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AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

August 14, 1996

Dr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso  
 Presidente da República  
 Palácio do Planalto  
 Brasília, DF  
 Brazil

Dear Mr. President,

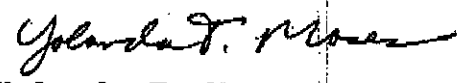
As President of the American Anthropological Association, I am writing to express our deepest concern about the failure of the Brazilian government to take action against the new invasion of Yanomami reserve by over 3,000 gold miners. Reportedly, the reinvasion has already led to a massive new outbreak of malaria that threatens to wipe out the gains of all the work of medical aid groups since the reserve was approved by President Collor. Violence resulting from the arming of Indians by miners has already resulted in at least three Yanomami deaths. Much new environmental damage, including pollution of rivers by mercury, has been done. All of this damage has been the direct result of the government's suspension of Operation Free Forest (Operação Selva Livre), which had effectively kept miners out of the Yanomami area, last March 6. Miners began constructing new illegal airstrips insides the reserve immediately afterward, and at least 35 are now in full operation. Ever since March, responding to the demands of indigenous leaders, indigenous support organizations in Brazil and abroad, and Brazilian Congressional Deputies, Minister of Justice Jobim had repeatedly promised that the government was about to renew Operation Selva Livre. In June, he told a Congressional Committee that nearly \$6,000,000 dollars had been budgeted for the purpose. Yet the most recent information from Brazil is that although the spending of this appropriation was approved by the Cabinet, release of the funds was blocked by the Office of the President.

Mr. President, it is imperative that you approve the release of the funds already appropriated for the renewal of Operation Selva Livre without further delay, and order the immediate expulsion of the invading miners and the destruction of their airstrips. To allow the new invasions of the Yanomami reserve to continue with impunity makes a mockery of the existence of the reserve, and the constitutional guarantees of the rights of the Yanomami to their traditional territory that the reserve purports

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to institutionalize and protect.

I take this opportunity, Mr. President, to express to you my highest esteem and respect,



Yolanda T. Moses, PhD  
President

cc: Exmo. Sr. Nelson Jobim, Ministro de Justiça  
Exmo. Sr. Julio Gaiger, Presidente da FUNAI

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL  
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Dr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso  
Presidente da República  
Palácio do Planalto  
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Your Excellency,

As President of the American Anthropological Association, I write to urge you to enforce the Constitutional rights of indigenous communities living on their traditional lands now held under federal trust in eastern Amazonia and Pre-Amazonia in the states of Pará and Maranhão. I refer specifically to the following reserves: Alto Guamá (Tembé Indians), Alto Turiaçu (Urubu-Kaapor, Tembé, Timbira, and Guajá Indians), Awá (Guajá Indians), and Carú (Guajá Indians). The situation of the demarcated and ratified (homologadas) Indian reserves in these regions has reached a critical stage of environmental destruction and societal conflict. Loggers, ranchers, miners, and landless squatters (posseiros) have progressively invaded these reserves since the late 1980s, apparently with the complicity of state and local officials. Much violence, deforestation, and other sorts of habitat destruction have resulted from these invasions.

The most recent assault on the integrity of these reserves that has come to our attention concerns the violent taking of 77 hostages and three FUNAI agents by about 800 illegal squatters inside the Reserva Indígena Alto Guamá in the state of Pará on 30 and 31 May, 1996. The hostages were late released by negotiations on 31 May. Some hostages reported that their captors threatened them with death on numerous occasions during their captivity. While no one was killed in this instance, violent deaths have already been reported from similar invasions in the neighboring reserve of Alto Turiaçu.

These invasions have been extensively documented in the Brazilian press, and been the subject of detailed reports by a large number of nongovernmental organizations, including Survival International, Conselho Indigenista Missionário, Instituto Socioambiental, Comissão Pro-Índio de São Paulo, Amanaka'a, Rainforest Alliance, and Amnesty International, as well as by the AAA's Committee for Human Rights. They have been denounced in testimony before the United States House of Representatives Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs on two occasions (in 1993 and 1994), before the European Economic Community, in the European Parliament, in the House of Commons of the United

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Kingdom, at the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, and in numerous other official and unofficial venues and milieux in Brazil and abroad, among the most recent being the University of Texas Law School in March, 1996, where the Federal Attorney General of Brazil, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Brazil, and the Brazilian Minister of Justice were also present. All of this substantial and meticulous documentation attests that time is rapidly running out for effective action to prevent more deaths, the expansion of lawless terror, the spread of habitat destruction, and the despoliation of the federal patrimony in this region. The federal judiciary, federal parliament, and municipal and state governments have failed to take action to stop these abuses. Only the executive power of the President, as implemented by the federal police and/or the military, now has any chance of ending the illegal invasions of these lands by non Indians and bringing to justice those responsible.

In the name of my colleagues of the AAA, I urge you to take the action within your power to uphold the integrity of the Brazilian Constitution and defend the lives of the Indian peoples of these reserves. I take this opportunity to assure Your Excellency of my great esteem and respect,

*Yolanda T. Moses*  
 Yolanda T. Moses, PhD  
 President

cc: Exmo. Sr. Nelson Jobim, Ministro de Justiça  
 Exmo. Sr. Julio Gaiger, Presidente da FUNAI