

Brazil court rules government must protect tribes



Brasilia, August 6 (RHC)-- Brazil's Supreme Court has ruled that President Jair Bolsonaro's government must adopt measures to stop the spread of novel coronavirus to the country's vulnerable Indigenous communities.

A majority of the justices voted to give the government 30 days to draw up a plan to reduce the threat to Indigenous people from COVID-19, which could wipe out some tribes.

Measures should include sanitary barriers to stop outsiders entering protected tribal lands and the isolation of invaders, but the court stopped short of ordering the immediate expulsion of illegal loggers and miners that Indigenous leaders say are spreading the virus.

The action was sought by Brazil's main Indigenous umbrella organisation APIB, which says Indigenous people have died from COVID-19. Some 22,325 cases have been confirmed among Brazil's 850,000 Indigenous people, while half of Brazil's 300 Indigenous tribes have confirmed infections.

The pandemic endangers Indigenous communities with no access to healthcare in remote parts of the Amazon and whose communal living under large dwellings make social distancing impossible.

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