

45th session of the Human Rights Council

Annual half-day panel discussion on the rights of indigenous peoples

Statement by Conectas Direitos Humanos

Delivered by Mr Gustavo Huppes

Madam President,

This statement is in partnership with the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB).

The indigenous peoples of Brazil are at the forefront of defense and protection of the environment. They are also at the forefront of attacks by the Brazilian government. Attacks carried out through hate speech and administrative measures aimed at dismantling existing protection mechanisms and policies. In addition, we face a disastrous management of the Covid-19 pandemic and the government's complete omission in relation to the criminal fires that engulf the country and destroy our main biomes.

Aggressive speeches by Brazilian authorities encourage violence against indigenous peoples and defenders. Brazil is already one of the most dangerous countries in the world for indigenous human rights defenders. We must remember that it is precisely indigenous peoples who most protect the environment in our country.

Last week, the Minister of the Institutional Security Office, General Augusto Heleno, falsely accused APIB and its leaders of "offence against the State" for the organization's tireless fight in defense of the environment and the rights of indigenous peoples in Brazil. The Minister used his position to make false accusations and intimidate the organization's leadership, putting them at risk. We would like to express our dismay and repudiate this attack and call on the international community to do the same as well as to repudiate all anti-democratic acts of the Brazilian government that aim to intimidate and restrict the rights of indigenous peoples and indigenous human rights defenders.

Brazil is on fire and the Brazilian authorities should be concerned not with attacking defenders, but with actions aimed at tackling the environmental crisis, such as strengthening environmental inspection bodies that are being dismantled by the Bolsonaro administration.

Thank you.