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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

**DIGITAL HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATION SHEDS LIGHT ON MURDERS OF
INDIGENOUS LAND DEFENDERS IN BRAZIL**

NOVEMBER 15, 2023, LOS ANGELES - Together with Cultural Survival, the University of California Digital Investigations Network has released its latest report: *Indigenous Land Defenders of Brazil: In Memoriam (2019-2022)*.

Indigenous defenders in Brazil are engaged in the latest chapter of a centuries-long struggle to protect their ancestral lands from exploitation and abuse. Opposing them are the many actors seeking to separate Indigenous Peoples from their land; people who often portray Indigenous Peoples as barriers to their progress. The resulting tension has led to profiteering and violence on a jaw-dropping scale.

This report is unique in the way that it maps the threat Indigenous land defenders face as they stand up to extractivists. To document what is happening on an individual level and how it connects to broader regional threats against Indigenous environmental defenders in Brazil, student researchers in the University of California Network leveraged online open-source information, broadly defined as publicly available information on the internet. This includes social media, reports from news sources, governments and civil society, as well as satellite imagery to track the erosion of Indigenous territories over time.

Promise Institute Assistant Director and head of the Promise Institute for Human Rights' Digital Investigations Lab (part of the Network), Professor Jess Peake noted "The report is a powerful advocacy tool which highlights a small fraction of the

deaths of Indigenous Peoples in Brazil, many of which remain otherwise invisible to outside communities."

The first part of this report profiles thirteen Indigenous leaders and land defenders from seven regions in Brazil killed between 2019-2022, with some caught in the middle of intense environmental crises. The thirteen lives and deaths portrayed in this report are unfortunately only a small glimpse into the larger crisis of hundreds of killings of Indigenous Peoples in Brazil, and reflect a deeper systemic issue.

Organizations such as Conselho Indigenista Missionário (CIMI) and Secretaria de Saúde Indígena (SESAI) report incredibly high numbers of deaths, including 795 killings during former president Bolsonaro's administration, with 180 killed in 2022 alone.

The second part includes additional information on the seven Brazilian states in which the defenders were killed. Taken together, the individual defender profiles and information about select regions starts to paint a picture of how and why these killings of Indigenous defenders have occurred. More importantly, it links each defender to their territory, acknowledging their interconnection. This part also details an additional six states that Cultural Survival has identified as emerging sites of concern for possible threats and targeting of Indigenous land defenders.

The University of California Digital Investigations Network is a groundbreaking collaboration of human rights digital investigation labs at the [Human Rights Center at UC Berkeley](#), the [Dolores Huerta Research Center for the Americas at UC Santa Cruz](#), and the [Promise Institute for Human Rights at UCLA School of Law](#).

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