



## British supermarkets and KFC chicken linked to indigenous rights abuses in Brazil

**May 11, 2022, London** – British supermarkets and fast food outlet KFC’s supply chains are linked to indigenous rights abuses in Brazil, an investigation can reveal.

[‘There Will Be Blood’](#), published today, has linked some of Britain’s best-known food brands to the ongoing repression of an indigenous group forcibly evicted from its ancestral land.

The investigation by Earthsight, a London-based environmental group, and De Olho nos Ruralistas, which monitors agribusiness in Brazil, uncovered the complex supply chains of KFC, Sainsbury’s, Asda, Aldi and Iceland, among others.

It found that one of their UK suppliers of poultry products, Worcestershire-based Westbridge Foods, is a major buyer of frozen and marinated chicken connected to a controversial farm in Brazil’s Mato Grosso do Sul state.

Rubens Carvalho, Earthsight’s head of deforestation research, said: “These findings reinforce the need for upcoming secondary legislation of the UK Environment Act to include, to the widest extent possible, the protection of indigenous land rights, and to cover key commodities, including soy and soy-fed chicken.”

The 9,700-hectare farm, Brasília do Sul, is built on the ancestral land, known as Takuara, of the Guarani Kaiowá indigenous group, which was forcibly evicted in the early 1950s to make way for big business.

Carvalho added: “Businesses in Britain have failed to cut ties with Brazilian producers linked to the violence, making us consumers unwitting participants in tragic stories like that of the Guarani Kaiowá.”

Cattle baron Jacintho Honório da Silva Filho, famed for helping to transform the country into an agricultural powerhouse, bought Brasília do Sul in 1966, ushering in a period of intense deforestation of Takuara, which had remained largely forested until then. The farm’s prosperity further cemented his power and political influence.

Meanwhile, the Guarani Kaiowá’s attempts to regain access to their ancestral land have been brutally suppressed, including through violent evictions and the aggressive use of the courts to stymie them.

The violence culminated in the 2003 murder of Kaiowá leader Marcos Veron, who was beaten to death when armed Brasília do Sul workers and hired gunmen attacked the camp the indigenous people had set up on the disputed territory.

Three were convicted for the attack, but da Silva Filho never faced justice. He died in 2019 aged 102. No-one was ever sentenced for Veron’s murder.

The Guarani Kaiowá’s constitutional rights continue to be suppressed by a hostile government, inequality in the justice system and powerful farming interests.

Meanwhile, da Silva Filho’s children control Brasília do Sul, which now produces soy – one of the main ingredients in modern animal feed.

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Local sources told Earthsight and De Olho nos Ruralistas the soy is sold to large cooperatives and traders, including Lar Cooperativa Agroindustrial, one of Brazil's largest poultry producers.

Trade records show Westbridge imported over 37,000 tonnes of frozen and marinated chicken from Lar between 2018 and 2021 – about a third of the chicken the Brazilian firm sent to the EU and UK over the period. Earthsight also uncovered evidence linking Lar chicken products to pet food produced in Germany and sold by major European retailers.

The UK Environment Act, approved by Parliament last year, will ban the use of commodities linked to illegal deforestation in UK commercial activities once it comes into force in a few years. The law does not directly address human rights violations – a glaring shortcoming for rules that should not only aim to tackle Britain's role in driving forest loss but also the human cost of agribusiness expansion.

The recent public consultation by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to inform secondary legislation on the commodities and types of businesses to be covered under the law, and how it will be enforced, disappointed environmental and civil society groups. Campaigners say the proposals favour a limited list of products and will exempt all but the largest businesses.

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## Notes to editors:

- Earthsight is a UK-based non-profit organisation that uses in-depth investigations to expose environmental and social crime, injustice and the links to global consumption.
- *There Will be Blood: The ugly truth about cheap chicken* can be read [here](#).
- Westbridge, Lar, KFC, Iceland and the Jacintho Family did not reply to Earthsight's requests for comment.
- Asda, Aldi, Sainsbury's denied links to either Brazilian or Lar chicken, without elaborating.
- The report includes the companies' full responses to Earthsight's findings.
- The experts who used the terms genocide or extermination to describe the treatment of indigenous groups in Brazil's Mato Grosso do Sul state during interviews with our team are anthropologist and historian Jorge Eremites de Oliveira, historian and lecturer in law Roseli Aparecida Stefanos Pacheco, federal prosecutor Marco Antonio Delfino and Guarani Kaiowá leader Valdelice Veron.

Photos, video and infographics can be downloaded [here](#).

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