



**Human Rights Council | 39<sup>th</sup> Session  
September 2018**

**Item 3&5: Clustered interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

**Delivered by: Defence for Children International (DCI) on behalf of Defence for Children International – Brazil (DCI-Brazil)**

Defence for Children International welcomes the opportunity to speak in this session.

We would like to thank the United Nations Special Rapporteur and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for convening a meeting on the human rights of indigenous peoples in the Amazon and Gran Chaco. We welcome their focus on this region, the role of the civil society organisations, and their recommendations.

DCI-Brazil works with other civil society organisations and regional and international mechanisms to promote and protect the rights of indigenous children in Brazil, and continues to document acts of discrimination against indigenous communities, as well as a lack of equality between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, including children. As such, we would like to highlight our concerns about the main challenges for indigenous peoples in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul.

Indigenous families suffer from humiliation and discrimination when accessing basic services provided by the State, including health care, social services, and education. Institutional racism, misconceptions and prejudice negatively affect the form in which indigenous peoples are addressed, evaluated, and welcomed.

Moreover, children in the Guarani, Kaiowá, and Terena indigenous communities suffer from serious human rights violations regarding their family and community life rights. Of particular concern is the fact that children are being irregularly separated from their families and communities. Judicial decisions in this regard are often arbitrary and psychologists and social welfare personnel often recommend indigenous children be immediately placed in a foster family or included in the National Registry of Adoption, which results in placement with non-indigenous families.

A total of 65 indigenous children were separated from their families in several municipalities across Mato Grosso do Sul in 2017 alone. Of these, 20 were children aged 5 and younger, 8 were separated before turning 1, and 3 were removed when only a few days old. Of particular concern is the municipality of Dourados, where 50 of these 65 children have been separated and where 70% of the children in institutions are indigenous, in contrast to 30% of non-indigenous children.

According to national and international law, separating children from their parents is a serious violation of their rights. This practice can also have a negative impact on children's health, causing suffering, insecurity, and depression, and can have a long-term impact on their psychological development and well-being.

Therefore, DCI urges the Human Rights Council to call on Brazil to stop these practices and return these children to their families as well as providing the necessary follow-up support to these children, families, and communities. Furthermore, we call on all member States to comply with national and international law and standards, and to fully promote and protect the human rights of indigenous peoples, including children.

Thank you.