



PRESS RELEASE

WITHDRAW INVITATION TO PRESIDENT BOLSONARO

In December 2021, over one million people from around the world signed a petition calling on the International Criminal Court “*to take all necessary steps to start an investigation into Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro for possible crimes against humanity over his government’s policies against the Amazon and its people. We urge member states to take action to ensure that severe damage to the environment, whether widespread or long-term, is fully recognized as a crime of ecocide, and can be prosecuted under international law.*”

The global Petition went on to state that Bolsonaro “greenlighted illegal mining and logging in indigenous lands, sabotaged environmental laws and now the destruction of the Amazon has risen by more than 20% in a year – a loss equivalent to 3,000 football fields per day”.

Global revulsion reflected in the million strong signature campaign was mirrored in recent Brazilian opinion polls that recorded satisfaction with Bolsonaro’s administration at 19%, the worst number ever recorded. The largest number of interviewees identified ‘corruption’ as Brazil’s most pressing problem, followed by ‘poverty’ and ‘social inequality’.

While a member of the Brazilian Congress under former President Dilma Rousseff, Bolsonaro’s racist and homophobic activism prompted an international campaign in support of legal protection for Brazil’s LGBT community. For his part President Bolsonaro in 2019 has accused “NGOs” of setting the Amazon forest fires rather than the illegal clear-cutting policy embraced by his right-wing Government.

In light of such global and domestic rejection, the invitation issued by President Ali is bizarre. As with the previous sally of the PPP Government into Latin American politics at the prompting of then US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, which over-turned Guyana’s careful avoidance of interference in Venezuelan domestic politics, the latest intervention has a strong whiff of Republican politics.

The specific incentive for the Bolsonaro visit. seems linked to constructing the trans-amazonica highway from Brazil across the Rupununi to a projected deep-water harbour on the Atlantic. This project is almost entirely for the benefit of Brazil. Moreover, Guyana has demonstrated a depressing lack of capacity or expertise to effectively protect its national interest in the construction of mega-projects.

Large-scale infra-structure projects have turned vast areas of the Amazon into zones of sacrifice for indigenous peoples, as testified by the devastation across the region. There is no historical evidence whatever to support the efforts to seduce indigenous communities into believing that such projects are in their interests..

The organizations endorsing this Statement are calling for the invitation to President Bolsonaro to be rescinded in light of overwhelming evidence that his policies with respect to the Amazon threaten the climate well-being of the planet as a whole and are genocidal for indigenous peoples in particular.,
Signatories.

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