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→ Jacques DE KORT  
WIP

Kan hij een kopie  
bezorgen aan

Claudia ANDUJAR?

Paul.

His Excellency  
José Sarney  
President of the Republic of Brazil  
Palacio do Planalto  
Praça dos Três Poderes  
70.000 Brasília, DF

Excellency,

We members of the European Parliament have recently been informed through the international press of the followings:

The situation of the 9.000 Yanomami Indians of Brazil has become one of life-and-death as a result of recent massive invasions of their territory by some 20.000 prospectors. According to the most recent news reports, the prospectors have already taken over the Serra Couco de Magalhães, and are moving onto the Serra de Surucucus (both in the Territory of Roraima); that is, the invasion has reached the heart of Yanomami territory. With this invasion, the Yanomami have been put, as several observers have declared, "on the verge of a genocide" for the majority of the Indians have had until now very little contact with the national society. Worse, the situation has gotten to the point where the government is unable to control it.

In the Territory of Roraima, there has been enormous pressure to leave areas open to prospecting within Yanomami territory. For the 9.000 Yanomami, many of whom are still isolated from contact, these happenings are incomprehensible.

On various occasions, the invasions of the Yanomami lands by gold miners have resulted in armed conflicts as, for example, on August 15 last year when a skirmish at one prospecting site resulted in the violent and particularly brutal deaths of 3 Yanomami.

Announcements in the press of the largest Eldorado in Brazil located in the Parima mountain range, the heart of Yanomami territory, merely fuel an already unsupportable climate. With airstrips located near mineral deposits, not even FUNAI's and other governmental presence is sufficient to stop an allout gold rush in the Yanomami area. Although efforts have been made to control the invasion, it seems difficult to do so. The prospectors freely land using the very airstrip at Paaplú, at Couco de Magalhães, which was enlarged as part of the Calha Norte Project (CNP) and is today a very good airstrip in the area, but which now has become the location of a miners' boom town. From there, the prospectors gain access to several gold mines nearby and continue to spread to Surucucus.

There are some 20.000 gold miners extracting, reports say, upward of 30 kilos of gold per day. Epidemic diseases, particularly flu with pulmonary complications, are increasing at a rapid rate among the Yanomami although there is no way of knowing the actual toll from diseases. Reports state that the prospectors' intention was to create a situation which would be impossible to resolve, and

It may be that they have done so for unless drastic measures are taken immediately - that is, the complete removal of the prospectors - the Yanomami face imminent physical and cultural destruction.

In the month of August of last year, the authorities took a drastic measure of ordering the Commission for the Creation of the Yanomami Park (CCPY) medical team to leave the Yanomami area indefinitely for security reasons. The medical and health assistance that the CCPY had provided to the Indians since 1981 was thus completely cut off. The same removal was extended to all researchers working in the area and to certain religious missions also providing health care.

In view of the gravity of the situation, aware of the massive and illegal penetration by prospectors in the Yanomami territory, with its imminent potential for violent conflicts and the outbreak of epidemic disease, we express our deep concern and ask for clarifications as to what the Brazilian authorities intend to do about these invasions, and the reasons for the removal of the CCPY health team from the Yanomami area. The CCPY is a Brazilian organization with a legal contract signed with FUNAI whose work is well-known; their removal appears incomprehensible in light of the generalized deterioration of the Yanomami situation. Finally, we urge your excellency to see that the demarcation of the Yanomami territory proceed, in spite of the invasions, and in such a way as to respect the lifestyle and culture of these people.

We thank you for your attention and look forward to learn how you plan to deal with the Yanomami question.

Yours sincerely,

Bugia Bjornig (MEP)

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