



SURARA - SPIRIT OF RESISTANCE

ON THE GROUND UPDATES

Surara Film Recognition

The Borari and Arapiun people of the Maró Indigenous Territory in the Brazilian Amazon have been protecting the forest they call home from invasion, loggers and other encroachments for decades. That story now has a film. Two festival submissions, two wins: Guardians in Action at Santiago Wild, one of South America's largest nature film festivals, and Best Indigenous Short at Las Américas International Film Festival in the Netherlands.

For us, the film is more than a story well told. It is evidence. It is testimony. And it is now the centrepiece of an impact campaign designed to turn attention into action, directing support directly to Maró and other indigenous territories where communities are protecting the forest on behalf of us all.

What the film captures and what the awards recognise is an approach to territorial protection that is as sophisticated as it is grounded. The Maró guardians do not operate through aggressive interventions. Their model centres on education within the community, de-escalation in the field, and safe confrontation techniques that prioritise the safety of guardians while deterring illegal activity.

They use technology to document intrusions and build the evidentiary record that makes prosecution possible. And critically, they work in direct partnership with the public prosecutor's office, ensuring that what they find in the forest does not disappear into a bureaucratic void but becomes the basis for legal action.

The results speak for themselves. The territory that first inspired Treesistance's work and where GPS camera evidence led directly to the removal of illegal logging concessions - is the same territory this film documents. That is not coincidence. It is proof of concept. A concept and model now expanding across the Brazilian Amazon.

What makes these recognitions striking is what sits behind them: just five days of filming on the ground. That the film carries the weight it does is a testament to director Lea Hejn, Indigenous producer Vivi Borari, cinematographers Cosmo Roncon Jr, Fabio Quereli, and the incredible wildlife footage contributed by Cristian Demetrius.

In summary, protection, when practiced daily, shifts resistance from fighting to stewardship.

WHAT IS FLOWING:

Inaugural Public Prosecutors' Event

In Santarém (Pará, Brazil), in May, something quietly significant happened. Nine guardian groups from across the Lower Tapajós together with the Xavante guardians from Mato Grosso, gathered at the offices of the Santarém Public Prosecutor's Office for two days of knowledge exchange, peer learning, and direct dialogue with the authorities responsible for prosecuting forest crime.

These are groups who operate on the front line: monitoring rivers and forests; documenting illegal mining, logging, and land grabbing; producing the territorial intelligence that makes enforcement possible. They do this, largely, with minimal institutional support. The meeting in Santarém was about strengthening these relationships. The meeting delivered on multiple fronts, experiences

were shared, collective needs mapped, and the presentations from the Maró and Takuara groups drew the attention of both fellow guardians and the institutions present (several of whom acknowledged they had not previously understood the full scope of what Treesistance and its partners have built). And the case was made, concretely, that guardian groups generate data and territorial intelligence that public institutions can and should act on.

What emerged from the two days was not just a conversation but a commitment formalised in a collective manifesto signed by all coordinators present. Which said plainly: the guardian groups are legitimate and autonomous community organisations committed to the defence of life,

forest, and the collective rights of indigenous and traditional peoples. They carry out, often without adequate support, activities that should be guaranteed by the Brazilian state itself. Their demand is correspondingly direct: legal, institutional, and political recognition at all levels of government, and permanent mechanisms for cooperation between public authorities, communities, and partners committed to socio-environmental justice.

For us, this gathering represents something we have been working toward - building not only a network of guardians but a coordinated movement with the institutional relationships to make their evidence count. There is still work ahead on integrated communication between groups but the direction is clear and has support.



COMING SOON

Looking ahead, these next steps show how Treesistance is bringing its core work together: supporting guardians in the field, strengthening access to justice, sharing Indigenous stories and scaling proven protection models.

Real-time territorial monitoring - In collaboration with Hack the Planet, this month we equipped the first indigenous territory in the Amazon with smart camera traps and real-time alert systems, enabling communities to detect and respond to intrusions more safely and effectively.

A new guardian group in Sawré Muybu - A new guardian group is forming in Sawré Muybu - a frontline territory in the Mid-Tapajós facing active gold mining pressure, and home of acclaimed indigenous leader Alessandra Munduruku.

Five demarcations advancing across the Lower Tapajós - Five indigenous territory demarcation processes are moving forward, a landmark moment for land rights in the region.

Train the trainers - We are developing an advanced training programme for guardian coordinators, equipping them to train new groups across their regions and keep knowledge embedded within territories rather than dependent on outside support.

Water Guardians expansion - In 2026 we will bring a fourth indigenous territory (Tupinambá) into the Water Guardians programme, extending protection to the opposite bank of the Tapajós River.

Tales of Resistance - In 2026/27, we will bring the voices of Pajés and indigenous knowledge holders into cultural spaces across Europe. An audio-visual journey connecting ancestral wisdom with contemporary resistance.

To learn more, explore collaboration opportunities, or support the next phase of this work, please contact our Head of Operations Jesse at jesse@treesistance.com



YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE IN THE FOREST TO JOIN THE FIGHT.

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