

Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
SW1A 2AA London



17 October 2007

Dear Prime Minister,

I, Davi Kopenawa Yanomami, spokesman for the Yanomami tribe in Brazil, have journeyed a long way to come here and to ask you to sign the international law on tribal peoples, ILO Convention 169.

My Yanomami people are suffering and our future is threatened. Our land is being invaded by goldminers who pollute the rivers and bring in diseases. Yanomami are starting to die. Now our parliament is debating a bill which could open up our lands to large scale mining.

We are very, very worried about this and think you can help. This international law protects us, but needs more support. Our own country has signed it, but we are very unhappy that other countries, like yours, have not. The more countries that sign it, the more strength it will have in international law, and the more we can rely on it to protect our lands and our people.

I have heard that your government does not want to sign the convention because you have no indigenous people here in this country. But British businesses and projects funded by your government can still cause problems for indigenous peoples like us. If you sign this law, they will have to respect it.

It is very important for the future of the Yanomami and all indigenous peoples around the world, that your government ratifies ILO 169. I appeal to you as the big chief of this country to support the millions of indigenous people like us around the world by signing the convention, which is the only international law which recognises our rights. We, the Yanomami, are a people of the rainforest. We have always lived there and our shamans have always watched over the forest. We the indigenous peoples and you the white people have to work together for the future of our forest and our planet. Without our land we cannot survive.

Yours sincerely,

Davi Kopenawa Yanomami