according to the Conduct Adjustment Agreement signed in November 2007 by FUNAI, the Ministry of Justice, the Federal Public Prosecution Service (Ministério Público Federal) and 23 indigenous leaders.

The Apyka'i Guarani-Kaiowá community reported to the Federal Public Prosecution Service that they had been threatened by the security guards, who have also prevented them from collecting water in a stream that runs through the sugarcane plantation. Employees of the security company have been charged with offences before, including two ongoing murder cases. The federal prosecutor has claimed that the company conducts "incontestable illicit activity" and are calling for the "suspension of its activities".

### **Please write immediately in Portuguese or your own language:**

- Urging the authorities to ensure the Guarani-Kaiowá people are not subjected to threats and harassment;
- Calling on the authorities to push forward the demarcation process for Apyka'i and other Indigenous communities' lands in Mato Grosso do Sul, fulfilling its obligations under the Brazilian Constitution, Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to complete all land demarcations.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 NOVEMBER 2013 TO:**

#### Minister of Justice

Ministro da Justiça  
Exmo. Sr. José Eduardo Martins Cardozo,  
Esplanada dos Ministérios,  
Bloco "T", 4º andar,  
70064-900 – Brasília - DF, BRAZIL  
Fax: + 55 61 2025 7803

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

#### Secretary of Human Rights

Secretária de Direitos Humanos  
Exma Sra. Ministra Maria do Rosário Nunes  
Setor Comercial Sul-B, Quadra 9, Lote C  
Edifício Parque Cidade Corporate,  
Torre "A", 10º andar,  
70308-200 – Brasília - DF, BRAZIL  
Fax: + 55 61 2025 9414

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

#### **And copies to:**

#### NGO

Conselho Indigenista Missionário (CIMI)  
CIMI Regional Mato Grosso do Sul,  
Av. Afonso Pena,  
1557 Sala 208 Bl.B,  
79002-070 Campo Grande - MS, BRAZIL

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



# URGENT ACTION

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLE THREATENED IN BRAZIL

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mato Grosso do Sul contains some of the smallest, poorest and most densely populated Indigenous lands in Brazil: pockets of rural poverty surrounded by large soybean and sugarcane plantations and cattle ranches, where life is plagued by ill-health and squalid living conditions. Some 60,000 Guarani-Kaiowá people live precariously, with social breakdown causing high levels of violence, suicide and malnutrition. Disappointed with the sluggish land demarcation process, the Guarani-Kaiowá began to reoccupy their ancestral lands in the 1970s, but have been subjected to intimidation and forcible evictions.

Due to the continued failure to resolve their demands for their ancestral lands, various Guarani-Kaiowá communities ended up living on the edge of motorways, such as the BR-463. They have been threatened by security guards hired to prevent them from trying to repossess their lands, and are faced with health problems as a result of living in temporary shelters without any medical assistance. In addition, many were killed and injured in traffic accidents.

Both the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (signed by Brazil in 2007) and the International Labour Organization's Convention 169 – of which Brazil is a signatory – uphold the rights of Indigenous peoples to their ancestral lands and call upon states to establish mechanisms to recognize them and defend them in court. The Brazilian Constitution (1988) also supports these rights and Brazil's responsibility to demarcate indigenous lands.

Name: 60 Guarani-Kaiowá people

Gender m/f: both

UA: 254/13 Index: AMR 19/008/2013 Issue Date: 23 September 2013