

GUAJAJARA

Brazilian newspapers have been reporting Arariboia as the "Most Threatened Indigenous Land in Brazil". Its extensive area and fertile rainforest soil have always attracted greedy loggers, ranchers and miners. The invasion of these lands directly threatens peoples who chose to isolate themselves and live only on hunting and forest fruits.

Violence against indigenous people has not stopped throughout Brazil, not just in the Araribóia/Maranhão TI. In Mato Grosso do Sul, farmers accused of committing a massacre in the Kaiowá village in 2016 are still awaiting trial without having suffered any consequences. Last month, April 2022, an article reported cases of violence, abuse, and high malaria and mercury poisoning rates among the Yanomami peoples – all due to the massive mining invasion of their territory.

The native peoples have a relationship of respect and affection with nature. When their forests are destroyed, so is part of their history and culture. The entire Eden team in Brazil has been moved and found motivation in the possibilities this work brings. We realized that it's not just about planting trees but also about getting hope to people who thought they didn't have the space to be heard anymore.

At Aldeia Três Passagens, we see constant signs of the invasion of the Karuís (as the whites are called by the indigenous people) - fences scattered throughout the territory and the presence of cattle that do not make any profit for the true owners of the land, who continue to live without access to even basic sanitation.



Sivaldo Guajajara, one of the members of our planting team, remembers that before Eden one of the only ways to support his five children was to work for the farmers to receive a daily rate of only fifteen reais. Survival, which was previously ensured by hunting and fishing, became even more difficult with the increasing proximity of large farmers and, consequently, the transformation of forests into pastures. One of the best memories of Sivaldo in his community is linked to the river that crosses Três Passages. According to him, the water used to go very close to his family members' adobe houses. There was an enormous abundance of fish, and the children played on the banks in full view of the adults.

Now the river has only a few fish, and the riparian forest is almost completely devastated.

And that's how he describes his biggest dream: "to see our river and our forest as they used to be. I don't know if I'll be able to see all this, but I have my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren who will be able to see this dream come true."

The Arariboia Indigenous Territory has been struggling to rebuild itself since the last fire that burned more than 100,000 hectares of the Amazon rainforest. And our team wants to help grow this forest, even if it is necessary to face challenges and cross-interest groups. Our first planting area in Três Passages is on the river's margin, which crosses the village. Still, we will also reforest at least 700 hectares of an area of Amazonian forest in Três Passages so that Sivaldo's grandchildren can see the seeds their grandfather planted.

