

Indian Law Resource Center

Indigenous Peoples' Rights

<https://indianlaw.org/brazil/urgent-call-support-against-threat-massacre-miners>

Campaign and Advocacy

What can you do?

Donate to frontline defenders of indigenous, environmental, and human rights like [COIAB](#) and [APIB](#).

Leaders from COIAB, APIB, the Munduruku Wakoborn Womens Association, and others representing the Yanomami, Munduruku, and Guajajara will be presenting the issues before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) on July 1st at 11:00 a.m. EST. You can watch the hearing [here](#).

Illegal miners are increasingly threatening [another](#) massacre of indigenous peoples in the Brazilian Amazon. In recent weeks, miners have [escalated their attacks](#) by burning homes, making credible threats against leaders, and shooting at communities, which has tragically resulted in the deaths of two children. The Bolsonaro administration has only exacerbated the situation: federal security forces legally required to remove the miners were withdrawn after miners turned their attacks on police, and President Bolsonaro has encouraged the miners by openly [voicing support for them](#) and [racist contempt for indigenous peoples](#). Bolsonaro favors short-sighted, destructive, and [economically inefficient](#) agricultural and extractive use of the Amazon, and has [signed](#) over fifty resolutions, ordinances, decrees, and other measures that weaken existing environmental regulations.

On March 25th, illegal miners broke into and [vandalized the headquarters](#) of the Munduruku Wakoborn Association of Indigenous Women, intending to threaten and intimidate women fighting to protect Munduruku lands against invaders. The vandals stole documents and destroyed equipment. Miners also [increase violence against indigenous women](#) in the Brazilian Amazon, including sexual violence, threats, and coerced or forced prostitution.

On May 10th, miners entered a Yanomami village by boat and [opened fire](#) in a thirty-minute shootout. Two children, ages 1 and 5, were [found dead](#) after having fled from the attack. Many children ran into the woods to escape the gunfire, and the two boys fell into the river without others noticing. Their community is mourning and unable to sleep due to the miners continued attacks and threats.

On May 26th, miners blocked a federal police operation by closing off entries to a municipality in the Munduruku Indigenous Territory and raiding a police base in Par. Hours later, miners raided a Munduruku village and [set several houses on fire](#), including one that belonged to a prominent indigenous activist and mining critic, Maria Leusa Munduruku. Munduruku leaders released a [letter](#) expressing indignation at the withdrawal of security forces and demanded lasting, effective solutions. Since the miners attacks, the Special Secretariat for Indigenous Health (Sesai) [removed its workers](#) from the areas, leaving roughly 1,200 people from 11 villages without medical attention. Village leaders report that many children have developed pneumonia-like symptoms after spending the night in forest to escape the violent shootout on May 10th.

Currently, there are [several bills](#) before the Brazilian Congress that would open up indigenous territories to mining and cause mass deforestation. The broad governmental support for these bills provide clear signals to illegal miners that their actions will go unpunished. This week, a group of 70 indigenous leaders are in the state capital to [fight against anti-indigenous proposals](#) in Congress.

All this comes at a time when the Amazon is reaching an imminent tipping point. With 3 to 10 percent more deforestation, most of the forest may [irreversibly become savannah](#). This would cause a staggering [loss of biodiversity](#), destroy the homelands of the peoples who inhabit the Amazon, and catastrophically [escalate other climate crises](#). [Indigenous peoples are the best defenders of their territories](#), and extractivists and their political allies like Bolsonaro are the greatest threats.

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Help Support and Protect Indigenous Rights.

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