

Guaraní Community Uprooted

Their Homes Burnt to the Ground to Make Way for Tourist Resort!

(Misiones, Argentina) According to *AmerIndia - Boletín de las Comunidades Indígenas*, seven Guaraní families, including 17 children, were forced out of their homes, which were subsequently burned. This atrocity took place in the Port of Iguazú, in the northeastern province of Argentina, bordering on Brazil and Paraguay. Officials from the government's Land and Colonization Department joined police forces in uprooting the families and burning down their homes. The Guaraní families were then forced into a truck and abandoned in a barren, rocky area bordering a garbage dump, where they were forced to spend one of the coldest nights of the year. The violent eviction of the Guaraní families, none of whom held official title to their ancestral lands, came as a result of a contract between the Misiones provincial government and the Iguazú Company. The contract was for the sale of 500 hectares to the Iguazú Company (at a cost of \$400 million). The company is constructing a tourist complex on the land, which is adjacent to the world-famous Iguazú Falls.

People from various organizations expressed their outrage over the evictions and their solidarity with the Guaraní families. The Bishop of Misiones, Joaquín

Piera, and the Popular Ecumenical Action Branch in Misiones were among them. Representatives from many Indian organizations expressed support for their Guaraní brothers and sisters.

The leader of the Guaraní community, José Espindola, expressed "...great sorrow for the seventeen children who were exposed to the extremely low nighttime temperatures as a result of the eviction, as well as for the incredible lack of sensitivity demonstrated by the white men with respect to our culture and lifestyle."

For more information, or to subscribe to *AmerIndia*, you can write to them at:

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To contact the *Asociación de Pueblos Guaraní*, you can write to them at:

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Indian People of Roraima Issue Call for Help

(Brazil) The Macuxi and the Wauja of Roraima are threatened with extinction because the policies of FUNAI (*the Brazilian Bureau of Indian Affairs*) which encourage encroachment on the lands, lives, and properties of Indigenous peoples. Like the Wauja, leaders of the 15,000 surviving savannah Macuxi have for years formally complained about actions of illegal poachers on their lands. They have witnessed FUNAI effectively defending only those who usurp Macuxi and Wauja lands, lives, and property, and that FUNAI policies have precipitated another era of lawlessness in this region of Roraima.

Acts of violence have been committed on behalf of poachers and landowners who are sanctioned by complicitous FUNAI/Brazilian laws. These acts include assault, battery, and hundreds of murders. They have been committed against trade union leaders, competing peasants and/or poachers, as well as Indian people.

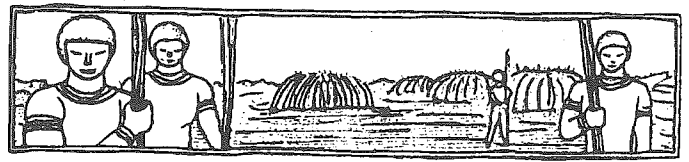
Two Macuxi Indians from the Jiboia maloca (communal house) of Santa Cruz, in the state of Roraima were killed on June 25, 1990. The two men, 19 year-old Mario Davis and 35 year-old Damiao Mendes, were allegedly murdered by employees of an influential landowner while they were out herding pigs. Their bodies were found on the banks of the Mau River, three

kilometers from their house. The *Conselho Indígena de Roraima (Indian Council of Roraima - CIR)* informed the public of the murders.

Earlier in April 1990, the CIR petitioned the federal police and state prosecutor to intervene in racist crimes against lives and properties of Indigenous peoples. They requested an impartial investigation of associated lawlessness involving Roraima's police and poachers and landlords. At present, they also demand: (1) that they undertake full and impartial investigation of the recent murders of Mendes and Davis; (2) that they bring the perpetrators to justice; (3) that they publicize all related decisions, findings, and actions in adjudication of these cases in Roraima.

Atamai, the principal chief of the Wauja Nation seeks support from international groups and individuals concerning the violation of their sovereignty and human rights, including religious rights through usurpation of their traditional lands, destruction of their homes and property, and thinly veiled threats upon their lives by foreign and domestic poachers acting in collusion with the Brazilian government. This very old land dispute between FUNAI and the Wauja concerns sacred and fertile agricultural land located in the southwestern

corner of Xingu National Park, south of Batovi and Ulupuene rivers. Atamai accuses FUNAI of the following: (1) the publication of maps which altered the boundary of unceded traditional Wauja lands without the prior consent of the Wauja Nation; (2) failure to rectify initial complaints voiced by Atamai before FUNAI concerning these errors; (3) through omission (e.g., failure to protect rights of the Wauja) and/or commission via these documents, aiding and abetting subsequent foreign and domestic poachers on Wauja lands; (4) subsequent use of indirect threats on Wauja life and property in its attempt to silence Wauja protests concerning land poachers and FUNAI's failure to adjudicate Wauja complaints about land rights; and (5) unlawfully defending the usurpation of Wauja lands which the agency now claims belong to non-Indians under Brazilian law. Atamai states that it is urgent that we now pressure the Brazilian government to ethically adjudicate the Wauja situation before lives are lost on both sides. This situation is critical since racist poachers recently destroyed three Wauja houses containing not easily replaceable tools and medical supplies (late summer, 1990).



President Postures Under International Pressure

Bombing of Airstrips is Meaningless

My people, the Yanomami, are dying. When they take the minerals from under the earth, whites do not realize that they are spreading poison throughout the world, and that the world will come to an end, will die. - Davi Yanomami

(Brazil) With these words, Yanomami leader Davi Kopenawa describes the tragedy of his people. In the past three years a goldrush has brought 45,000 miners to the state of Roraima, home of the Yanomami Tribe (See SAIIC Newsletter, Vol. 5, Nos. 2 & 3). The mining operations have severely damaged the environment. Mercury residues from the mining operations poison the rivers, killing fish and destroying Yanomami water supplies. Wildlife, essential to the Yanomami diet, is scared away by noise and is decimated by the miners. But most disruptive of all, the new immigrants have brought with them many diseases for which the Yanomami have no immunity. As a result, of the 9,000 Yanomami in the region, as many as 15% have died so far. At this rate, all Yanomami will have disappeared in the next ten years.

Last January the Brazilian Government ordered the eviction of the miners, but no real enforcement followed. An estimated 8000 miners remain on Yanomami lands, and more have been returning. Pressured by an international outcry, President Fernando Collor de Mello ordered the bombing of all illegal landing strips, estimated to be about 100, built by the miners, so as to prevent their returning.

Since the Presidential decree, only 14 airstrips have been destroyed. Heavy rains have brought any further government operations to a halt while the garimpeiros (gold prospectors) are already recovering the few damaged airstrips. The bad faith of the government and its posturing to hold off criticism are evident by President Collor de Mello's refusal to repeal former President Sarney's decree that permits miners to enter the 35,000 square miles of Yanomami territory, establishing "three garimpeiro reserves." The decrees are uncon-

How You Can Help

Send letters, Faxes, telegrams, telexes 1) urging that a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation be opened into the killings of Damiao Mendes and Mario Davis, that the results be made public, and that those found responsible be brought to justice; 2) urging that a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation be made of FUNAI concerning the above five accusations, and that justice is carried out in regards to Wauja land claims; 3) respectfully reminding the authorities of their duties to offer effective protection through judicial or other means to individuals and/or groups who are in danger of extrajudicial executions, including those who receive death threats.

Send your appeals to:

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