

Decree 1775 Update: Jobim Calls for Revision of Demarcation of Eight Indigenous Territories

Of the 83 Indigenous territories contested as a result of the controversial Decree 1775, Brazil's Minister of Justice, Nelson Jobim has targeted 8 for alterations and possible reductions. The Indigenous areas slated for alteration are: Kampa do Rio Envira (Acre); Raposa/Serra do Sol, (Roraima); Sete Cerros, (Mato Grosso do Sul), Krikati (Maranhão); Maxakali (Minas Gerais); Tapeba (Ceara); Apyterewa, and Bau (Para). There are now 90 days for FUNAI (the National Foundation for Indian Affairs) to study each of these individual cases and hand its recommendations to Jobim who will make the final decision.

Decree 1775, written by Jobim, was signed into law by Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso on January 8, 1996. The Decree allows private interests and state and local governments to appeal the demarcation of those Indigenous reserves not already demarcated. By the end of the April 8 contestation deadline, FUNAI had received over 500 appeals targeting 83 different Indian areas from miners, loggers, ranchers, and government officials. Jobim will now have a chance to prove his good intentions when saying that Decree 1775 was necessary to move on with the demarcation process. All but 8 territories have officially gone through the contestation process and can continue with their demarcation. Indigenous peoples and their Brazilian and international allies want to see the immediate demarcation of all other Indigenous territories. The process is now constitutional and funds are being made available from the World Bank's Pilot Program for the Amazon.



The Mano dance of the Bororo, who inhabit the heavily colonized southern portion of the state of Mato Grosso.

In Brazil, there are about 150,000 Indigenous peoples forming 215 distinct nations and speaking about 170 languages. Most inhabit 526 Indigenous areas nationwide that comprise a total area of 190 million acres – an area twice the size of California. There is also evidence of 50 other Indigenous groups that are still uncontacted and living in the depths of the rainforest. Most of these Indigenous lands, about 188 million acres, are located in the Amazon region of Brazil in the states of Acre, Alnapá, Amazonas, Pará, Mato Grosso, Maranhão, Rondônia, Roraima, and Tocantins. Considering that Brazil contains about 65% of the Amazon Basin and that 188 million acres of it belong to Indigenous peoples, the demarcation of Indigenous territories is not only imperative for securing Indigenous rights, but also a

very significant conservation strategy. However, 125 million acres of Indigenous lands still await final demarcation. 📧

Please write to Minister of Justice asking him to honor Article 231 of the Brazilian Constitution by ordering the immediate demarcation of all Indigenous territories and to guarantee that the rights of Brazilian Indigenous peoples are respected.

Dr. Nelson Jobim, Ministro da Justícia, Esplanado dos Ministérios, Bl. T, Brasília, DF - CEP: 70.064-900, Fax: (0115561) 224-2448; email: njobim@ax.apc.org

Adapted from a text of Beto Borges of the Rainforest Action Network. For more information contact RAN, 450 Sansome St., Suite 710, San Francisco, CA 94111; Tel (415)398-4404; Fax: (415)398-2732.