

Other Side: Centro de Trabalho Indigenista

Centro de Trabalho Indigenista response to the article "Omission of Funai may have led to violent conflict in the Javari Valley"

In response to the article entitled "Omission of FUNAI may have led to violent conflict in the Javari Valley", published on November 19th 2015, Centro de Trabalho Indigenista (CTI) presents the following clarifications and information:

CTI is a non-profit organization that works in the defense of the indigenous peoples' rights in Brazil for 36 years, among which the isolated indigenous peoples. CTI has a long history of technical cooperation with the Fundação Nacional do Índio (FUNAI), without any transference of financial resources and traversed by different administrations of the FUNAI, taking among other objectives the strengthening of the protecting policy for isolated and recently contacted indigenous peoples. Such cooperation agreements have always been formalized through legal instruments published in the Diário Oficial da União (Union's Official Gazette) in the years 2000, 2004, 2009 and 2014, obeying the proper legal procedures for their signature by the Presidents of the indigenous agency. Therefore, as per the exposed, there are not evidences that could constitute influence peddling or conflict of interests.

The beginning of the technical cooperation was requested by the head of the Departamento de Índios Isolados - DEII (Department of Isolated Indigenous people) of FUNAI, in view of CTI's historical performance and with the sources of funding identified at that time by own DEII. The most recent cooperations were given by public notices (USAID and Fundo Amazônia) with project proposals developed jointly by CTI and the FUNAI's General Coordination of Isolated and Recently Contacted Indigenous Peoples (CGIIRC).

The protection policy for isolated indigenous peoples always had external cooperation due to the budgetary difficulties of the indigenist official agency. Since the structuring of the Departamento de Índios Isolados (DEII) in 1987, when the premise of no contact was established as a Funai's policy for these people, some of the complementary budget sources came from articles / documentaries / publications in national and international media. As counterpart, FUNAI required the donation of equipment and infrastructure items. Moreover, it attended to the goal of raising public awareness to the issue of the isolated indigenous peoples.

More broadly, implementation of Amazon protection policies, demarcation and support for the territorial and environmental management of indigenous lands were and are given in partnership with international cooperation – refer to Programa de Proteção das Terras Indígenas na Amazônia Legal (PPTAL), Programa Demonstrativos de Povos Indígenas (PDPI) and Fundo Amazônia itself - following the procedures and instances of approval and control of the Brazilian government (Brazilian Cooperation Agency, The Senate, Ministry of Finance, the Office of the Comptroller General, the Court of Auditors of the Union, etc).

On the contrary of what points the article, the scope of the partnership between CTI and FUNAI has never been the establishment of a "parallel power" to the State but to contribute on the indigenous policy advance in their protection objectives to isolated indigenous peoples. What motivated us to put into effect this institutional support was precisely to aggregate efforts in opposition and confrontation – these, for sure, illegal and parallel activities - to the missionary work and religious proselytism, grabbers, loggers and miners

in the misappropriation of indigenous lands and natural resources, compromising the physical, cultural and territorial security of isolated indigenous peoples.

The priority lines of action of these partnerships were, among others: i) hiring indigenous and non-indigenous collaborators; ii) support for infrastructure and strengthening of territorial monitoring actions, vigilance and localization executed by FUNAI's Ethno Environmental Protection Fronts - Frentes de Proteção Etnoambiental (FPEs), as a decentralized and specialized units in the protection of isolated indigenous peoples iii) support for training and capacity building of new staff for the FUNAI's FPEs; iv) Promote and technical support for articulation and interagency initiatives aimed at the defense and improvement of the rights of isolated indigenous peoples and recently contacted on the international scope.

All personnel hired by CTI works (or worked) in the regions in accordance to the bases and technical cooperation standards, complying to the caution and conduct guidelines established by FUNAI. Besides that they are oriented by planning, flows and functions previously agreed by the indigenous official agency.

In respect to the current Project ([for further information refer to CTI's website where its details are disclosed](#)), its elaboration considered: i) the experience gained in previous projects and the progress achieved; ii) the challenges placed on the present context of implementation of the policy to the protection of the isolated indigenous peoples and recent contact; iii) the guidelines, subject areas, lines of action and rules for financial support from the Fundo Amazônia. Whereas these three assumptions it was chosen to prioritize the support to the localization of the isolated indigenous peoples, to be executed by FUNAI, and strengthening the dialogue with indigenous peoples and the surrounding populations that share territory with isolated indigenous peoples.

This last point considers current territorial dynamics of isolated indigenous peoples – or by the advances of the FUNAI's isolated protection policy, or by the deficient protection to them in certain areas - and the need to discuss and support shared territorial management strategies with other indigenous peoples.

In this sense, the tensions and conflicts involving contact between the Matis and Korubo peoples, as reported on the article, precisely illustrate the challenges and the importance of advancing dialogue with indigenous peoples of the immediate surrounding territories of isolated indigenous peoples. Such element would thus enhance our conviction about the importance of strengthening and expanding indigenous participation in the Sistema de Proteção aos Índios Isolados (Protection to the Isolated Indigenous Peoples System).

The historical partnership between CTI and FUNAI, over more than three decades and through the administration of various presidents and coordinators of the policy for uncontacted indigenous peoples, is premised on an institutional performance line that considers strategic the strengthening of the indigenous official agency as well as understands the essential role of the civil society organizations, whether indigenous or indigenist organizations, to ensure the execution of the indigenous policy by qualified and participatory manner, respecting the duties and specific institutional missions.

Based on the above exposed, the CTI refutes the now mentioned article content, which seeks to associate the entity's image to vested interests and interference in internal disputes to CGIIRC / FUNAI, to the time we reaffirm our transparency in all procedures on the partnerships scope with the indigenous agency, and our historic commitment to defend the rights of indigenous peoples in Brazil to build a democratic and multiethnic State.