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Brazil: Key milestone in indigenous rights battle

President Lula's ratification of the Raposa Serra do Sol indigenous territory in the Amazon state of Roraima represents a key victory for Indians in the region, who have struggled for more than 30 years for recognition of their land rights. More than twenty indigenous people have died in disputes over the territory, while hundreds more have lost their homes and livestock, Amnesty International said today.

"It is now essential that the Federal government take the necessary steps to provide security in the region during these vital first years of the officially recognised territory. Particularly as this is the period during which compensation claims will have to be settled," said the organization.

Today on Brazil's Day of the Indian, Amnesty International is also calling on the Brazilian federal government to ensure that this is not an isolated example, and that it be included as part of a wider strategy for settling indigenous land claims across the country. "Up until now the indigenous policy of the Lula government has been inconsistent at best. The authorities must now turn their attention to the appalling plight of indigenous peoples in other parts of Brazil, such as the Guarani-Kaiowá of Mato Grosso do Sul," the organization concluded.

For more information please go to: <http://news.amnesty.org/pages/BRAZIL>

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