Behind the smokescreen in the Amazon, the fighting people resist!
Letter from organizations that live and fight in the Amazon!

We union leaders, representatives of rural workers family farmers, organized through the 369 Rural Workers Unions and 07 federations of the Northern region, affiliated with the CONTAG Confederative System and CUT, and several partner organizations subscribed below, come to public to denounce what really has caused the great burning in the Amazon and the impacts generated in the lives of the populations living here.

The Amazon has been experiencing a process of unbridled occupation over the years, driven by the greed of large enterprises that, in the name of so-called "development", threatens the community territories in the face of the flexibility of command-control actions, pressure on protected areas, expansion of the agricultural frontier and large infrastructure projects such as ports, railways, liming of rivers to provide conditions for transit of large vessels, action by large mining companies, among others. These are the real causes of the smokescreen that covers the Amazon, resulting in a considerable increase in deforestation in the region.

We, family farmers, whose Amazonian face is represented by peasants, extractivists, fishermen, indigenous and quilombolas, traditional populations, have over the years sought to establish a relationship of coexistence between the need to produce and guarantee the generation of income and dignified life. for who lives in this much coveted biome, and the need for respect and preservation of natural riches, as a good of ours and a heritage of future generations. However, historically, the voices of peoples who echo from the Amazon have been hard to hear, gaining support only the projects that contribute to pressure on preserved areas such as conservation units, indigenous lands, destroying the sovereign rights of our peoples of effectively deciding about the development in their territories, bearing only the burden that has been left, with the expulsion of populations from their lands.

We have been following with growing concern the way the Amazon Fund has been treated for the Ministry of Environment. Without a clear policy of reinforcing and scaling up sucess actions and positive impacts of the  projects supported by the Fund, coupled with recurring questions about the eficiency and seriousness on the use of the resources used for projects funded by the Amazon Fund, it is evident lack of political good will in actions in the Amazon that are, in fact, sustainable economically, socially  and environmentally. We defend the continuation of the Amazon Fund, since its resources are essential to combat deforestation and for the environmental conservation in the Amazon, contribute in the combat of illegal practices of exploitation of natural resources and, fundamentally, collaborate to ensure sustainable development for the Amazon and its populations.

Behind the smokescreen it’s posible to see the misgovernance caused by the fragility of land regularization in the Amazon. We returned to the square one with the end of the Terra Legal Program, whose effort had been to recognize the occupation, especially of family farmers, who for several years have lived in areas that are mostly union public lands, subjectes to regularization by land reform programs. The lack of documentation impedes farmers to access a variety of other policies that can ensure increased incomes and production, such as access to technologies, which could contribute to lessening the pressure on new areas.

The expansion of agrobusiness that meets the demand of large commodities, in addition to contributing to the deforestation of large areas, has leased land to expand the production process demanded by the world market, leading to a large displacement of local communities, due to the impossibility of living together, in their territories, with aerial spraying of the area, in addition to the increasing and indiscriminate use of pesticides, leaving a visible trace of contamination in the air we breathe, in our waters, in the destruction of our biodiversity and, more seriously, in the health of those who live here. It frighten us to imagine what future holds to us with the impacts of releasing more than 290 new types of pesticides just in the first half of this year in Brazil. What development is this being driven? Who does it matter? Are the consequences only for the lives of rural populations? Or to all who depend on the food produced here?

Behind this smokescreen, lies the bloodstain of those who have lost their lives in defense of their territories. According to data from the Field Conflict Notebook, published by the Pastoral Land Commission, 1,489 conflicts were recorded just in 2018, involving more than 1 million people, data that register a 36% increase over 2017, with 86% of killings by conflict in the countryside occurred in the Amazon. We also fear for the results that may bring about the fulfillment of the countless decisions of eviction orders that are being decreed, in public lands of the union, that are being cleared, unoccupied, to the detriment of the interests of some, and in counterpoint to the eviction of countless families.

We, Amazon fighting organizations, also want to sympathize with the difficult times faced by Venezuelan immigrants and join in the task of welcoming everyone. Moreover, to express our indignation at the now growing exploitation processes where people with no sense of humanity have taken advantage of the situation to broaden the precariousness of the work to which these families have been subjected.

We call on the Brazilian people and also the international community to sympathize with the current situation in the Amazon, to add with women and men, who through various struggles, such as the Marcha das Margaridas, Gritos da Terra, Chamados da Floresta and so many other manifestations, such as the mobilization now carried out by the Amazon Synod, strengthening the voices of those who resist here, so that together we can strengthen a “popular uprising in the Amazon”, capable of ensuring the implementation of a project of alternative sustainable and solidary rural development, which may be founded on structuring bases such as land, water, and agroecology, as well as in the defense of the good living and respect for the Amazonian populations and that, above all, considers the autonomy and sovereignty of the peoples who live here.

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Confederation of Agricultural Workers of the Family Farming

CUT- Single Workers Central

CNS-National Council of Extractive Populations

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