Indigenous Peoples Day at COP30: Brazil Announces 10 Demarcations, and Leaves Dozens of Indigenous Lands Waiting for Justice

Brasília, November 17th – The announcement by the Brazilian government of the demarcation of ten Indigenous lands during COP30 represents a necessary but insufficient step given the scale of the challenge and the expectations created by the government itself. While the act signals that the issue remains on the agenda, the limited number of demarcations reveals a lack of ambition and political will in the face of the large backlog of Indigenous lands awaiting signature by President Lula and Justice Minister Ricardo Lewandowski.

All Indigenous lands ready for recognition should have been signed during this COP — a symbolic moment in which Brazil seeks to reaffirm its role as a global leader on the climate agenda. But many still have not been signed, and the delay in advancing full demarcation of these areas contradicts the government's stated environmental commitment in international forums.

The demarcation and protection of Indigenous Lands are constitutional obligations of the Brazilian state and fundamental instruments for mitigating the climate emergency, delivering historical justice to Indigenous Peoples, and fulfilling one of President Lula's campaign promises. Each demarcation represents not only the guarantee of rights but also a concrete barrier against deforestation and emissions that threaten the planet's climate future. In the context of COP, these demarcations demonstrate to other countries that nature-based solutions are a vital part of the global response to climate change.

Mauricio Guetta, Director of Law and Public Policy at Avaaz, says: *"The announcement of ten demarcations is a step in the right direction and should be celebrated, but is still far short of what is necessary, given the large number of lands ready for government approval. The climate leadership the world expects from Brazil requires political courage -- yet it continues to shirk its responsibility to deliver the main measure for protecting forests and ensuring justice for their peoples. It is clear the necessary determination is still lacking. Each undemarcated land is a broken promise, an injustice to Indigenous communities, a territory vulnerable to deforestation, and a setback in the global climate struggle*."

Currently, there are at least 107 Indigenous lands ready to move forward in the demarcation process—70 awaiting presidential ratification by Lula and another 37 awaiting declaration by Justice Minister Ricardo Lewandowski. These final steps are what truly guarantee legal security for the territories, historical justice for their peoples, and the definitive protection of forests.

The demarcation of Indigenous lands has strong public backing, precisely because of its environmental benefits. A public opinion poll released on November 4 by the Quaest Institute in partnership with the organisation More in Common revealed that an overwhelming majority of Brazilians across all political spectrums, support the demarcation of Indigenous lands as a

climate solution: 92% of progressives and 69% of conservatives agree with the measure. Moreover, an Avaaz global petition has already gathered more than 1 million signatures calling on Lula to announce new demarcations before or during COP30.

What are Indigenous land demarcations and why do they matter for COP30 and the world?

Indigenous land demarcations in Brazil are the legal recognition and protection of ancestral territories, essential for the cultural survival and sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples and for preserving the planet's ecological and climate balance. Research shows that Indigenous-managed areas are the most effective barriers against deforestation and carbon emissions in the Amazon, safeguarding biodiversity and storing vast amounts of CO_2. President Lula's commitment to resume and expand these demarcations is therefore not just a domestic policy—it is a test of Brazil's global climate leadership. As host of COP30, Brazil has the chance to transform its climate discourse into implementation actions, by advancing Indigenous land rights and protecting the Amazon. Such a move would not only strengthen Brazil's credibility at COP30 but also inspire other nations to adopt more just and nature-based climate solutions, reaffirming that Indigenous land demarcation is both a moral and environmental necessity and a cornerstone of any genuine global effort to combat climate change.

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