

BASTA! Note about the murder of a leader of the indigenous Wajãpi people of Amapá by gold miners and the rise in violence against indigenous peoples in Brazil

The Brazilian Anthropology Association (ABA) is abhorred and deeply concerned by news of the murder of a leader of the indigenous Wajãpi people of Amapá by gold miners on 22 July. Chief Emyra Wajãpi was killed near his village and thus within the Wajãpi Indigenous Reserve. On Sunday 28 July the Federal Police entered the Indigenous territory after a request by FUNAI (The National Indian Foundation) and the Wajãpi to arrest gold miners in their territory, according to the Wajãpi, who are taking refuge at a remote location. We refer readers to the informational letter published by the Council of Wajãpi Villages (Apina) on 28 July (<https://www.facebook.com/apina.conselho/>), which explains the chronology of events and the crime, and reports on the tense situation this indigenous people is currently experiencing.

We are stunned by what is only the most recent in a series of human rights violations within the Wajãpi territory, recognizing that other indigenous reserves are also threatened and are reliving the nightmare of invasions by gold miners. It is important to emphasize that ABA, through its Indigenous Affairs Commission, and countless indigenous and indigenist organizations, have for months been warning the public in general, and in particular the federal government (which is directly responsible for the safety of indigenous populations within Brazil), about the rise of threats and violence committed daily against indigenous peoples throughout the country. ABA is clearly aware that the indigenous question in Brazil is a complex and multifaceted issue and that various factors are thus involved in the countless acts of violence practiced against indigenous peoples in 2019 alone.

It is impossible to separate this rise in violence from declarations by members of the current federal government, in particular the president of the republic, who unfortunately has often used unacceptable irony and sarcasm to disparage both indigenous peoples and those who work to defend their rights. The evident result of this prejudiced and inappropriate narrative

of government authorities has fueled criminal acts against these peoples and their territories by segments of Brazilian society who, in the accurate statement by former FUNAI President General Franklimberg Ribeiro de Freitas, “drool hate towards the indigenous”.

The Brazilian Anthropology Association demands a rigorous investigation of the crime against Chief Emyra Wajãpi and the arrest of his assassins. This human rights violation requires urgent and decisive action by the Brazilian state, before similar tragedies are repeated. With equal vehemence, ABA also declares the need to end the disparaging and at times slanderous declarations by government authorities against the indigenous peoples and all those not in agreement with the government’s views and interests.

Brasília, 26 July 2019.

Brazilian Anthropology Association (ABA) and its Indigenous Affairs Commission