

ACTIVISTS OF EXTINCTION REBELLION GLUED THEMSELVES ON TO THE BUILDING OF THE BRAZILIAN CONSULATE IN MUNICH

Munich, Sept 07, 2020 - On Brazilian Independence Day protests against the inactivity of politics regarding the devastating forest fires in the Amazon region occurred in the city center of Munich. Starting on Sunday afternoon, an alliance of various environmental and climate justice groups organized a 24h vigil in solidarity with the indigenous people of the Amazon region, accompanied by emotional speeches and live music. Early Monday morning, activists from Extinction Rebellion (XR) then built an art installation in front of the entrance to the General Consulate of Brazil in Munich and glued themselves to the building, standing on "burning" pedestals.

WHERE IS THE OUTCRY THIS YEAR?

The flames on the pedestals are made of cardboard, but the superglue on the activist's hands is real. Two activists are glued at a height of 2m and two others are chained to a huge pile of wood in front of the building. "The fires in the Amazon region this year are once again much more devastating than last year's already catastrophic event, but the big political outcry as last year has so far failed to materialize. While we in Europe are sitting far away from this catastrophe, indigenous people and activist Latin America, who are working to preserve their livelihoods, live in constant danger of being killed. Governance in Brazil is simply inhumane and the situation in many other Latin American countries is not much better," explains Thomas Nier, geographer and activist with XR. "Colombia is the country where most environmental activists will have died in 2019," he adds with a serious face. Some of XR's activists are determined to temporarily jeopardize their own freedom to show solidarity with the threatened indigenous people and to give more force to their demands. According to the demonstrators, the government and the media should finally report with the necessary urgency on the ongoing climate crisis and catastrophes like the one in the Amazon. Thomas Nier is concerned: "The Amazon rainforest is one of the sensitive tipping points of our global climate. Once the destruction has passed a critical point, there is no turning back, then the forest is lost forever. The consequences for the South American continent would be devastating, and also globally, there would be dramatic changes that we would then no longer be able to influence".

POLITICS MUST ACT IMMEDIATELY: STOP MERCOSUR TRADE DEAL

"We call on both the Brazilian government and politicians in our country to take immediate action to stop the destruction of nature and genocide against the indigenous people," says Katharina Wax of Extinction Rebellion. She stresses: "Since Bolsonaro took office, the number of deforestations and slash-and-burn clearances in Brazil has increased by more than 85%. Now the EU wants to conclude the Mercosur Agreement with Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, which will reduce tariffs on meat, animal feed, sugar and ethanol and promote the export of highly toxic pesticides banned in Germany.



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This would further increase the destruction of the rainforest and the threat to the indigenous people. According to the human rights organization Global Witness, 212 murders of conservationists are known from 2019 alone, 24 of them in Brazil and 64 in Colombia. According to Global Witness, the number of unreported cases is likely to be significantly higher. "Indigenous people are particularly affected," reports Sibylle Schade, ethnologist and activist. "While they live sustainably in harmony with nature, it is not only the devastating fires that are destroying their habitat, but also illegal logging, mine construction and the use of toxic pesticides. The indigenous people are exposed to structural racism, the massive restriction of their rights by Bolsonaro's policies and violence by profiteers from the coal, timber and agricultural industries. To make matters worse, since the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, indigenous villages and communities have had little access to medical care. Many of the particularly important and courageous actors of the global climate and environmental justice movement are currently dying.

CITIZENS TO BE INVOLVED IN FUTURE DECISIONS

"Here in Germany, we enjoy the privilege that peaceful protest is possible at any time, even if we do not give police a notice in advance. In other countries you can't even put up a sign in public without fearing for your life," says Thomas Nier while glued to the building with one hand. "I chose this somewhat more daring form of protest today because I consider it my duty to leave my comfort zone and use my privileges. In deepest solidarity with the people who have been suffering for decades from overexploitation and acute threats from the climate crisis and environmental disasters". The activists do not only want to bring the catastrophes in the Amazon region into the public focus. They demand concrete political and diplomatic measures to stop the destruction and protect the indigenous people. In their opinion, political decisions of such a global scope should be debated in civil assemblies, the results of which should be fed into policy-making, as happened recently in France with regard to climate and environmental measures. The activists of XR, for example, urge the Brazilian government to make a drastic change of policy and criticize Germany and the EU for sticking to the Mercosur Free Trade Agreement.

Starting on October 5th, the next big wave of rebellion by XR Germany is already scheduled to take place. Hundreds of activists want to make their way to Berlin again in order to lend emphasis to their demands with actions of peaceful civil disobedience and to motivate those responsible in politics and economy to act, always in conformity with actual infection protection rules, as they emphasize. More detailed information will be announced in the upcoming days and weeks.

