

Amazon Indigenous Chief Paulinho Paiakan, 66, Dies from COVID-19



Brasilia, June 21 (RHC)-- Iconic Amazon Indigenous Kayapó Chief Paulinho Paiakan has died of COVID-19 at the age of 66. Paiakan was a lifelong defender of the Amazon rainforest who in the 1980s led the resistance against the Belo Monte hydroelectric project, an environmentally destructive massive complex of dams planned to be built on the Xingu River in the heart of the Amazon.

The project was successfully suspended at the time but later reinstated in 2011. In recent years, Paiakan had warned against Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's calls to open the Amazon for agriculture and mining.

As coronavirus cases continue to surge in Brazil, the pandemic has taken a toll on Indigenous communities, with nearly 5,500 reported cases and close to 300 deaths.

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