

To the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Violence and discrimination against indigenous women and girls in Brazil

Report submitted by **ANMIGA – *Articulação Nacional das Mulheres Indígenas Guerreiras da Ancestralidade***, the national indigenous Women network in Brazil, in reference to the review of the Brazilian State before the CERD Committee in November 2022.

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Introduction

We, Brazilian Indigenous Women of the ANMIGA Network, join our ancestors, with our collective voices and bodies, to denounce the continued attacks we suffer, in face of gender-based violence, silencing and discrimination.

Each and every day one of us is assaulted, faced with violence, beaten, or killed!

Enough with the violence against our bodies!

Yesterday, today, and tomorrow, we, indigenous women, are met with violence against our sisters in Southern Brazil and in other states too.

Violence is our enemy and antagonist to women's wellbeing within our territories. Still, we are engaged in national and international struggles. We are planted seeds, nurtured through our chanting; we strive for social justice, for the demarcation of our territories, for our forests to remain standing, and for health.

In Brazil, we comprise more than 305 indigenous Peoples. We speak 274 languages. We are more than 1 million people, more than 50% are women.

We are diverse. We are mothers, daughters, and granddaughters. We represent the continuation of many movements for the defense of the rights of indigenous women. As a result of many years of work, unfolding from the I March of Indigenous Women in Brasília, in 2019, Brazilian indigenous women founded a political front to defend our rights, which we named ANMIGA – National Articulation of Indigenous Women Warriors of Ancestry. ANMIGA is an important articulation of indigenous women from all six biomes in Brazil, intertwining indigenous knowledge, traditions, and collective struggles, which combine and converge in our Network. We gather politicized, collectively-organized women, amplifying our voices and perspectives, with the purpose to advance indigenous rights, protect the lives of our Peoples and enable the continuity of our existence and resistance as indigenous peoples in Brazil.

Women from ANMIGA participate in this collective struggle and network from many different positions; from grassroot communities and associations, as well as from their roles as teachers, elderly women, healers, and leaderships at local, regional, and national level. Today, we count with the voices of women from all six Brazilian biomes. We are together for those who came before us, us for us, us for them, and us for those who will come after us.



We are active in several fronts for the defense of the rights of indigenous women and girls, regardless of region, People, or class. We are all Ancestry Warriors. We are all indigenous women fighting for the *Buen Vivir* of Indigenous Peoples, for children, for women and for the environment where we live, our “territories”.

To further occupy spaces for dialogue and debate on the human rights of indigenous women, in 2022, for the first time in our history, ANMIGA is engaging with a United Nations Treaty Body, the CERD Committee, because we are indigenous women organized in a movement fighting for rights. Our report to the CERD Committee focuses on the topics outlined below, which we believe are urgent and part of an emergency. We present our concerns and demands also in the medium and long-term.

This report presents the context and cases of discrimination and violence against indigenous women and girls in Brazil between 2018 and 2022, focusing on four topics: discrimination, violence, social, economic, civil, and political rights, and the impacts COVID-19 pandemic.

1 – Racial discrimination against indigenous women and girls in Brazil

Since 2018, Brazil is going through a backlash in multiple fronts of public policy, in special those dedicated to human rights issues, territory, and environmental issues, among others. The Bolsonaro administration was responsible for the dismantling of agencies and State bodies extremely relevant to the protection of human rights. As such, it accelerated and amplified the levels of violence against original Peoples, in special indigenous women.

Besides not respecting the concepts and understandings arising from the CERD, the Brazilian government is responsible for the increase in discrimination and harassment against indigenous women, in politics as well as in the local contexts of indigenous territories.

The alarming consequences of this process may be observed in the increase in violence against the lives and the bodies of indigenous women and girls all over Brazil, but in special in regions of interest to extractives, predatory activities that impact the environment.

In addition, the great diversity of indigenous women from different Peoples is not acknowledged nor taken in consideration by public policy nor in legal definitions of discrimination, which renders invisible the complexity of our cultural relationships, cosmovisions and sensitivities as indigenous women.



2 – Violence against indigenous women and girls in Brazil

Violence against indigenous women and girls in Brazil is intrinsically connected to the national and global economic dynamics of production and export of commodities and to the greed over our indigenous lands.

We, Ancestry Warriors Women, hold hands at this time in history to send an SOS to the world. Enough with the violence, they are killing us before the eyes of the Law. They are silencing us before the eyes of those who should protect us.

ANMIGA manifests its outrage regarding the serious threats and torture suffered by our sister Pa’y Tavy Terã, known by the karáí [whites] as Joana Benites, as well as her daughters in the community of Soberania, indigenous territory Nhanderú Marangatú, municipality of Antônio João, Mato Grosso do Sul. On 5 March 2022, she was rescued by the team of Kuñangue Aty Guasu’s Observatory (an organization of Guarani and Kaiowá indigenous women). She was punished and kept hostage by evangelical indigenous leaderships of Campestre, in the Guarani and Kaiowá territory. They cut off part of her hair, assaulted her, tortured her physically and emotionally, on the accounts of practicing “wizardry” and “witchcraft”. In addition, the threats against her included plans to burn her alive, as reported by the Kuñangue Aty Guasu Observatory – OKA. In the Guarani and Kaiowá territories, between 2014 and 2022, already 17 traditional prayer houses have been burned, with seeds and sacred objects inside, in acts of religious intolerance against healers and spiritual leaders¹.

We lack words to describe our sadness and indignation witnessing cases such as this, which demonstrate that religious intolerance keeps on going, stealing the souls and killing the bodies of our indigenous relatives, who after 522 years of colonization use the bible as a weapon of war.

We manifest our solidarity to healer and spiritual leader Joana Benites and her family, as well as to all of the houses of prayer, *terreiros* [yards used for spiritual purposes], and sacred spaces of the original Peoples, which have been attacked throughout history, in a context that regrettably has been aggravating over the past few years.

We manifest our outrage and our solidarity with our sister Marcia Camilo Kaingang (which took place in Setor Estiva, in the Indigenous Territory Guarita, on 8 March, International Women’s Day) and with all of our Kaingang relatives who have been facing threats, violence, assault with serious injuries, in the conflict taking place due to

¹ See Kunangue Aty Guasu (2022). “Intolerância religiosa, racismo religioso e casas de rezas Kaiowá e Guarani queimadas”. Available at: https://apiboficial.org/files/2022/03/Relato%CC%81rio_Intolera%CC%82ncia-religiosa-racismo-religioso-e-casa-de-rezas-queimadas-em-comunidades-Kaiowa%CC%81-e-Guarani.pdf



the dispute in the internal leadership of the Indigenous Territory of Guarita (TI Guarita). Women in this land have been struggling for four years with violence perpetrated by a former leader [cacique] with dictatorial traits, sexist, who hides behind the laws he created himself to reinforce his own ruling. We repudiate it, and join our hearts with the affected families, in light of the context of violence and the attempted femicide of our sister Eva Kaingang, who is still in a hospital in Farroupilha, state of Rio Grande do Sul.

We express our solidarity in light of the pain of the relatives of Graciane Gonçalves Feliciano, 23 years-old, of the Kaingang indigenous people, in Indigenous Territory Xapecó, municipality of Ipuacu, in the western portion of the state of Santa Catarina, who was victim of femicide perpetrated by a former partner.

3 – Social, economic, civil, and political rights of indigenous women and girls

Discrimination against indigenous women and girls is observed in relation to all human rights, in a violent way. We are constant victims of racism and institutional misogyny.

At times, our rights are denied, and we are obliterated from spaces that were supposed to protect us. Regarding health, our access to specialized services and equipment is restricted, and we witness the dismantling of SESAI – the Specialized Secretary for Indigenous Health. In what concerns education, indigenous children are humiliated and harassed for expressing their culture, and there have been cases of suicide of indigenous children in classrooms.

The bodies, wombs and soil of indigenous women are sickened by invasion and contamination, severely affecting our health and that of our daughters and sons. It also threatens the food security of our Peoples due to the poisoning of waters and animals.

In 2022, indigenous women launched the Headdress Caucus, a political platform intending to occupy institutions, built by indigenous women. It counted with seven candidacies of indigenous women to seats in the House of Representatives, and ten indigenous women running for state legislatures. Elected representatives Sônia Guajajara (with more than 157 thousand votes in the state of São Paulo) and Célia Xakriabá (more than 100 thousand votes in the state of Minas Gerais) are the highest representation of the victory of the Headdress Caucus, together with the expressive voting conquered by other indigenous women candidates who, despite not being elected, are now stronger, more powerful and confident to perform their roles and occupy more spaces in politics and in multiple levels of institutional power.

The Indigenous Women Warriors who run in the 2022 elections faced multiple instances of political violence and institutional racism in their campaigns. Electoral and party mechanisms, which are conservative, sexist, and



racist, reinforced obstacles to the participation of indigenous women. We faced the erasure of our leadership perpetrated by political parties, and, even without funding, we built our campaigns around the collective force of indigenous women.

Even though Brazil has specific legislation dedicated to responding to gender and domestic violence [known as “Maria da Penha” law], an emblematic piece of legislation to protect the rights of Brazilian women, insufficient awareness about the law, among other elements, creates a barrier between indigenous women and the services and equipment we should have access to, according to the law. Many among us cannot travel multiple kilometers, through land and water, to get to a police station. Even when we manage to get to a specialized police station for women, we are faced with racism and more violence perpetrated by police agents.

4 – Indigenous emergency: COVID-19 and the neglect of authorities

The COVID-19 pandemic severely affected indigenous peoples, increasing situations of vulnerability for the entirety of our communities, women and men, the elderly, children, and youths.

We witnessed the irreparable loss of our elderlies, and with them the loss of knowledge and traditional science. We experience the increase in violence against our own bodies and the bodies of our sisters, an escape to the reduced socioeconomic conditions of our communities.

Social distancing, a necessary measure to combat COVID-19 in the first years of the pandemic, pushed indigenous women further away from spaces of conviviality, warmth, and interaction, as they became restricted to the family setting. In addition, due to scarce access to the internet, many opportunities for social interaction were restricted to virtual dynamics not accessible to indigenous women.

Recommendations

Wishing to collaborate to the works of the CERD Committee, we present below the following suggested recommendations to the Brazilian State:

- 1- To embrace the cause expressly and publicly for the lives of indigenous women and commit to the protection of our territories.
- 2- To formulate and disseminate information campaigns on the laws and policies for the elimination of racial discrimination dedicated specifically to indigenous women, with the meaningful participation of indigenous women and indigenous movement.



- 3- To create a specific State institution, with adequate and dedicated budget, mandated with protecting the human rights of indigenous peoples and mainstreaming gender and ethnicity in public policy, ensuring full and meaningful participation of indigenous women and that we have decision-making power over the formulation and implementation of such policies.
 - 4- To create public policies specifically dedicated to ending violence against indigenous women and girls, that are culturally adequate, that count with the meaningful participation of indigenous women, and that have adequate and dedicated budget ensured.
 - 5- To create legislation, public policies, and programmes, with clearly established goals and dedicated adequate funding, to end racism and racial discrimination against indigenous peoples, with meaningful civil society participation, with the goal of, among others, celebrating the contributions and the heritage of indigenous peoples to society.
 - 6- To strengthen in the efforts, initiatives, and good practices of the indigenous women's movement to prevent and respond to violence and discrimination, based on the knowledge, and experience we have developed ourselves, for instance, the KASA Observatory of Indigenous Women (OKAIM), an initiative dedicated to responding to violence from the perspective of indigenous cosmovision.
 - 7- To ensure that indigenous women and girls are included and participate in all efforts and decision-making spaces to protect the environment and respond to climate change, and that environmental financing, budget and investment, legislation, public policies, and programmes respond to the specific needs, concerns, and priorities of indigenous women and girls.
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Final remarks

We, Indigenous Women, fight for the demarcation of indigenous lands, against the liberalization of mining and renting of our territories, against the attempt to dismantle environmental licensing and legislation, against the financing of firearms in rural areas. We are going through the dismantling of the indigenist and environmental public policy.

We are faced with much violence and many human rights violations: the atrocities of sexism, racism in all its forms, the increase in femicide and religious intolerance. All of this is reinforced by the discourse of an anti-government; a racist, homophobic, anti-indigenous government.



We are the daughters who, with our bodies tainted in *urucum* [red paint fabricated from seeds of the *Urucum* tree], have attempted to block violence and barbarism fomented by a genocidal government. They will not silence us. And the State silence is a way to kill us too.

We ask for help. Indigenous women ask for help. Mother Earth asks for help. We will keep on mobilized, organized, together to fight for our rights. And we will resist, for we are strong trees, our roots deep in the Earth.

We are many. We are multiple. We are women, chiefs, midwives, healers, spiritual leaders, rural workers, teachers, lawyers, nurses and doctors – in the multiple sciences of our Territory as well as in Universities. We are anthropologists, congresswomen, psychologists. We are those who move, from the grounds of our villages to the grounds of the world.

Land-women, Water-women, Biome-women, Spirit-women, Tree-women, Root-women, Seed-women. Not only the Women Warriors of Ancestry.

Together, all of us, stand against all forms of violence against our indigenous body-territory, and the body of any other women in the world.

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Body-Territory of indigenous women MATTERS!

Indigenous bodies MATTER!

Ni una a menos

For the Lives of Indigenous Women

NO TO VIOLENCE!

