

# Brazilian Indians Launch Campaign Guarani Are Great People

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A group of Brazilian Indians has just kicked off a campaign called Guarani People, Great People. The self-esteem-enhancer promotion was launched in the Tey' kue village, near the municipality of Caarapó, in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul in the Brazilian Midwest.

Resulting from a strengthened continental articulation of the Guarani people, the campaign intends to show to society the value of this people, and to intensify the fight for their rights, especially to life and to a land of their own.

Today, 225,000 Guarani are living in South America. They live in Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia and Brazil. It is the people with the largest population in our country, about 50,000 people in eight states (Mato Grosso do Sul, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Espírito Santo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul and Pará).

In Brazil, there are many references to the Guarani people (in the literature, music, painting, cinema). Although they are so present, the Guarani people remain virtually invisible. What is known is that their children die undernourished, their lands are invaded, they suffer with a high murder rate - that is, the State disregards their minimal rights.

But, despite this reality, the Guarani people are still resisting in some parts of their territory, including metropolises such as São Paulo and Porto Alegre. They are fighting to reoccupy the rest of their land, maintaining their beliefs, language, their solidarity-based economy and way of living.

The campaign will rely on the participation of Guarani leaders from the Guarani People's Assembly - (APG) and the Central Network of Organizations of Native Guarayos Peoples, both from Bolivia, and Teachers and chiefs coming from Argentina, Paraguay, and from the states of Espírito Santo, São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina.

Regarding other indigenous peoples in Brazil, leaders from the Irantxe and Myky (state of Mato Grosso), Kwaza and Migueleno (state of Roraima), and Terena (state of Mato Grosso do Sul) will also take part in this campaign.

The launching of the campaign is supported by the Peasantry Research and Promotion Center - Cipca (Bolivia), Guarani Masters and Leaders and the Aborigine Pastoral Team - Endepa (Argentina), Guarani Leaders and the National Coordination of the Indigenous Pastoral - Conapi (Paraguay), the Committee of Guarani Kaiowá Teachers and Leaders, the Indianist Missionary Council - Cimi, the Native Amazon Operation - PAHO, the Ecumenical Service Coordination - Cese and Norad (Brazil).

## Campaign Background

In 2005, indigenous leaders and organizations and experts in indigenous affairs began to develop a dialogue on possible joint actions. In the following year, they held the "First Guarani Continental Meeting" in São Gabriel (state of Rio Grande do Sul), to celebrate the memory and resistance of the indigenous peoples of the 7 missions and the 250th anniversary of the death of their leader, Sepé Tiaraju.

About 1,500 Guarani from Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay who attended the meeting decided to restore the power of their joint organization and, throughout the year, they discussed how to carry out a large continental campaign.

Since then, the Committee of Guarani Kaiowá Teachers and Leaders to Cimi in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul took the initiative to produce materials (a folder, a magazine, a poster and a website) to show the reality faced by the Guarani people and to disseminate the "Commitment Letter: Yvy Poty. In Defense of Life, the Land and the Future."

In April of this year, the 2nd continental meeting was held in Porto Alegre, capital of the southernmost state of Rio Grande do Sul, during which political links were enhanced, as well as the desire of the Guarani people to engage in a comprehensive and joint struggle. The proposal of the campaign was presented in plenary and it was embraced by all those attending the meeting.

More Information

[www.campanhaguarani.org.br](http://www.campanhaguarani.org.br)