

MARUDI PRESS RELEASE

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*The Wapichan People of the South Rupununi welcome the recent **Communication** sent to the Government of Guyana by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination concerning the Mining on Marutu Taawa (Marudi Mountain). The UN Committee's Communication is timely and crucial, as we continue to fight the contamination, pollution, and destruction of our sacred mountain, which is also an important watershed at the source of Guyana's main waterways. The issue of mining at Marutu Taawa is a matter of grave concern, as it affects our Constitutional rights to health and a healthy environment, as well as to the protection, preservation, and promulgation of our cultural heritage and way of life.*

The Communication stresses that the UN Committee is concerned that we, the affected people, have not been involved in an effective and meaningful manner in the decision-making surrounding mining at Marutu Taawa. The latest example of our marginalization has been the failure to include our participation and to address our concerns in the draft Environmental and Social Impact Assessment of the Romanex mining project. This is the second time in 2018 that the UN Committee has written to the Government of Guyana, urging it to protect and respect our rights under the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In the first Communication, the UN Committee had recommended the Government ensure that environmental and social impact assessments of the proposed mining project on Marutu Taawa were conducted with our participation. This did not happen, and we welcome the Committee's follow-up on this matter.

We urge the Government to respect its treaty obligations and to follow the recommendations of the UN Committee and to:

- 1. Revoke the flawed draft Environmental and Social Impact Assessment;*
- 2. Conduct an environmental and social impact assessment with our full participation, as the indigenous peoples affected by the mining project on Marutu Taawa; and*
- 3. Suspend the mining project on Marutu Taawa until we have given our free, prior, and informed consent to the project following full and adequate consultation.*