



# Kayapó Declaration Against Mining

**We are against PL 191/2020 bill, against goldmining and any extractive activities in our territories**

Support Mēbêngôkre-Kayapó people in it's struggle to protect nature

We, some 6,200 indigenous people of the Mēbêngôkre - Kayapó people from 56 communities of the Baú, Capoto / Jarina, Kayapó, Las Casas and Menkragnoti Indigenous Territories, with our indigenous organizations the Associação Floresta Protegida, the Instituto Kabu and the Instituto Raoni wish to clarify that we do not agree with individual statements made by Kayapó relatives in favor of goldmining.

**We wish to make it very clear that we are against goldmining and any predatory activity in our territories!**

We repudiate the federal government's encouragement of invasion of our territories; either by using rhetoric that emboldens organized crime, or by weakening the federal agencies responsible for protecting indigenous territories and combating illegal predatory activities. Although the great majority of Kayapó people are against goldmining in our territory, increasing pressure by goldminers offering quick and easy money has seduced a few leaders. We do not allow these individuals to speak on behalf of the Kayapó people; especially since many families in their own communities do not support this rapacious activity which benefits only a few in the short term.

How could we be in favor of such an activity that profoundly negatively impacts our environment, society and communities? How could we deprive our children and grandchildren of a vital territory that supports our livelihoods, autonomy, customs and traditions, as guaranteed by the Federal Constitution? Our territories provide us with almost everything we need to live well. We harvest most of our food from the forest through hunting and fishing, collecting fruits and nuts and also from our gardens. It from our forests and cerrado (savannas) that our shamans collect the multitude of products that we use in our traditional medicine to treat prevent and prevent illnesses.

It is this traditional knowledge that is reducing the impact of the Covid-19 virus on our communities. It is also from our forests and savannas that we gather materials to build our homes and to make utensils, handicrafts and the ornaments we use in our traditional rituals. It is in our forests and rivers where we hunt and fish to prepare for our ceremonies; where we collect Brazil nut, cumaru nut, açai, and a multitude of other foods and materials; where our children play and learn from their parents and elders how to live and be Mëbêngôkre. Over the course of seven decades since contact with the outside world and more recent consolidation of frontier society around our territories,

we Mēbêngôkre - Kayapó indigenous people have adopted certain industrially manufactured products that help us in our daily lives; such as clothing, communications and transportation equipment and tools. Today, therefore, we need sources of cash to buy these essential items. But we have also come to understand that there are two very different paths to money. One path is fast, easy money that leads inevitably, as we have witnessed, to destruction of our territories and natural resources, infighting, poisoning of our rivers, degradation of our society and condemnation of present and future generations to lives of poverty and dependence on the Kuben (non-indigenous people).

This is the path proffered by goldmining, predatory fishing and logging! Our other choice is to use the forest in the way our ancestors taught us which relies on territorial protection and empowerment of our people. This is the path to the future we chose. We are working hard to build our Kayapo owned enterprises of sustainably harvested non-timber forest products, handicrafts, and community-based tourism. We are demonstrating that we do not need to destroy our forests and rivers; nor sell our future, in order to gain access to the manufactured goods we have come to need. We, indigenous and traditional peoples of the Amazon, protect nature and will continue to do so.

Protecting our territories is a practice handed down by our ancestors. By protecting forest, we take care of what Kuben calls “biodiversity”. And biodiversity also takes care of us, guaranteeing our livelihoods and the vitality of our cultures. We know that when we take care of our territory, it is not just our communities that benefit from intact forests and rivers. Without our forests, regional climate and rainfall will change, affecting food production and the lives of thousands of people, indigenous and non-indigenous. The rivers that are born or pass through our territories flow to other regions and if we do not take care of them, many other people will also be harmed.

We appeal to all Brazilians and international society to support our struggle to protect our forest and demand that the government respect the Federal Constitution and our right to use our territories according to our customs; as well as the right of all people to a ecologically balanced environment. **We stand against goldmining in our territories and against PL 191/2020!**