Mr President,

Right Livelihood thanks the Special Rapporteur for his report and the attention given to the situation of Brazilian indigenous peoples in the Amazon, who have to face the daily consequences of garimperos’ presence in their territory, including mercury contamination.

Despite being protected on paper, the Amazon region has seen an exponential increase in illegal mining over the past 10 years, which is estimated to have grown by over 500% under the blind eye of the authorities who profit from the gold market, causing irreversible damages to the environment, health and lives of the peoples affected. A recent analysis of Yanomami waters found mercury levels 8,600% higher than that safe for human consumption.

While mercury contamination is decimating the population slowly and silently, wildcat miners also pose an immediate threat to life as they use violence to obtain access to indigenous lands. The scale and frequency of violence has increased in recent years and it is deeply concerning that miners are now equipped with automatic weapons and using criminal gangs to perpetrate violent acts.

While the Brazilian authorities continue to claim to have legislation in place to protect indigenous peoples’ rights, the only effort of the current administration was to dismantle such architecture. It is fundamental that such a trend is not perpetuated further after the 2022 general elections.

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

How can States effectively ensure that they do not become accomplices in the killing of indigenous peoples through the importation of Brazilian gold?