WILPF RESOLUTION
33rd Congress
Brisbane, Australia & online
24 July 2022

Situation of Indigenous and Environmental Defenders in Brazil

We, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, on the occasion of our 33rd International Congress,

Having observed with deep concern the dismantling of socio-environmental public policies and agencies by the Brazilian Government of Jair Bolsonaro, in addition to the escalation of violence, threats and persecutions and other human rights violations of Indigenous Peoples, environmental human rights defenders and other human rights defenders;

Recognising that Indigenous women are at the forefront in protecting Indigenous Peoples’ rights to their lands, territories and natural resources and that they face additional discrimination based on their identity as Indigenous people and as women, which is further exacerbated when these identities intersect with other characteristics, including age or disability;

Deploring the murders of Brazilian expert on Indigenous Peoples Bruno da Cunha Araújo Pereira and British journalist Dom Phillips, found dead on 15 June 2022 in the Javari Valley Region. Their murders are in many ways a consequence of the Bolsonaro government’s policy of dismantling the system of protection for Indigenous communities enshrined in Brazil’s Constitution as well as of weakening and, in practice dismantling, government agencies, such as FUNAI, the Brazilian national agency mandated to oversee Indigenous affairs, and IBAMA, Brazil’s main environmental enforcement body. As a result of this government’s policy, FUNAI has been taking a more hands-off approach towards protecting Indigenous land and people. After being removed from his post as coordinator of FUNAI’s Department for Isolated and Recently Contacted Indigenous peoples, Bruno Pereira had decided to take unpaid leave to fulfil the request of the Indigenous organisation UNIVAJA and undertake the checking that FUNAI no longer did, and thus, to continue to support them in their struggle to ensure implementation of the Brazilian Constitution;

Deploring also the armed aggression on 24 June 2022 in Mato Grosso do Sul against two communities of the Indigenous Peoples Kaiowa and Guaraní by private security officers in Kurupi/Santiago Kue (Navirai) and by the Polícia Militar (military police) in Guapo’y Mi Tujuri (Amambai), which caused two...
deaths (including that of a young woman) and serious injuries to several members of the communities. This case shows an illegal decision by the Government of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul that by not deliberately recognizing the initiative of Indigenous Peoples as a land conflict, caused the military police to intervene in an extremely violent way, in a situation that required the intervention of the Federal Justice;

Recalling the complaints made by associations and political bodies such as The Brazilian Anthropology Association (ABA), Amnesty International, Reporters Without Borders, Survival International, Amazon Watch, Human Rights Watch on 16 June 2022; the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights on 11 and 18 June; the ABA, ANPOCS, SBPC, ABPC, Sociedade Brasileira de Sociologia on 28 June; the resolution 2022/2752(RSP) of the European Parliament on “the situation of indigenous and environmental defenders in Brazil, including the killing of Dom Philips and Bruno Pereira” of 7 July 2022;

Having regard to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights; the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (N°169), and the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, to which Brazil is a state party; the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders; the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters (Escazú Agreement), which Brazil has not yet ratified;

Our organisation:

• Calls on the Brazilian authorities to uphold Brazil’s obligations to respect, protect and fulfil Indigenous Peoples’ rights, including those arising from international and regional human rights treaties to which is a state party, and to implement recommendations received from the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and other human rights mechanisms;
• Condemns the murders of Bruno Pereira, Dom Phillips and the Indigenous people in Guapo’y Mi Tujury (Amambai), which took place in June 2022, and all other crimes and human rights violations and abuses committed against Indigenous Peoples, and defenders, individuals and organisations that support them;
• Demands that the Brazilian authorities conduct an exhaustive, impartial and independent investigation into the murders of Bruno Pereira, Dom Phillips and the members of the Indigenous community in Guapo’y Mi Tujury (Amambai), as well as into all violations and crimes committed against Indigenous Peoples and defenders, individuals and organisations that support them, and ensure that those responsible be held accountable;
• Urges the Brazilian government to recognise and protect the traditional lands of Indigenous Peoples, including by resuming the demarcation of Indigenous territories in compliance with
the Brazilian Constitution (Art. 231) and protecting those territories from illegal land seizures; by reinstating and strengthening the capacities of FUNAI and IBAMA to ensure the effective enforcement of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and of environmental law, in line with Brazil’s obligations under international law; and by cancelling all mining requests around Indigenous lands registered with the National Mining Agency (ANM);

- Condemns the recurrent militarised responses, violence and excessive use of force against Indigenous Peoples, including in Amambai on 24 June 2022, and urges the authorities to ensure that these and all allegations of human rights violations by security forces be promptly and thoroughly investigated by an independent body capable of prosecuting perpetrators;
- Urges the Brazilian authorities not to resort to security forces when addressing land conflicts with Indigenous Peoples and to prioritise culturally appropriate mediation mechanisms;
- Urges the Brazilian authorities to take immediate action to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of Indigenous Peoples and those supporting them, to put in place effective, comprehensive and gender-responsive protection measures for environmental defenders and other human rights defenders as well as for journalists who report on this issue, and to ensure effective access to justice and remedy;
- Urges Brazil to ratify the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters (Escazú Agreement).