



Survival International is a worldwide human rights organisation supporting the rights of threatened tribal peoples to their land and to a secure and dignified future. Survival International depends on its members to fund its work. Your support is vital if it is to be effective. Please join us and give what you can.

- Subscribing Member: £15 or US\$30
- Member: £8 or US\$20
- Concessionary Member (unwaged/student/pensioner): £3 or US\$10

All members receive regular newsletters.

Donation £500/\$1,000 £250/\$500 £100/\$200 £50/\$100 Other....

Please send: Urgent Action Bulletins regularly details about Local Groups

Name

Address

.....
.....

Survival International (all countries apart from the USA & France)
310 Edgware Road, London W2 1DY, UK. Tel: 01-723 5535 (Reg Charity No 267444)
Telex:933524 (quoting GEO2:SURVIVAL)

Survival International (USA) (in the USA only)
2121 Decatur Place NW, Washington DC 20008, USA. Tel: (202) 265 1077

Survival International (France) (in France only)
16 rue Littré, 75006 Paris, France. Tel: 45 49 40 18

Survival Interational (Espana) (in Spain only)
Apartado de Correos 28003
Madrid, Spain.

The Milan Group of Survival Internationals (in Italy only)
Via Ludovico de Breme 48
20156 Milan, Italy.

CEDI - P. I. B.
DATA 15/03/94
JDD ALD 00007

BRAZIL

AMAZON DAMS THREATEN INDIANS



Photo: Andre Torral

The Ava-Canoeiro Indians are threatened by a major dam. The agency constructing the dam claims that uncontacted bands, known to be in the flood zone, do not exist.

URGENT ACTION BULLETIN

UAB/BRZ/14/NOV/1988



**SURVIVAL
INTERNATIONAL**

for the rights of threatened tribal peoples

BRAZIL

AMAZON DAMS THREATEN INDIANS

THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT IS SEEKING FURTHER WORLD BANK FUNDING FOR A MASSIVE PROGRAMME OF DAM BUILDING IN THE AMAZON. THE DAMS WILL FORCE MANY INDIAN PEOPLES OFF THEIR LANDS. INDIANS PROTESTING AGAINST THIS ARE BEING TRIED AS FOREIGNERS FOR 'DENIGRATING THE IMAGE OF BRAZIL'. THE GOVERNMENT HAS DENIED THE VERY EXISTENCE OF OTHER INDIANS AS IT PLANS TO FLOOD THEIR LANDS.

Massive loans from the World Bank continue to fund destructive development projects in the Brazilian Amazon. Despite a chorus of criticism sustained over several years, the Bank is now considering putting in a further half a billion US dollars to promote the construction of massive hydropower schemes in the north of Brazil.

Dams on the Xingu: the Indians are 'foreigners'.

The largest of these schemes are planned for the Xingu river, where the developments threaten to disrupt the lives of some 1,400 Indians. In July 1988, two Kayapo Indians travelled to Washington to present their concerns about these dams to the World Bank and the US Congress. On their return to Brazil they found themselves, and the US anthropologist who had accompanied them, charged under Brazil's 'Law of Foreigners' for having 'denigrated the image of Brazil abroad.'

In October, the trial of one the Kayapo, Kube'i, caused a national uproar when he arrived in traditional dress at the court-house with 400 other Kayapo. The Kayapo were prevented from entering the court by the military police. The judge refused to allow Kube'i himself into the courtroom until the Kayapo leader 'dressed in shirt and pants' for he considered the leader's attire 'a sign of disrespect'. The judge did, however, uphold a decision to submit the two Kayapo leaders to psychological, anthropological and psychiatric tests 'to determine their level of acculturation and whether they were aware that they were committing a crime against Brazil.'

More dams on the Tocantins: the Indians 'do not exist'

Another series of dams planned for the Upper Tocantins river is further advanced. The dams threaten the almost uncontacted Ava-Canoeiro Indians, who live in a number of small bands of 5 to 10 persons dispersed in the mountains and forests between the Parana and Maranhao rivers. Following a long history of hostile encounters with whites, the Indians now live in a constant fear of contact, sometimes finding refuge in caves in the hills. Harassed by non-Indians and thus unable to settle and establish agriculture, the Indians survive, in part, by raiding local farms, principally to steal cattle. Reprisal raids by the whites are common. Apart from hunting parties organised by the local white population, the last known machine-gun attack on a group of Ava-Canoeiro was carried out by the military police in 1984.

The Government Indian agency, FUNAI, carried out a series of 'pacification' missions in the early 1980s and resettled two groups of Ava-Canoeiro in the area now to be flooded by one of the dams. But attempts to safeguard the other uncontacted groups have now ceased because funds for the work have dried up. The electrical agency, FURNAS, which is building the dams and has signed a contract with FUNAI to fund the Indian programme, says that the Indians no longer exist in the area. This is not true.

Funds delayed by protests

These are but two of more than a dozen dams that threaten Indians in various parts of Brazil. The proposed development of hydropower has come at a time when the Brazilian Government's commitment to the welfare of the Indians has reached a new low. The Government's Indian agency has become increasingly corrupt, conniving with ranchers and colonists in dispossessing the Indians and issuing illegal licences to

timber companies to log Indian lands. Meanwhile senior staff positions in the Indian agency have been filled by appointees from the National Security Council, further subordinating the Indians' rights to the demands of the Brazilian military.

For the past two years, Survival International, in collaboration with numerous other non-Governmental organisations within Brazil and abroad, has been pressing the World Bank to delay lending further money to promote these dams. Largely in response to this pressure, the Bank's second major loan of US\$ 500 million has been suspended for over eighteen months while the Brazilian Government was asked by the Bank to develop a plan for dealing with social and environmental impacts of the proposed dams. The plan that the Government has come up with is wholly inadequate, a fact admitted by World Bank staff. Despite this, the Bank's board of Executive Directors is being asked to vote on the loan in December.

* * * * ACTION * * * *

Recipients of this Urgent Action Bulletin are urged to send, in their own name (and including their address) a courteous air mail letter or post-card or telex to the World Bank as soon as possible. Please send Survival International a copy of any reply you may receive.

Barber Conable
President
The World Bank
1818 H Street NW
Washington DC 20433
USA

Telex: (023) 440098

Model letter
(this model letter is provided as a guide only)

Dear Mr Conable,

I am writing to express my great concern at the World Bank's proposed loan of US \$500 million to the Brazilian Power Sector.

The loan will contribute to many dams in the Amazon region that will flood the lands of Indian peoples. I am, in particular, concerned by the dams being developed in the Xingu and Tocantins basins. Indian protests against the dams on the Xingu have led to them being charged as 'foreigners' for 'denigrating the image of Brazil abroad'. Such action makes a mockery of the Brazilian Government's expressed commitment to improved public participation in development planning. Meanwhile, the electrical agency constructing the dams on the Upper Tocantins has ceased funding FUNAI's work with the Ava-Canoeiro on the grounds that the Indians do not exist.

The Brazilian Government has persistently failed, in the past, to comply with the conditions attached to World Bank loans and its present plan to deal with the social and environmental impact of dam building is inadequate. I understand that this fact has been admitted by World Bank staff.

I, therefore, strongly urge that this loan is further delayed until the Brazilian Government develops the institutional capacity to protect the Indians' rights. Until then further financing of dams in Amazonia can only result in the destruction of the Indian peoples and their ways of life.

I look forward to learning how you plan to deal with this matter.

Yours sincerely