

Brazilian government authorizes mining in preserved Amazonian area

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In the area where Heleno approved mining exploration and exploitation, 23 aboriginal groups live. | Photo: Semana

Brasilia, December 7 (RHC)-- The Brazilian minister of the Institutional Security Office (GSI), General Augusto Heleno, authorized at least seven gold exploration projects in the area of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, near the border with Venezuela and Colombia, a preserved and untouchable place in the

Amazon where 23 indigenous groups reside.

Heleno, who is in charge within Jair Bolsonaro's government of approving mining projects in strategic areas, has been the first in 10 years to grant permission to carry out activities in that area, the one with the largest presence of indigenous communities in Brazil.

Bolsonaro's administration, accused of not addressing complaints about illegal mining activities, with these seven projects would be allowing the exploitation of 12,700 hectares in the area of São Gabriel da Cachoeira.

Heleno also authorized the exploitation of an area around 150 kilometers wide across the border, which would cause multiple damages to ecosystems and indigenous communities.

In 2021 alone, 45 permits have been issued in Brazil for mining exploration and exploitation in the Amazon, which stands out as the highest number authorized since 2013.

The MapBiomas organization has unveiled data detailing how the mining area in 1985 was approximately 31,000 hectares, while by 2020 that figure almost septupled, reaching 206,000 hectares and about 90 percent of the exploitation area is in the Amazon.

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