
Brazil: NO to the REDD+ Mejuruá project in the state of Amazonas

Statement of condemnation regarding violations committed by BR Arbo Gestão Florestal and its REDD+ Mejuruá project in the state of Amazonas, Brazil

We, indigenous, peasant and afrodescendent women from different countries in Latin America, defenders of collective territories, who gathered in the Alto Turiaçu Indigenous territory – in Ararorenda village of the Ka'apor peoples – in the state of Maranhão, Brazil, from September 9-12, 2025, to discuss carbon markets and carbon projects such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) which threaten our territories, hereby publicly express our condemnation of the violations committed in the context of the Mejuruá REDD project in the municipalities of Carauari, Jutaí, and Juruá (state of Amazonas, Brazil), for which the company BR Arbo Gestão Florestal S.A. (BR Arbo) is responsible.

The project was submitted to the registry of the carbon certification body Verra in 2023, seeking certification under the VCS and CCB standards, with BR Arbo listed as the project proponent. The company claims to own more than 900,000 hectares in three municipalities in the Brazilian Amazon state of Amazonas. The REDD+ project covers 20% of the claimed area – totaling 123,762 hectares - and according to the project description submitted to Verra, foresees the incorporation of additional land over time, potentially reaching a total area of up to 668,116 hectares.

The project description available in the Verra registry states that 10 communities are located within or around the project area of influence: Riozinho, Vila Nova, Reforma, Lago Serrado, Ressaca, Santa Cruz, Concórdia, Marapatá, São João and Bacaba. Among these, Riozinho, in Carauari, is identified as the most impacted community due to its location inside the project implementation area and its dependence on the forest of traditional subsistence livelihood activities. The community has lived in the territory for more than 50 years and has long been fighting for recognition of its traditional territory and for collective land regularization. The community of Riozinho is composed of riverine and extractivist populations whose livelihood depends on rubber tapping, the harvesting of fruits such as açaí, buriti e patauá, as well as fishing and hunting.

In April 2024, the community formally submitted a request for territorial recognition to the State Secretariat for Cities and Territories of Amazonas (SECT/AM). This process occurred in parallel with BR Arbo's attempts to implement the Mejuruá REDD project.

The Association of Residents of Baixo Riozinho (ASMOBRI) has repeatedly reported violations committed by BR Arbo during the project implementation process. These include violations of the right to free, prior and informed consultation, as established under Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), as well as incidents of harassment, pressure, co-optation and misinformation carried out by the company.

There are also allegations that BR Arbo contacted residents of the Riozinho community to sign contracts offering plots of 5, 10 or 15 hectares in exchange for their support for the Mejuruá project. Such offer constitutes an attempted transfer of the community's own traditional territory, to which tit

holds rights, regardless of the implementation of the project and of BR Arbo's involvement.

Based on complaints received, in relation to the Mejuruá project, the 5th Office of the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (Ministério Pública Federal, MPF, in Portuguese) in the state of Amazonas issued Legal Recommendation nº 1/2025, recommending that the company BR Arbo and the certification standard body Verra immediately suspend the Mejuruá REDD project in the state of Amazonas. Following these denunciations, Verra rejected the project's registration request in April 225; however, this decision was reversed in July of the same year. The project is currently awaiting approval of its registration request by Verra. In recent days, pressure and threats against the community have intensified. We have been made aware of the following practices

1. Direct pressure and intimidation

- Individual home visits by company representatives, aimed at pressuring residents to sign documents.
- Messages containing explicit threats, with intimidation that had previously been veiled becoming overt.
- The creation of an environment of fear and insecurity, especially among families with little access to legal information.

2. Threats of litigation and abuse of power

- Announcements that starting next year, the company will initiate individual legal actions against residents who refuse to sign the proposed documents.
- Abuse of legal power as an instrument of coercion, with the company claiming to have 'the best law firms and lawyers', effectively making individual legal defense impossible for families.
- A deliberate strategy to weaken the community association by isolating residents and undermining collective forms of organizing and defense.

3. Violation of territorial and production rights

- A drastic reduction of land available for traditional use, with residents reporting that they were receiving much smaller parcels than the territories they historically used.
- Allocation of insufficient land (8 hectares, for example), which would not allow for the reproduction of traditional ways of life and renders activities such as rubber tapping and the harvesting of açaí and copaiba unviable.
- Substitution of upland tropical forest areas with floodplains, which are often less productive, have poor water quality, and are unsuitable for planting and traditional management.

4. Misleading discourse and manipulation of information

- Company narrative claiming that residents are 'receiving more than they deserve' and that the company is being 'very generous' in conceding rights, contradicting the reality lived in the territories.
- Claims that initial benefits were suspended because the company had to allocate resources to legal action, blaming the association of residents and the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office.
- Downplaying impacts by presenting isolated and inefficient actions as benefits (such as solar panels and boreholes); many of which are non-functional or poorly implemented.

5. Denying the identity of traditional communities

- Refusal on the part of the company to recognize residents as a traditional community, claiming that doing so would be harmful to them.
- Attempts to forcefully classify them as family farmers, erasing the traditional and collective character of the territory.
- This strategy would lead to the withdrawal of specific rights guaranteed by law as well as

institutional instruments protecting traditional communities.

6. Violation of the right to information and to free, prior and informed consent

- Withholding or refusing to provide complete documents and transparent information regarding the REDD project.
- Pressuring residents to sign documents without adequate time for analysis without independent legal advise, and without collective discussion.
- Direct violation of the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

7. Attempts to coopt leaders and institutional illegalities

- Attempts of cooptation of community leaders by the company, generating internal conflicts and delegitimizing collective representation.
- Signing of documents by unauthorized individuals, including attempts to forge the signature of the president of the residents' association.
- Use of these illegitimate signatures to legitimize procedures and pressure other residents to adhere to the project

8. Explicit threats of eviction and loss of territory

- Direct communication that residents who refuse to sign documents "will be removed" or be forced to "stay out" of the community from next year.
- Use of fear of total loss of the territory as key instrument of coercion.
- References to the company's political and judicial power (including alleged connection with senior members of the judiciary) as a form of symbolical intimidation.

9. Territorial reconfiguration in favor of the project

- Unilateral redrawing of territorial boundaries to prioritize the interests of the REDD project.
- Appropriation of the most productive areas (upland forests) by the company and allocation of degraded or unproductive areas to the families.
- Restrictions of territorial use and destruction of traditional ways of life in the name of the REDD project's viability.

In light of the pressure, intimidation, threats, and rights violations reported by traditional communities as a result of the REDD project proposed by BR Arbo Gestão Florestal S.A., we, women defending our territories:

- denounce the **conduct of the certification standard body Verra**, which has so far failed to issue any public statement regarding the practices described. Verra must take urgent action to cancel the project's certification process;
- **reaffirm our strong rejection of all forms of REDD+**. REDD+ is not a solution; it is an illusionary and false proposal that financializes nature, allows intermediaries to profit, enables companies and governments to continue polluting, and deprives our communities of their territories, our vital sources of life.
- **express our full solidarity with and support for the community of Riozinho** and its struggle for recognition of its traditional territory and for collective land regularization.

This struggle is ours.

17th of December 2025

Signed by:

- Associação das Mulheres Munduruku Wakoborun - Brasil
- Associação dos Pescadores São José de Icatu Quilombola - Brasil
- Associação Indígena Extrativista da Aldeia Akamassyron Surui Aikewara- Brasil
- Associação do Povo Nawá (APINAWA) - Brasil
- Associação dos Moradores do Baixo Riozinho e Entorno (ASMOBRI) – Brasil
- Associação dos Moradores Agroextrativistas do Assentamento Acutipereira (ASMOGA) - Brasil
- Associação dos Moradores Agroextrativistas do Assentamento Peaex Acangata - (ASMOGAC) – Brasil
- Aty Ñeychyrô - Argentina
- Coletivo de Mulheres Flor da Roça, Quilombo São José de Icatu – Brasil
- Comité Defensor de la Vida Amazónica en la cuenca del Río Madera (COMVIDA) - Bolivia
- Coordinadora Nacional de Defensa de Territorios Indígenas Originarios Campesinos y Áreas Protegidas (CONTIOCAP) - Bolivia
- Red de Mujeres Indígenas Tejiendo Resistencias - Perú
- Tejido Unuma De La Orinoquia – Colombia
- Tuxa Ta Pame - Conselho de Gestão Ka'apor - Brasil

Signatures in support:

- World Rainforest Movement (WRM)
- Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN)
- The Corner House, UK

To sign-on in support, please write an e-mail to wrn@wrn.org.uy