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Loures, Rosamaria

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# The Karodaybi Government and its Invincible Warriors: the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ Movement versus large construction projects in the Amazon

*Rosamaria Loures<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Programa de Pós-Graduação em Recursos Naturais da Amazônia,  
Universidade Federal do Oeste do Pará, Santarém/PA, Brasil

## Abstract

In this article we analyze the context of a territorial dispute in the Brazilian Amazon from the perspective of the resistance strategies of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ Movement in relation to the development model of the Brazilian state. The objective is to understand the rise and action of the Ipereğ Ayũ Movement, its particularities and the ways that it established itself and acts. The Movement is seen as a complex process of cultural recreation, inspired by reviving elements of Munduruku cosmology and traditions, re-elaborated to a current historic context that presents new dangers and threats, but that also creates new uses and meanings. To a large degree, the Munduruku resistance presented here confronts the nation building projects that the dominant classes have for Brazil. The government plans contemplate the Tapajós River as a source of energy resources and as a route for the shipment of commodities through the construction of a series of hydroelectric dams and other large associated projects. On the other hand, the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ movement conceives of the Tapajós River in a particular form, considering the resources provided by the river and places in the cosmology of the people. The movement uses a variety of strategies to confront the model imposed by the federal government.

**Keywords:** Munduruku; Ipereğ Ayũ movement; Tapajós hydroelectric complex; resistance; territorial conflict.

# O Governo Karodaybi e seus guerreiros invencíveis:

## Grandes Projetos na Amazônia versus o Movimento Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ

### Resumo

Analisamos nesse artigo, o contexto de disputa territorial na Amazônia brasileira sob a ótica das estratégias de resistência do movimento Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ frente ao modelo de desenvolvimento estatal. Trata-se de compreender o surgimento e a atuação do movimento Ipereğ Ayũ, com as suas particularidades e modos como se constitui e age, como um complexo processo de recriação cultural, inspirado numa retomada de elementos da cosmologia e das tradições Munduruku, mas que é reelaborado com vistas a um contexto histórico presente, que implica em novos perigos e ameaças, mas que também lhe propicia novos usos e significados. A resistência Munduruku, aqui apresentada, em boa medida, vai de encontro aos projetos de nação que as classes dominantes constroem para o país. Os planos governamentais concebem o rio Tapajós como fonte de recursos energéticos e como rota de escoamento de commodities com a pretensão de construção de uma série de usinas hidrelétricas e outros grandes empreendimentos associados. Por outro lado, o movimento Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ, concebe o rio Tapajós de modo peculiar, desde os recursos oferecidos pelo rio até lugares na cosmologia do povo e apostam em uma pluralidade de estratégias frente a esse modelo imposto pelo governo federal.

**Palavras-chave:** Munduruku; movimento Ipereğ Ayũ; complexo hidrelétrico do Tapajós; resistência; conflito territorial.

# The Karodaybi Government and its Invincible Warriors: the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ Movement versus large construction projects in the Amazon

*Rosamaria Loures*

## **Brief Context: Expansion fronts in the Amazon and the Tapajós Hydroelectric Project**

Since the beginning of Brazil's military government in 1964, official discourse focused on the integration of the Brazilian Amazon to the world economy. In the 1970's, there was an intensification of what Oliveira (1991) called the invasion of international and Brazilian capital in the Amazon. This form of development was considered equivalent to economic progress and growth and was supported by the technical-scientific apparatus to exploit natural resources and undertake large construction projects in the region.

Oliveira affirmed that the speed that the Amazon's natural resources were plundered – a strategy legitimated by government agreements and plans – left the local population with only the burden of these development projects (1991). It is important to emphasize that, as Little explains (1991), the currently planned megaprojects differ from other movements of expansion of capitalist frontiers because of the “geographic reach of their impacts, their magnitude and the speed with which they are being realized” (2013, p.58).

Martins, referring to large projects proposed and implemented by the federal government in the Amazon argues that:

It is not that they offer nothing to the lives of these populations [indigenous, peasants, [local indigenous and peasant populations], but that they take from them what is vital for their survival, not only economic: land and territory, but means for material, social, cultural and political existence. It is as if they did not exist, or if they exist, had no right to the recognition of their humanity (Martins, 1991, p.16).

The territorial expropriation and territorialization of capital occurs in various means, from the violent expulsion of people from their places of origin to the extraction of natural resources from their territories and the attempt to assimilate them to the development model.

Projects to build hydroelectric dams in the Tapajós basin, a priority of the II National Development Plan (PND 1975-1979), made clear the strategies traced for progress in the country's energy sector. “This next step would necessarily be marked by the influence of factors related to the international situation, mainly to the energy crisis” (II PND, 1975, p. 2). Energy was thus “a decisive element in the national strategy” for large projects (II PND, 1975, p. 5),

In this process, it was the role of the I National Development Plan (1972 – 1974) to consecrate this principle that was developed in U.S. military schools and transferred to Brazil through countless military agreements between

the two countries during and after World War II. As we have affirmed, they were no longer complementary acts that were drafted, they were **government plans**, and therefore goals to be achieved. Acting in this way, the military government obeyed the logic of the “ideology of the Escola Superior de Guerra” and as is known, did not even ask civil society of this country if this was what it wanted (Oliveira, 1991, p. 90).

Government planning, in recent decades, was determined to undertake hydroelectric projects in the Amazon region. Forty-three large hydroelectric projects were planned and in progress in the Tapajós River basin included in addition to a group of small hydroelectric generators.<sup>1</sup> Large hydroelectric projects are planned for the Tapajós River and its main tributaries including: the Jamanxim, Teles Pires and Juruena Rivers. Three of the dams will be located on the Tapajós. River, four on the Jamanxim, six on the Teles Pires and thirty on the Juruena (cf. Fearnside 2016).

The Hydroelectric Survey of the Tapajós River Basin,<sup>2</sup> conducted between 2006 and 2008, was approved by the National Electrical Energy Agency (ANEEL)<sup>3</sup> in 2009. The survey involved seven hydroelectric projects: three on the Tapajós River and four on the Jamanxim tributary: and hydroelectric utilization projects of São Luiz do Tapajós, Jatobá and Chacorão on the Tapajós River; and Cachoeira do Caí, Jamanxim, Cachoeira dos Patos and Jardim do Ouro on the Jamanxim River. This group of hydroelectric projects is defined as the Hydroelectric Complex of Tapajós (CHT), as shown in Map 1 (CNEC, 2014).

The Tapajós Hydroelectric Complex is one of a number of large construction projects planned for the Amazon in the Tapajós river basin. Established in the Ten-year Energy Plan 2021 (PDE 2021) and in the Accelerated Growth Plan II (PAC II), it became a priority for the federal government, because it is a project that would support others, such as mining, river transportation and ports planned for the region.

It is important to emphasize that the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayü Movement, concerned with the violations against the indigenous peoples caused by dam construction in the Amazon, undertook essential actions to analyze the federal government’s intentions to build the Tapajós Hydroelectric Complex. The conflict took shape in each of the phases in the realization of the dam. The land conflict currently in focus in the Tapajós also stimulated an accumulated experience among the indigenous peoples, which have had their rights violated in various ways by the implementation of dams in the Amazon, conferring coherence to the processes of struggle and resistance of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayü Movement, which we will describe further on.

<sup>1</sup> The “large” hydroelectric plants are those with capacity greater than 30 MW, while those smaller than 30 MW – which are considered Small Hydroelectric Plants – are exempt from Environmental Impact Studies and Environmental Impact Reports (EIA-RIMA) as determined by Resolução Normativa nº 343 of the Agência Nacional de Energia Elétrica (ANEEL), of 9 December, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> The studies of the Inventário Hidrelétrico da Bacia do Rio Tapajós were conducted by Eletronorte (Centrais Elétricas do Norte do Brasil S.A.) and by Contratista Construções and Camargo Corrêa S. A. (CCCC). The sections about engineering and the environment that were the responsibility of the CCCC were realized by CNEC Engenharia S.A.

<sup>3</sup> Despacho nº 1.887, 22 May, 2009.

**Map 1** – Projection of the Indigenous Lands and the Conservation Districts and flooding caused by the dam.  
Source: Archivo MMIA. Prepared by: Juan Doblas.



The Mundurucu, who call themselves Wuy Jugu, (which means “we are people”) and whose language pertains to the Mundurucu linguistic family and the Tupi trunk, currently total some 14 thousand people, residents of the Tapajós river basin, in western Pará state. Although they inhabit different regions in the states of Mato Grosso, Amazonas and Pará, the greatest concentration of their population is in the region of the Tapajós river basin, particularly on the upper stretch. They live in more than 130 different villages

on the banks of the Tapajós, Tropas, Kabitutu, Kadiriri, Teles Pires, Cururu, Anipiri and Waredi Rivers and other tributaries (Saw 2013). Of these, approximately 120 are on the Upper Tapajós.<sup>4</sup> The Munduruku also occupy, in addition to the Upper and Middle Tapajós, the lower course of the river (see Ioris, 2014 and in this dossier), the Madeira River, the Xingu and other areas to the north of Mato Grosso and in Amazonas State.

The reports about the Tapajós River and its occupation, according to Rocha and Honorato de Oliveira (2016) and ROCHA (2017), began to be produced more systematically after the opening of the ports decreed by Dom João VI, in 1808, when expeditions of naturalists began. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Munduruku nation occupied so much land that the European began to refer to the entire Tapajós as Mundurukânia (Aires de Casal 1976 [1817]).

The Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement, although it involves villages in all these locations, has its bases in the villages of the Upper and Middle Tapajós and the lower Teles Pires River (Map 2), and our analysis is limited to the Indigenous Lands occupied in this region.

The situation of the demarcation process of the indigenous lands is presented in the following table:

**Table 1** – Synthesis of the situation of indigenous lands, occupied by the Munduruku of the Upper and Middle Tapajós that are the object of this study

| Indigenous Land or Reserve              | Situation                           | Area                               | People who occupy the land |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Indigenous Land Munduruku (PA)          | Sanctioned                          | 2.382 thousand hectares            | Munduruku and Apiaká       |
| Indigenous Land Sai Cinza (PA)          | Sanctioned                          | 126 thousand hectares              | Munduruku                  |
| Indigenous Land Sawre Muybu (PA)        | Identified                          | 178 thousand hectares              | Munduruku and Apiaká       |
| Indigenous Land Sawre Juybu (PA)        | Under study                         | No final proposal for delimitation | Munduruku                  |
| Indigenous Land Sawre Apompu (PA)       | Under study                         | No final proposal for delimitation | Munduruku                  |
| Indigenous Reserve Praia do Índio (PA)  | In process of physical demarcation. | 28 hectares                        | Munduruku                  |
| Indigenous Reserve Praia do Mangue (PA) | In process of physical demarcation. | 30 hectares                        | Munduruku                  |

<sup>4</sup> The number is quite dynamic. Reasons such as accusations of witchcraft, political disputes, death of a relative, etc. commonly provoke divisions of villages. Families migrate and settle in other villages or establish new ones.

**Table 2** – Synthesis of the situation of the indigenous lands occupied by the Munduruku in other states and regions.

Source: Funai, 2016.

|  |            |                         |  |
|--|------------|-------------------------|--|
| TI Apiaká-Kayabi (MT)                        | Sanctioned | 109 thousand hectares   | Apiaká, Kayabi and Munduruku   |
| TI Apiaká do Pontal and Isolated groups (MT) | Identified | 982 thousand hectares   | Apiaká, Kayabi and Munduruku   |
| TI Kayabi (MT, PA)                           | Sanctioned | 1,053 thousand hectares | Apiaká, Kayabi and Munduruku   |
| TI Munduruku Taquara (PA)                    | Declared   | 25 thousand hectares    | Munduruku  |
| TI Bragança Marituba (PA)                    | Declared   | 14 thousand hectares    | Munduruku  |
| TI Coatá Laranjal (AM)                       | Sanctioned | 1,153 thousand hectares | Munduruku and Sateré Mawé  |
| Dominial Indigenous Village Beija-Flor (AM)  | Sanctioned | 41 hectares             | Baré, Borari, Desana, Kambeba, Marubo, Munduruku, Mura, Sateré Mawé, Tukano and Tuyuka |

The demarcation of lands traditionally occupied by the indigenous peoples is conducted according to an administrative system described and analyzed by Pacheco de Oliveira (1998), the last version of which was established in Decree 1775 of January 8, 1996. The indigenous lands are considered to be federal property and the procedures for their creation include phases that are the responsibility of the executive branch, specifically of the National Indian Foundation (Funai) and the Ministry of Justice. The first step is the realization of identification and delimitation projects, and when these are concluded, the presentation of the Substantiated Report of Identification and Delimitation (RCID). The National Indian Foundation is responsible for approving, signing and publishing a summary of this report in the official government journal, the *Diário Oficial da União* (DOU). After being opened to questioning, the physical demarcation is conducted and is the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice. After an indigenous land is declared, through a government edict and its demarcation is established by the Ministry of Justice in another edict, the last step is the administrative procedure of homologation through a presidential decree.

The Munduruku of the Upper Tapajós have had the indigenous lands of Sai Cinza and Munduruku sanctioned, while in the Middle Tapajós they await recognition and demarcation of their indigenous lands. These include the Sawre Muybu Indigenous Land (the Daje Kapap Eipi territory),<sup>5</sup> which encompasses a territory that – if the government advances with its plans for construction of the São Luiz do Tapajós hydroelectric project, would have part of its land flooded. Thus, although the identification and demarcation report has been finished since 2013, there was considerable political pressure on the National Indian Foundation to not sign it. The government chose to not officially recognize this indigenous land, because it would make the São Luiz do Tapajós hydroelectric project unconstitutional because of the flooding of part of indigenous land.

Although the identification and demarcation report for the Sawre Muybu indigenous land was published in April 2016, eight questionings were presented, a step called for in the procedure for

<sup>5</sup> The Daje Kapap Eipi territory is an area of special interest of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement and will be the object of specific consideration later in this article.



demarcation of indigenous lands in Brazil. One of the filings, by the Instituto Chico Mendes de Conservação da Biodiversidade (ICMBio), is not formally a challenge, but a relatively favorable declaration, which affirms that the overlapping areas of the indigenous lands and the national forests of Itaituba I and II create a type of environmental and indigenous comanagement.

The challenges made to the Substantiated Report of Identification and Delimitation of the Sawre Muybu indigeneous land are the following:

- Ministry of the Environment (MMA) – Processo nº 08620.085237.2015-51;
- Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) – Processo nº 08620.085233.2015-73;
- Associação Nacional do Ouro (ANORO) – Processo nº 08620.138849.2015-54;
- Rio Vermelho Importação e Exportação de Diamantes Ltda. – Processo nº 08620.136082.2015-29;
- Instituto Chico Mendes de Biodiversidade (ICMBio) – Processo nº 08620.128804/2015-71;
- Consórcio Tapajós – Processo nº 08620.127451/2015-92;
- Associação dos Mineradores de Ouro do Tapajós (AMOT) – Processo nº 08620.138845.2015-76;
- Confederação Nacional da Indústria (CNI) – Processo nº 08620.049081.2015-45.

These questionings come from the ministries of energy and the environment, the federal environmental agency responsible for conservation districts (ICMBio), private companies and a mining association, which have countless political interests in the territory traditionally occupied by the Munduruku. The first two challenges, from the ministries of the environment and energy, were presented even before the identification and demarcation report was published in the *Diário Oficial da União*.

The document filed by ICMBio is a proposal for comanagement of the area, given that the Sawre Muybu indigenous land is essentially overlapped by the Itaituba II national forest. Anoro [The National Gold Association], Rio Vermelho and Amot [The Gold Miners Association of Tapajós] challenge areas that are sought for mining. The Consórcio Tapajós, which is composed by Eletrobrás and companies from the Tapajós Study Group, presented a challenge due to their interest in the construction of the Tapajós Hydroelectric Complex.

The interest of these companies in these areas conflicts directly with the traditional occupation by the indigenous and traditional riverine communities along the margins of the Tapajós. This fact can be seen in the declarations against the regularization of the Sawre Muybu Indigenous Land presented not only by companies directly interested in the installation of hydroelectric dams or in mining in the region, like the Consórcio Tapajós and Rio Vermelho Mineração, but also by the National Confederation of Industry, which affirmed:

The central concern of the sectors involved is the precedence that this type of decision [demarcation of the Indigenous Land] can generate, with a consequent series of damage to the country. The insecurity for investors can be highlighted, the probable consequent reduction of investment in infrastructure and all of the related harm (...)” (Questioning presented by the Confederação Nacional da Indústria. 2016. Processo nº 08620.049091.2015-45, p. 63).

If on one hand, there was a significant advance in the struggle for regularization of the Sawre Muybu Indigenous Lands, with the compliance of another step in the long process of demarcation of indigenous lands described above, on the other hand, the reaction by the part of all the sectors that exploit or plan to economically exploit the region takes various forms – by administrative means, presenting challenges to the identification and demarcation report of the National Indian Foundation; through campaigns broadcast in the local media opposing recognition that the indigenous lands are traditional indigenous territories;

and by inciting conflicts between *riberine* communities and the indigenous, with direct impact on the historic relations that these groups constructed throughout the entire Tapajós river basin.

Various arrangements have been made to guarantee the execution of the large projects in the Amazon. In this case, it can be noted that even before any Environmental Impact Study and Environmental Impact Report (EIA-RIMA)<sup>6</sup> were completed, the size of the Conservation Units was reduced through Provisional Measure no. 558/2012 (which was converted into law)<sup>7</sup> which changed the borders of the conservation districts that are in the area of interest of the large hydroelectric projects. The limits of the following conservation units were changed, calling for flooding of the areas: the national parks of the Amazon, Campos Amazônicos and Mapinguari; the Itaituba I and Itaituba II and Crepori National Forests; and the Tapajós Area for Environmental Protection (cf. Torres 2014).

To a large degree, the Munduruku resistance challenges the nation building projects that the dominant classes have for the country. This process involves contradictions. While the federal Constitution of 1988 assures differentiated rights to citizenship, a right to cultural diversity, and guarantees not only territory, but the ways of living, producing and creating of the indigenous peoples, flexible complementary laws and administrative procedures have allowed the implementation of nation-building projects that carry with them developmentalist models that infringe on these constitutional rights.

The protocol for consultation, a specific regulation of the Munduruku people, was prepared to demand compliance with norms established by International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169 that determines that prior free and informed consultation must be conducted with the indigenous peoples before the implementation of projects on their lands. The convention was ratified by the Brazilian state in 2002, in legislative decree no. 143 of 2003.

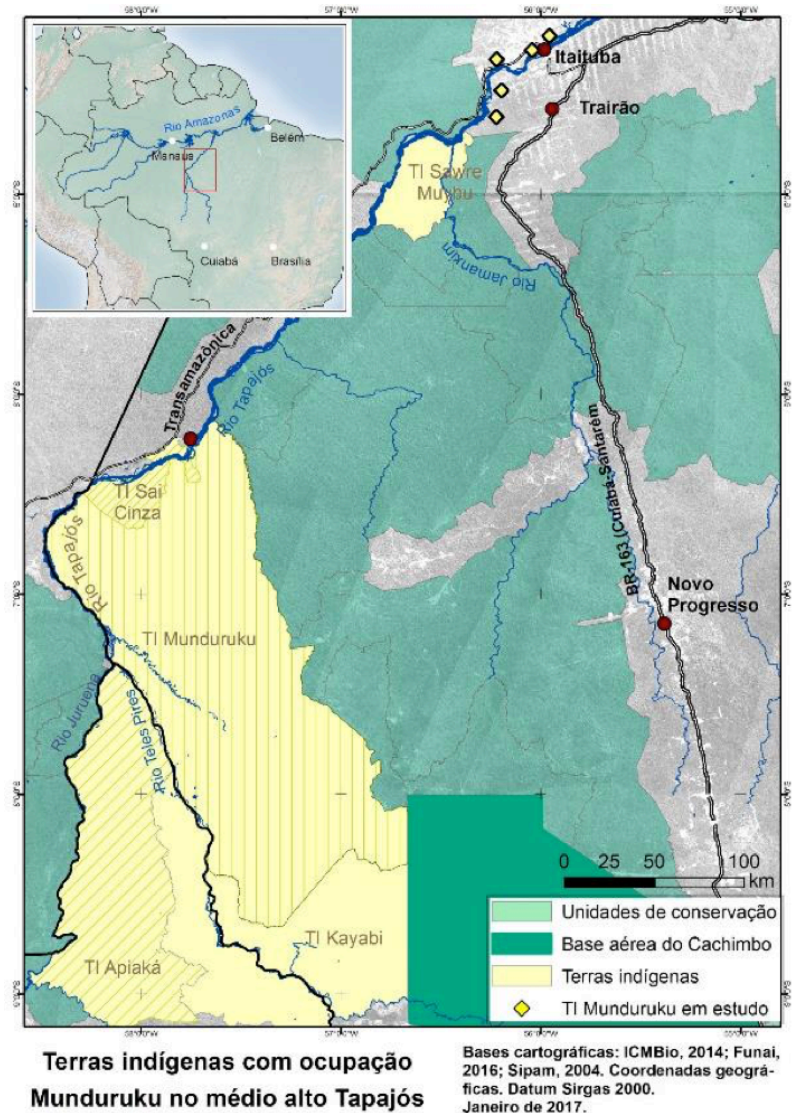
After many meetings with the federal government, letters were published by the Munduruku Movement, explaining the need for dialog and consultation of its people before beginning construction projects that would drastically transform their ways of life. The documents can be found on the blog of the occupation of Belo Monte (<https://ocupacaobelomonte.wordpress.com/>) and on the blog of the self-demarcation (<https://autodemarcacaonotapajos.wordpress.com/>). In June 2013, 140 Munduruku, Xipaya, Arara, Kayapó and Tupinambá Indians demanded a meeting in Brasilia in exchange for abandoning their occupation of the Belo Monte hydroelectric dam construction site and sat with minister of the General Secretariat of the President of the Republic Gilberto Carvalho. Minister Carvalho recognized problems with the indigenous policy and suggested a new meeting with the Munduruku. He promised that that they would be heard, but affirmed that the government would not abandon the planned hydroelectric projects in the region. This meeting never took place, and the Munduruku returned to Brasilia in December 2013 and sought an audience in the 1st Region of the Federal Court, asking for revocation of Portaria [Edict] no. 303, which allowed exploitation of water resources in indigenous lands without consultation. They also demanded the maintenance of the suspension of the license for the Teles Pires hydroelectric plant and the demarcation of The Sawre Muybu Indigenous Land. In 2014, they continued to try to resolve the situation with the National Indian Foundation, but the foundation president, who ceded to pressure from the government to not demark the Sawre Maybe indigenous land, resigned on October 17 without signing the identification and demarcation report. From this time on the Munduruku understood that they would have to confront the situation and guarantee their right to land and to the existence by their own means.

6 Since 1986, Brazilian law requires that an Environmental Impact Study and Environmental Impact Report (EIA-RIMA) be prepared for construction projects that alter the environment. This is a study conducted before construction, with phases of diagnosis and evaluation of environmental impact, mitigatory measures and programs. The Study and Report should serve as planning tools and support for decision making.

7 Lei nº 12.678, de 25 June 2012.

With all the attempts at construction of a dialog with government, including the drafting of a protocol of consultation based on the terms of ILO Convention 169<sup>8</sup> and a series of meetings with the federal government, the Munduruku decided not to wait for the courts and government institutions to guarantee the recognition of their rights and defense of their territory.

**Map 2** – Indigenous lands occupied by the Munduruku in the Middle and Upper Tapajós. Prepared by: Mauricio Torres, Dec. 2016.



## The Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement: forging identity and social organization

The Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement (MMIA) began at a demonstration in Jacareacanga, in western Pará, in June 2012, which was held to demand justice for the murder of a Munduruku indigenous leader. The crime sparked revolt by the Munduruku, and the lack of an investigation and measures by authorities

<sup>8</sup> Project conceived and developed by the federal public ministry in partnership with non-governmental organizations such as Greenpeace, FASE, FAOR, Amazon Watch, Xingu Vivo, Artigo 19, to develop a protocol for consultation, a specific regulation for the Munduruku people, related to ILO Convention 169, which establishes a need for prior consultation of an indigenous people affected by large projects. Prepared by the Munduruku in the Waro Apompu village on the Munduruku Indigenous Land, on September 24-25, 2014, and in the village of Praia do Mangue, on September 29-30, 2014, the document was approved in an extraordinary assembly in the village of Sai Cinza, of December 13-14, 2014. The protocol was issued on January 30, to the president of the republic, but until today there has been no effective prior consultation about the Tapajós Hydroelectric complex by the federal government, which continues to insist that it has “good dialog with the Munduruku”.

heightened tensions. The “action at the police station” (as the Munduruku call the event) was triggered when the responsible authorities did not respond to the murder. The Movement took over the police station where the accused were held with the objective of “doing justice according to our customs” according to a statement of Rosildo Saw Munduruku to the newspaper *Tapajós em Foco*.<sup>9</sup>

The members of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement reported that the action at the police station, where they demonstrated against the unjust death of “cousin”, “relative” and “friend” Lelo Akay was the first moment in the current articulation of men and women warriors. They say that this was an important action in which they were able to detain the police officers responsible for the case (whose investigation they found to be unsatisfactory) related to Lelo’s murder. After the removal of all the people, they burned down the police station, demanding changes in policies and legal procedures in Jacareacanga.

In this action, according to the statements of the participants, the Movement became stronger, organized itself and continued to promote “vigilance” of government projects that, as they say, “have had impacts on us. So at that time we began to create the Movement”.

According to the majority of the members of the coordination<sup>10</sup> of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement, this was its founding act. The name Ipereğ Ayū had still not been created, but since then there has been a mobilized group, that was combative and articulated, the same that, in short time, would conduct actions against the dam projects, especially against the building of dams in the Tapajós river basin.

Nevertheless, the mobilization of the Munduruku in acts of resistance, some very similar in various aspects to the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement, is as old as the records of them. Unified reactions in response to aggressions of one of their own, for example, are well documented by Friar Pelino de Castrovalvas, who lived with the Munduruku from 1871 to 1875:

They defend each other as if they are from the same family. If someone is insulted or mortally wounded by an outsider, they spare no effort or blood to gain revenge; they swear to gain revenge and do not rest until they do. This is why they war and are continuously clashing with other tribes. The Mundurucu who are strong and brave always attain victory (Castrovalvas 2000 [1871-1883], p. 203s).

The Ipereğ Ayū Movement, is not the first resistance movement of the Munduruku people and was not the first against the government’s development projects, nor was it the first movement against dams on the Tapajós. This is what we can gather from the minutes of an assembly of the Munduruku people of 1987 in which they discussed the countless impacts that a hydroelectric dam in the Tapajós basin could have:

We were meeting to debate various issues of interest to us. Mainly about the dam on the Tapajós River. Because this will cause many problems for the Munduruku region. There were 47 leaders of the indigenous communities to debate the issue. This dam can bring great harm to the reserve, mainly hunting and the flooding of the forest which is of great utility to planting.

Because most of the area is composed of cleared fields, the area of the forest is small and is along the Tapajós River. So for this reason the Munduruku community does not accept the construction of this dam in this location. And for this reason we are requesting to the government that the dam not be built. We have already struggled considerably for our area to be expanded and this never happens. Where will we live if the area of the forest goes to the bottom? What will we eat, where will we raise our children and where will we work to

<sup>9</sup> Available at: <<http://tapajosemfoco.blogspot.com.br/2012/07/jacareacanga-guerreiros-munduruku-fazem.html>>. Accessed: Feb. 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Whenever we refer to the coordination of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement, we are referring to the indigenous people who, at any time, were at the leadership of the front, in coordination of a meeting that they participated in that was called by Movement, without necessarily, having occupied any formal position in the coordination.

support our children? We have no where to go if we lose this area, our group is very large. How will our children and grandchildren live without this forest? We hope with great certainty that our request be granted

Documento do Povo Munduruku

Missão São Francisco, 23 December 1987

From 2012 to 2015 the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement planned and executed various actions as a function of the defense of indigenous rights guaranteed in the federal Constitution of 1988 and ILO Convention 169. The moment for demanding justice for the death of their relative Lelo Akay, in June 2012, was a seed that a Munduruku organization of confrontation would rise around what would be the name Ipereğ Ayū.

“*Ipereğ Ayū*” in the Munduruku language can be translated as “the people who know how to defend themselves”, or “that is not easy to fool”, “that is not easy to catch”. In its original definition, the term can be used to describe a person. Someone who is *Ipereğ Ayū* has a strong ability and power to question and not fall into traps. This ability helps to debate and disagree on certain occasions, and even “negotiate without being intimidated” in situations of conflict. It is a person who “is lucky” and for this reason “will never be caught”.

On some occasions the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement called itself, the “Popular indigenous movement in struggle to defend territory and rights of humanity”<sup>11</sup> and, a number of times, suffered from attempts by the federal government and local opposition to criminalize the entity. Given these threats, to protect and define itself and express its legitimacy in relation to the Munduruku people, it uses the traditional form of communication in letters and communiqués:

Our movement will never end. Because we are constantly fighting against the dams. From now on our Movement will be independent of the Association. Our struggle is for the rights of the Munduruku people, for the future generation, for the forest and for the rivers. We are 118 chief who do not accept the construction of the hydroelectric dams on the Tapajós. We will never give in to the large federal government projects. (...) They want to eliminate our movement, but they could not. Because we are the majority of the villages, *caciques*, leaders and warriors who struggle for biodiversity (MMIA. Declaração sobre o Movimento Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū, Munduruku, 2013).

The social organization of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement was organized with a close connection with Munduruku cosmology, to the degree to which it mimics the group of warriors led by Karodaybi, the great Munduruku warrior, who had chosen the five most skilled warriors to protect him: Pukorao Pik Pik, Pusuru kao, Waremuçu Pak Pak, Surup Surup and Wakoburūn (Loures 2017). Thus, as in the myth, the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement is organized in five platoons – each one associated to one of the five warriors that compose the Karodaybi army – and each one of the groups carries the name of one of the warriors of the mythic hero, while one of them, Wakoburūn, is composed by women warriors. To accompany each group, there is a *pajé* on the front line, who “conserves the sacred force”. The importance of the *pajé* ranges from providing spiritual protection he invokes for the warriors to the use of his abilities to see beyond the material plane. *Pajés* are able to foresee what will come to be and what they can affect. And, by indicating paths, they are consulted in the various moments and contexts of the movement.

Today, the *pajés* are guardians of this cosmology and are operators of Munduruku religiosity. They have a strong relationship with the spirits of the animals, fish and plants, for which reason at times Munduruku treat them like *xi* (mothers). The *pajés* have many attributions, such as the much commented

11 Declaração do Movimento Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū, August 2013.

ability to extract a *caushi* from the body of an ill person. A *caushi* is considered by the Munduruku as a spell introduced by a what they call a “*pajé bravo*” to distinguish shamans who use their practice to cure from those who use their practice to cause harm. Murphy & Murphy 1954).

In the countless meetings of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement, Karodaybi, the mythic warrior, is often mentioned. It is understandable that the resistance movement is inspired by the leader known as the “great head cutter”, a chief who had few warriors, but even so, never lost a war and whose army had the power of never being hit by arrows or spears in battle. The myths about Karodaybi registered by Murphy (1958) involve his great ability to cut off the heads of the enemies in battle and express the prodigious qualities of his few and heroic warriors, relating them to birds and species of trees. These narratives inspire the members of the movement and are used to organize reports of the actions of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement.

The demonstrations of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement are also moments for reproduction of rites and symbols of Munduruku tradition. Songs are evoked in actions of vigilance and dispute, as in the occupations of the Belo Monte dam construction site. The “Munduruku singers” are important members of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement, given that they know and sing well the Munduruku ritual songs, which have the power to weaken the enemy, and many other things. The songs are highly present in the myths, as in that of Karodaybi. When his warriors confront a much larger army, the woman warrior and singer Wakoburūn sang songs that weaken and remove the courage of the enemy, and shield the body of the warriors against arrows.

Since then, the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement continues with each new act to gain strength and more precise forms by placing at the center of its internal discussions the opposition to plans to build hydroelectric dams in the Tapajós river basin (although they are not limited to this agenda). The importance of the resistance to the dams stems from the fact that they represent what the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement understood as the main threat to what would be their reason for existence: the territory and rights of the Munduruku people.

The federal government’s position to not maintain a dialog – although it is always ready for a pretense of communication, through the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic (SGPR) – led the Munduruku, in 2013, to intensify their resistance. At the heart of their demands was their right to Free Previous and Informed Consultation as established by ILO Convention 169, of which Brazil is a signatory. That is, they struggled to have the federal government comply with the law.

It is important to remember that in November 2012, at the Kayabi Indigenous Land, on the Teles Pires River, the federal government triggered the polemic and tragic Eldorado Operation, which was announced as an effort to fight illegal gold mining, but which was in fact understood by the Munduruku as a form of intimidation that sought to make viable the implantation of the Tapajós Hydroelectric Complex. The Eldorado Operation was conducted to comply with a federal court decision in Mato Grosso state that called for the destruction of the gold-mining drags in the Teles Pires River, inside the indigenous lands of the Munduruku and Kayabi peoples. Coordinated by the Federal Police, 150 men of the National Public Security Force, the National Indian Foundation and the Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (Ibama) conducted the action. The truculent and unexpected invasion of the Teles Pires village left 19 indigenous wounded and the killing of one leader, Adenilson Kirixi Munduruku, by the officer who led the operation.

Another emblematic fact that had strong impact on the region was the military presence, in the National Public Security Force, to guarantee the escort and monitoring of researchers of environmental studies, and to guarantee “law and order” at the construction sites of the large construction projects to avoid occupations, strikes and the organization of workers, as found at Belo Monte, even during the

Munduruku occupation. The Tapajós Operation,<sup>12</sup> for example, undertaken in March 2013 based on the Decrees nº 5.289/04<sup>13</sup> and nº 7.957/13,<sup>14</sup> discharacterized the functions and attributions of the national public security force, given that to guarantee the environmental impact studies, they conducted a operation of intimidation, particularly of the indigenous peoples and the traditional communities of the region (cf. Justiça 2013). In 2013, the direct consequence was a sharp increase in tension between the Munduruku and the troops that escorted the technicians who would conduct the studies and research of the viability of the Tapajós Hydroelectric Complex. The National Public Security Forces would circle the villages and riverbank communities for days - and they felt they were afflicted by acts of violence, intimidation and strong psychological pressure.

Strategically, the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement understood that it would gain greater political repercussion if it occupied the construction site of the Belo Monte hydroelectric dam in Altamira-PA. If they could stop the largest engineering project in the federal Accelerated Growth Program the Brazilian government could certainly not ignore them. In May and June 2013, in an analogy with their ancestral war expeditions, the Munduruku traveled more than 900 kilometers to the Xingu River.

They occupied the Belo Monte construction site twice; first from May 2 to 9 and then from May 27 to June 4. The occupations were peaceful, and included some 170 people of Munduruku, Juruna, Kayapó, Xipaya, Kuruaya and Arara ethnicities, as well as fishermen and people from traditional communities along the river (*ribeirinhos*). The two occupations had the same agenda, which was clearly presented in letters and statements, demonstrating that they were not there to negotiate with the companies building Belo Monte dam, or much less to present a list of requests to be met, as they highlighted in a public letter released on May 3, 2013:

We are here to dialog with the government. To protest against the construction of large projects that definitively impact our lives. To demand that the law be regulated to guarantee the realization of previous consultation - that is, before the studies and construction! Finally, and most importantly, we occupy the work site to demand that there is prior consultation about construction projects in our lands, rivers and forests. And for this reason the government must stop everything it is doing. It must suspend the work and studies of the dams. It must remove the troops and cancel the police operations on our lands. The Belo Monte worksite is occupied and paralyzed.<sup>15</sup>

After many meetings and pressure from the federal government for a small group of Munduruku go to a meeting in Brasília, the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement rejected the proposal for a meeting with a small number of people and indicated that it would only accept a meeting with all of the 150 demonstrators at the Belo Monte construction site. The government accepted and sent two Brazilian Air Force planes to carry all of the demonstrators (photos 1 & 2). Once in Brasília, then minister Gilberto Carvalho, however, limited himself to saying that the government would not give up its dam projects on the Tapajós. In relation to prior consultation, he affirmed that although previous consultation should be broad and must accept suggestions, it did not establish a right to a veto. Federal appellate courts had already determined that the federal government was not properly recognizing the indigenous people's rights to prior consent<sup>16</sup> and

12 Military and police operation promoted by order of the federal government in the region of the Munduruku territory.

13 The decree concerns the organization and operation of the federative cooperation program known as the National Public Security Force, determining that it would operate in activities dedicated to maintaining public order and the protection of people and property, among other measures (BRASIL, 2004).

14 The decree covers various measures. In terms of what is important to this study, it regulates the action of the armed forces for environmental protection, justifying their action in the case of "assistance to the realization of surveys and technical reports about negative environmental impact". (BRASIL, 2013)

15 This letter and other materials can be accessed at <https://ocupacaobelomonte.wordpress.com>.

16 In September 2012, the federal public ministry in Pará state filed a civil public suit requiring a process of prior consultation for the indigenous peoples threatened by the hydroelectric project of São Luiz do Tapajós. The suit also called for evaluation of the cumulative impacts along with other projects



made it a requirement for projects on the Tapajós. Thus, the representatives of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ Movement reaffirmed their desire to dialog, in their territory, without suffering accusations and without police force. For these reasons, they decided to return to their territory in the Tapajós basin and undertake other forms of defense.

In late June, upon returning to Brasília, once again the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ Movement was the target of accusations from researchers conducting the licensing of the dam in Munduruku territory. This was not the first time: since at least August 2012, denunciations were made by companies conducting studies for the environmental licensing of the hydroelectric project. The Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ Movement were concerned by the charges because they understood that the studies should be preceded by prior free and informed consultation. To investigate the charges, the group conducted an expedition and found 25 researchers hired by the Concremat company conducting studies required for the licensing of the Jatobá hydroelectric project, also planned for the region.

In one of the actions of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ Movement, the Munduruki heard from a *cacique* of the Arara people – who had lived through the tragic experience of the “cosmetic licensing” of Belo Monte on the Xingu River. The Arara chief warned that if the Munduruku wanted to stop construction of the hydroelectric dams on the Tapajós, they would have to avoid the conclusion of the environmental impact studies for the hydroelectric projects. The strategy used by the Munduruku in the Tapajós region was precisely that observed by the Arara *cacique*: that of not permitting entrance to the indigenous lands to conduct studies. The Munduruku heard him and decided to resist all the studies conducted without a consultation process, as they understood they had a right to.

In response, the government alleged that these researchers were outside the formal demarcation of the Munduruku Indigenous Land. The Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ Movement countered that the studies were conducted along the entire course of the Tapajós, which was part of the Munduruku territory. There was thus a conflict between different conceptions of what were the Munduruku lands and territory. While the government affirmed that their territory was limited to the land stipulated by the normative acts, the Munduruku understood their territory to be the land that they and their ancestors traditionally occupied. And in fact, according to item 2 of article 13 of ILO Convention 169, the allegation of the movement had a legal basis, because the concept of land is based on the concept of territory that “encompasses the totality of the habitat of the regions that the interested peoples occupied or used in some other way”. In this sense, the location where the researchers were found was Munduruku territory, because it was in front of a landmark known as the Cantagalo stone, where there are rock carvings that are important to the Munduruku cosmology.

Thus, the Munduruku approached the research team, confiscated their materials and held three researchers, to guarantee attention and dialog with the federal government. The Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ Movement demanded prior consultation and affirmed that after a long struggle, all of the public agencies and society should be aware that the Munduruku people would not accept dams in their territory. Two days after the capture of the researchers, representatives of the National Indian Foundation in Brasília (also speaking in name of the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic) came to Jacareacanga, publically promising the immediate suspension of studies and guaranteeing that they would only be continued after prior consultation. Under these conditions, the researchers were released.

But the precariousness of the word given by the federal government to the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ Movement was proven, less than one month later, when the Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Natural Resources ratified authorization of the studies by Concremat, thus guaranteeing arbitrary

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planned for the Tapajós river region and its tributaries. The suit gained an injunction from a federal judge that was upheld by the Federal Supreme Court (STF) in April 2013.



continuity to the studies. Concremat, returned to Tapajós, with not only researchers who conducted this type of work but also an apparatus of war to intimidate and counter the strength of the Munduruku movement. From then on, all of the research was conducted under protection of the National Public Security Forces, who accompanied each one of the researchers all of the time. As a result of the Munduruku resistance, for the first time in the history of Brazil environmental impact studies were conducted under armed guard.

**Photo 1.** With 150 warriors, on May 27 2013, the Munduruku were able to take control of the immense work site at Belo Monte, controlling all of the main gates and stopping all of the activities. Photo: Lunaé Parracho.



**Photo 2.** In Brasília, the men and women warriors of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement met in Brasília with Minister Gilberto Carvalho and other authorities. June 4, 2013. Photo: Lunaé Parracho.



### **The Self-demarcation of the Daje Kapap Eipi Territory and the Karodaybi Government**

The Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement, in light of the delayed publication of the Substantiated Report of Identification and Delimitation, decided to conduct a self-demarcation of the Sawre Muybu Indigenous Land as a fundamental strategy for maintenance of their traditionally occupied territory, which encompassed various sacred locations described by Munduruku mythology. The Sawre Muybu Indigenous Land includes six villages (Sawre Muybu, Dace Watpu, Karo Muybu, Daje Kapap, Sawre Aboy and Poxo Muybu) and various sacred sites. It was denominated by the Munduruku as the Daje Kapap Eipi territory, precisely because it encompassed a sacred location known as “Os Fechos”, a point at which the Tapajós River becomes narrow due to a transformation that according to myth was caused by white-lipped peccaries that escaped with the son of Karosakaybu,<sup>17</sup> as revenge for having been transformed by him from humans into pigs:

Estreito (Dajekapap) [the narrows]: is the passageway of the pigs, it is a sacred place. This place exists below the old Capuchin Bacabal Mission known as the Montanha [Mountain]. In the summer, the tracks sculpted in the rock at this location can be seen, they are the tracks of the feet of Karosakaybu, when he reached there when his son was taken to the other side of the Tapajós by the pigs and he stopped looking for his son. Another location on dry land is called Cintura Fina, [Thin Belt] which is the same phenomenon and is between km 180 and the small gold-diggers village called Vila Rabello on federal highway BR-230 of the Transamazônica.

On the right bank of the Tapajós can be seen the split rock in the shape of a trench, this is the passageway of the “pigs”, it is the path by which they descended.

Karosakaybu, displeased, was deeply saddened by the loss of his son and decided to leave a snake there so that

<sup>17</sup> Karosakaybu is the God creator for the Munduruku. He has spiritual powers of transformation of people. In the Munduruku language a being similar to the Christian god is designated as Topağa.

no one could pretend to be god. He left a surucucu snake to bite anyone who would pass there. And in this same place there is an image of a saint, and this was discovered by an explorer at the time, but he did not know that the location was sacred and was bitten by that snake and died, and until today it can be very dangerous for anyone who passes by there.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, in October 2014, the Munduruku, began the process of self-demarcation of the Sawre Muybu indigenous land located in the Middle Tapajós. The Munduruku expeditions for the Sawre Muybu indigenous lands, more than mapping and identifying the points and the limits indicated in the report from the National Indian Foundation, contributed to the recognition of their ancestral territory and to the beginning of a process of vigilance and protection of their land, which had been illegally invaded and appropriated by lumbers, gold-diggers and land grabbers.

The beginning of the self-demarcation process was an initiative to confront the threats of territorial disputes emerging in the region and the paralyzation of the administrative process with the non-publication of the Substantiated Report of Identification and Delimitation by the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI). Thus, the Munduruku decided not to wait for the courts and government institutions to guarantee recognition of their rights and the defense of their land.<sup>19</sup> The self-demarcation of their lands began in October 2014. The Munduruku expeditions through the Sawre Muybu indigenous lands (already identified in the Substantiated Report of Identification and Delimitation) were based on the points and limits indicated in the report from the National Indian Foundation. During the process, the recognition of the ancestral territory was also important for the group that conducted the activity.

In the demarcation, various signs that were built and posted at the limits of the territory by the Munduruku indicate: “Território Daje Kapap Eipi – Governo Karodaybi”. Myths about Karodaybi, a great Munduruku warrior, have a strong presence in the Munduruku oral tradition. Also known as Daybi, Karodaybi was the person who passed on the teaching of “cutting off the head” of enemies, as told in this short portion of a story:

So Daybi began to constantly cut off heads.

We were disappearing in the forest. On the hunt we were disappearing. (Daybi) came to those who were killing coati.

[...] Daybi would remove their heads. He came to the woods. There was no one. Someone was missing. He did not arrive.

He still comes. He was hard to kill, grandpa. He always goes far – he said.

He was not hidden. It is he who knows. He was always removing people’s heads. From the mouth of night he would take the teeth from the mouth of those from whom he had removed the head. He would take their teeth. The next day, they disappeared again.

[...] He always removed heads like that. Daybi was removing heads. So they became angry. That is all. (CABA, 1980, p. 101-119).

The issue of governance is articulated with the cosmology and to the conflicts with the whites, and to the origin myth of being a Munduruku warrior, which is key to the Ipereğ Ayū social organization. In the analyses of Pacheco de Oliveira (1988) about the Ticuna Indians, the notion of a “government of Indians” or “Our Government” “Toru Aegacu” was also used to refer to mobilizations and movements of families beyond the rubber fields and the economic and political domain of the whites. These actions were ordered by their creator heroes, through the prophets and Shamans, in movements of a messianic and salvationist

<sup>18</sup> Available at: [http://media.wix.com/ugd/c99e01\\_7dcfb3cedf6546869a9d9ac542ec73da.pdf](http://media.wix.com/ugd/c99e01_7dcfb3cedf6546869a9d9ac542ec73da.pdf) Accessed: Feb. 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Various times, as was mentioned, government authorities announced that they would not abandon construction of the Tapajós Hydroelectric Complex. “Understanding” the message, the Munduruku undertook another political act, based on the rights that are assured to them.

nature. This narrative continued to exist decades later in the struggle for the demarcation of lands, which was now linked to the indigenous movements and undertaken by the General Council of the Ikuna Tribe/CGTT (Pacheco de Oliveira, 2015, p. 228-235).

For the Munduruku, it was originally Karodaybi (at times referred to simply as Daybi) who coordinated the actions. He was a great warrior, very intelligent and brave, who knew how to protect the Munduruku and defeat the enemy. Daybi did not think only of himself, but thought of the majority. They all sought teachings and knowledge from Karodaybi. “At that time it was he who governed”, according to Jairo Saw.

Thus, the warrior Daybi also became a symbol for the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement. During the self-demarcation, he would be compared to the government of the *pariwat* [non-indigenous] and was seen to give vigor to the government. A Munduruku leader explained how it was the Munduruku government before the government of the *pariwat*: “In the past, we did not depend on the *pariwat*, we lived in our villages, but then came the people from the Indian Protection Service who tried to tame the Munduruku. Then it was the priests, who came closer to the Munduruku”.

Autonomy is currently a central issue for the Munduruku and the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement. The Karodaybi government is part of this legitimate strategy of the Munduruku people:

Karodaybi is an ancient warrior, right, in the past he lived here on our land. He is the Karodaybi warrior, a great warrior. And as a warrior everything he did was for the benefit of our people. Something that would benefit everyone, everyone followed him, his path. It is because he governed the Munduruku people. The Munduruku government functioned like that, right? These are the government leaders, the Karodaybi and others, right? Government leaders. There are the warriors, the chief, the pajés, puxadores, cantores, these are the leaders of the old Munduruku people (Valdenir Boro Munduruku, personal communication).

It is known that this process of demarcation is in direct conflict with the government projects, like that for the Tapajós Hydroelectric Complex. The delay in publication of the Substantiated Report of Identification and Delimitation is due to the omission of competent agencies concerning the finalization of the demarcation. They are under political pressure from those interested in the exploitation of natural resources in the region. Given this context, the Munduruku began a long process of self-demarcation of their territory, which involved various steps of mapping and vigilance.

There are many reasons given for the importance of the act of self-demarcation of the Daje Kapap Eipi territory.<sup>20</sup> The self-demarcation proves to some that the Munduruku are capable of marking their lands. For years, they waited for the government, which did not conduct the demarcation. So the self-demarcation shows that the Munduruku are capable of guaranteeing the integrity of their territory.

we had always been capable of protecting our land, This Earth, this world is ours, because we related with nature. There is no doubt, because we rose here on our land. We did not come from far, we arose on this land. But the government does not recognize that there are indigenous [people] here, the Munduruku. This is why we do it. We are the owners there (Maria Leusa Kaba, personal communication).

It is important to note that one of the most important landmarks of the Munduruku cosmology is within the perimeter of Sawre Muybu, and the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayū Movement affirms that sacred places should not be destroyed.

<sup>20</sup> Each time that we mention the Daje Kapap Eipi territory, we are referring to the Sawre Muybu indigenous land, the indigenous land for which the Substantiated Report of Identification and Delimitation is concluded, and approved by the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) and is awaiting the next step, which is signature of the president of the National Indian Foundation, and publication in the federal record, the Diário Oficial da União (DOU).

The intensity and the form of resistance of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayü Movement, in response to threats to their territory and cognitive foundation, represents their form of conceiving the river and the world by relating to a territory for which they have struggled considerably and continue to struggle.

## Final Considerations

Upon analyzing the processes of resistance of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayü Movement we noted how their current political initiatives are conceived in close relation with the group's cosmology. The formation and actions of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayü Movement are permeated by symbolic and ritual elements that indicate how they relate to the projects that threaten to advance on their territory.

In 2013, the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayü Movement occupied the Belo Monte construction site. With five groups of men and women warriors, the movement reaffirmed the continuity of a historic resistance through dynamically renovated forms of struggle, now employed to confront the construction of large hydroelectric dams in the Amazon.

To occupy the Belo Monte dam construction site, the Munduruku undertook an expedition that, beginning at the Tapajós Basin, travelled 900 km to the Xingu basin, to demand their right to exist, reproduce their way of life and defend the integrity of their territory of origin in the Tapajós basin. If, in the past, they had gone to Xingu to war with other indigenous peoples who lived there, this time they asked "permission for passage" and established an alliance with these peoples: the confrontation, is now with a common enemy. The Xinguano peoples suffering from what the Munduruku fear will happen to them, they systematically experience grave violations of rights due to the implementation of the Belo Monte hydroelectric project. "We came to join forces, and the government will only hear us at its largest project under the Accelerated Growth Program, we cannot let happen in Tapajós what happened at Xingu", the Munduruku said to the people of Xingu.

The revival of the Pharaonic projects – which in a way had been put on hold since the end of the military dictatorship (which lasted from 1964-1985) – took on an institutional form under the federal Accelerated Growth Program (PAC). The Viability Study for the Tapajós Hydroelectric Complex, in particular the dam at São Luiz do Tapajós, which was conducted before hearing the indigenous peoples and the traditional communities of the Tapajós, which had already declared their opposition to the projects, presented a great threat to their existence. As in other large projects in the region, these studies have served not to evaluate the true viability of a construction, but to legitimate their progress and the licensing processes needed for the operations. They studies neglect the flooding of sacred sites such as Dajekapap and the emotional significance of the territories – villages, and lands for hunting, fishing and collection – which are necessary for their physical and cultural survival.

The socio-cultural diversity of the country is subjugated, subordinated and often has its existence obliterated. At an extreme, the humanity of these groups is denied to the degree that their rationality is not recognized in comparisons to the technical and scientific discourse at the heart of the large projects. The public hearings, which are limited to fulfilling an additional cosmetic phase of the environmental licensing processes, are the privileged space of this practice. The struggle of the Munduruku people has revealed a bit of the hypocrisy of the studies conducted in the environmental licensing process.

We hope this paper has shown how the resistance of the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayü Movement to this process reveals the Munduruku's highly developed political and cultural awareness of their place in this situation. It is not by chance that one of the main demands has been prior free and informed consultation, which regardless of its effectiveness in terms of reversing the situation of exclusion in decision making, was seen by the group as an important opportunity to make itself heard.

If on one hand the government has affirmed that it will not desist from the projects in the Tapajós region, the Munduruku Ipereğ Ayũ Movement – using a variety of strategies for territorial defense in response to the movements of government and to the process of territorialization of capital – guarantees that it will continue to struggle for the river and the forest.

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Rosamaria Loures

Postgraduate Program in Natural Resources of Amazonia - Federal University of Western Pará - UFOPA, Santarém (PA), Brazil.

Contact: rosalooures@gmail.com