

Our ref: 162/HAY/2015

Boa Vista, Roraima
30 November 2015

HE Ms. Dilma Rousseff
President of the Federative Republic of Brazil

HE Ms. Suely Campos
Governor of the State of Roraima

Subject: Decision by the President of the Republic may increase the risk of mining in the Yanomami Indigenous Land

In recent years Brazil has reduced deforestation and protected large areas of its forests; but now deforestation rates are increasing again, laws which protect us are being revoked and large-scale economic and infrastructure projects are advancing over Amazonia and its peoples. And at precisely the same moment that Brazil has suffered the worst environmental disaster in its history, caused by mining activities, the federal government is attempting to create the conditions that will enable the mining industry to encroach on one of the best conserved areas of the Amazon Forest.

The threat involves the transfer of federal lands to the state of Roraima, in accordance with Decree 6754/2009 which provides a degree of protection against the advance of mining activity. However the government now intends to alter this decree and remove this protection, opening the door to large mining companies along the course of our largest river, right along the boundary of the Yanomami Indigenous Land.

The federal government well knows that this area is under great pressure from gold mining and for this reason, in Decree 6754/2009, determined that the area should be declared an Ecological Station, a type of conservation area in which mining is not permitted under any circumstances (Processo 02001.004366/2005-96/ICMbio). But now the government wants to turn the area into a State Forest, a weaker form of conservation area where in some cases mining is now permitted and, once the new Mining Code about to be approved in the National Congress enters into force, where all types of mining will be possible.

If the government alters Decree 6754/2009 and permits the activities of large mining companies in this area, the result will be severe impacts on the forest and on our people. This measure will also serve to encourage illegal prospecting as it would facilitate the "laundering" of gold extracted by the thousands of prospectors operating in the Yanomami Indigenous Land, resurrecting the situation which provoked the near genocide of our people in the 1980s.

At this moment when Brazil and the world are focussed on the search for solutions to protect the climate, water, and forests and their peoples, it makes no

sense for Brazil to support activities that may result in the destruction of the natural resources of the Yanomami Indigenous Land.

For this reason we request that Your Excellency ensure compliance with Decree 6754/2009 and maintain the Yanomami Indigenous Land free from deforestation and the destruction caused by large mining companies.

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