

URGENT ACTION

BILL THREATENS HUMAN RIGHTS AND CLIMATE

President Lula da Silva must veto the 'PL da Devastação' bill, approved on 17 July by Brazil's Congress without public debate and transparency. This bill drastically weakens environmental licensing, undermines critical environmental institutions, and shows little regard for human rights. We call on the President to veto this bill, as it threatens the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, the rights to access to information, public participation and access to justice, as well as the rights of Indigenous Peoples and climate justice.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva
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Mr. President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva

I am writing to you to share my concern about the "General Environmental Licensing Law", also referred to by civil society as "Devastation Bill" (PL da Devastação), approved by the Chamber of Deputies on 17 July 2025, now under your consideration.

This bill severely weakens Brazil's environmental licensing framework by enabling automatic approval for most projects through "License by Adhesion and Commitment," based solely on self-declaration, without prior environmental or human rights assessments. It also exempts entire sectors, such as agroforestry and livestock, from licensing, and creates a "special environmental license" to fast-track government-designated strategic projects without full environmental review. These modifications pose serious and irreversible risks to the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment and, if implemented, would accelerate environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change.

The bill also restricts the participation of institutions tasked with protecting Indigenous rights in the approval of projects to only those on demarcated lands, disregarding the many territories awaiting formal recognition. This undermines the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples and Quilombola communities to their lands, territories, and resources. We also stress that the bill was passed without meaningful public consultation and could lead to violations to the rights to access to information, public participation and access to justice.

In light of these severe impacts and the constitutional responsibility you uphold, we urgently request your full veto of the "PL da Devastação" to protect life, and human rights, including to a healthy environment. We emphasize that the approval of this bill contradicts Brazil's international human rights and environmental commitments, especially in light of its presidency of the 2025 UN Climate Change Conference (COP30). A "climate leader" cannot allow this threat to human rights and climate justice.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The General Environmental Licensing Law (Bill [PL 2159/2021](#)), widely referred to as the “Devastation Bill” (*Projeto de Lei da Devastação*) [was approved](#) by the Chamber of Deputies on 17 July 2025, with 267 votes in favor and 115 against, and is now under review by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who holds the power to veto it.

Backed by [agribusiness](#) and the [oil and gas](#) industries, and approved without adequate public debate or effective participation by civil society, Bill 2159/2021 significantly weakens Brazil’s environmental licensing framework. Among its most alarming provisions is the expansion of the so-called “License by Adhesion and Commitment”, which would allow most projects (excluding only those classified as high-impact) to bypass prior environmental and human rights impact assessments. Under this mechanism, companies could obtain [automatic approval based solely on self-declaration](#), without any evaluation by competent authorities.

The bill also [exempts entire sectors](#), such as agroforestry and livestock farming, from environmental licensing altogether. Projects in these sectors would require only a simple adherence form, with no technical scrutiny of their environmental impacts. Additionally, the bill introduces a [“special environmental license”](#) for government-designated “strategic” projects, including oil extraction, enabling them to be fast-tracked through a simplified, single-phase licensing process without full impact assessments.

These provisions against environmental safeguards pose serious risks to the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, recognized by the UN General Assembly, affirmed in the San Salvador Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights (ratified by Brazil), and enshrined in Article 225 of the Brazilian Constitution. The bill also undermines the rights to access information, public participation, and access to justice.

With respect to Indigenous Peoples’ rights, the bill PL 2159/2021 restricts the participation of competent authorities to projects affecting officially demarcated Indigenous lands and titled Quilombola territories, ignoring the reality of land tenure insecurity in Brazil. [Around 80% of quilombola territories \(TQs\) and 32.6% of Indigenous Lands \(TIs\) are awaiting titling](#). These provisions severely undermine the rights of indigenous peoples enshrined in instruments ratified by Brazil like the ILO Convention No. 169 or the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

A group of [UN Special Rapporteurs](#) has already warned of the grave threats posed by the bill to human, including Indigenous Peoples’, rights. Overall, it represents a major setback to Brazil’s international human rights and environmental commitments. Brazil faces significant human rights challenges, including persistent police violence predominantly affecting Black youth, increasing gender-based violence, and ongoing threats to land and environmental defenders, especially those from Indigenous Peoples and Quilombola communities. Despite some progress, systemic issues like overcrowded prisons, limited social policy investment, and insufficient transitional justice measures for dictatorship-era abuses remain critical concerns.

The surge in deforestation and [recurring wildfires](#), coupled with lax environmental enforcement, intensifies climate risks and undermines Indigenous rights to land and livelihood. The approval of regressive legislation such as the “PL da Devastação” deepens these threats by weakening environmental protections and facilitating exploitation. Brazil must uphold its commitments to human rights, environmental protection, and climate agreements. Not to do so will risk undermining Brazil’s global leadership role in this crucial year for climate action. Effective responses depend on strengthening democratic oversight, ensuring justice for marginalized groups, and restoring robust environmental governance.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Portuguese.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: August 2025

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: People Affected by Climate Change (They / them)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: n/a

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

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