52nd session of the Human Rights Council

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

Mr. President,

Right Livelihood, Survival International and CIMI thank the Special Rapporteur for his report which recognises the strong connection between global extractivism, climate change and growing inequalities, with effects on the right to food.

This connection cannot be any clearer in Brazil, specifically in the Yanomami territory, where years of invasions by illegal miners coupled with dismantling protection and healthcare structures have led to a real humanitarian crisis.

While we appreciate the efforts of the new government to expel miners and protect the Amazon, gold mining has caused irreversible damage. Important sources of livelihood have either been destroyed or are heavily contaminated with mercury – with grave consequences on the rights to food and the health of the population. Yanomami children are currently dying of malnutrition at a rate 191 times higher than the national average, and thousands are infected by infectious diseases such as Malaria.

Removing gold miners will not be sufficient to provide a solution to this crisis. Restructuring the Distrito Sanitario Especial Indígena Yanomami should be a priority, to guarantee adequate healthcare both in the short and long term. In addition, the Brazilian authorities must urgently establish a permanent monitoring and protection programme for the Yanomami Territory, in full consultation with the communities concerned, to ensure that invasions and genocide can never be a reality again.

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

What role can the Council play in ensuring accountability for the grave human rights violations to which Brazil’s previous administration was complicit in?