

CYPONER

comics as eyewitness
July 2021

Chile

Brazil



1st year update

front line defenders



cypher

/ˈsaɪfər/

The dictionary definition of cypher is ‘a secret or disguised way of writing’. In many ways, this is the essence of comics storytelling – the image, rather than the word, is a disguise for many words, that can convey meaning, emotion, and can re/frame an entire narrative.

Rap and hip hop culture has taken the word and ascribed a new meaning: ‘an informal gathering of rappers, beatboxers and/or breakdancers in a circle, in order to jam musically together.’ This, too, we find relevant to this project, in that we are bringing together artists and HRDs in freestyle collaboration of activism and art with the aim of informing, elevating and inspiring.

For us, this captures the spirit of why we are working in comics and guides how we facilitate the process of creative production.

Edited and published by:
Beldan Sezen and Adam Shapiro

Cover art by Ty Silva

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adam shapiro

This issue marks the beginning of the second year of production of Cypher. This initiative has been a learning opportunity for us all, and one that has been an incredible experience in bringing together artists and human rights defenders to present their work and stories in a different format than the reports and statements that human rights organizations, including Front Line Defenders, usually produce.

After this month's stories, we have included some updates to stories that appeared throughout the first year of the 'zine and hope you find going back to those stories as interesting and important as the new stories we continue to produce.

Thank you again for your interest in and support of this initiative.

Editorial



beldan sezen

One year of Cypher – WOW.

This gathering of artists, Human Rights Defenders, academics, administrators and readers is happening for a whole year now. We come together in our disciplines to cross over; to weave visual stories often too cruel to witness, but witness we must. The comics and visual stories we have been publishing – and will continue to publish - are meant to spread the word globally. Those killings and murders, harassments, physical, socio-economical and mental attacks on those who are 'an inconvenience' for those in powerful positions aren't just 'local events' in some far away places no one ever has heard about. Greed, political or financial, isn't patriotic and bound to borders. If we believe that, we fall for the old "look at what you're doing in your own country" rhetoric, popularized by autocratic, corrupt and despotic rulers around the world. To gather in a circle and 'rap' is to break the silence and to break this pattern of 'forget about it, it doesn't concern you'. If profit and greed are international, so is resistance and solidarity.

Adam asked me a year ago if I knew what to cypher meant in the world of Rap and Hip Hop. I didn't. Now I do.

July 2021

Brazil

Brazil is one of the most lethal countries in the world for environmental activists and human rights defenders. Historically, the state of Pará has registered the highest rates of violence related to agrarian issues in Brazil; located in the Amazon region, it is the most violent state for land rights defenders. The episodes vary from evictions of rural workers, riverside communities or quilombolas; illegal mining, logging and occupation of indigenous areas; destruction of property and assets; physical attacks; arbitrary detention, criminalization and killings.

On 24 May 2011, land rights defenders José Cláudio Ribeiro and Maria do Espírito Santo were shot dead in an ambush by gunmen on the road leading to the settlement project where they lived. Both were local leaders of the Praia Alta-Piranheira Agro-extractive Project, located in Nova Ipixuna, Pará State. The settlement was home to about 500 families who produced and lived off that land, coexisting in harmony with the forest.

Weeks before they were killed, José Claudio and Maria suffered an attempted killing in their home. In November 2010, at an international conference in Manaus, José Cláudio Ribeiro da Silva expressed concern for their safety, as a result of threats he had received, and predicted that he would be killed as a result of his work. José Cláudio and Maria informed the Public Prosecutor's Office of the name of loggers from Jacundá and Nova Ipixuna, who were pressuring the settlers and had invaded their lands to illegally remove timber. An investigation was opened against a number of loggers in the region, and IBAMA (Brazilian Environmental Agency) even conducted research that detected illegal logging in the settlement region, which resulted in the closure of a number of illegal sawmills. Despite denouncing the threats they suffered to the authorities on several occasions, José Cláudio and Maria do Espírito Santo never received police protection.

Their struggle inspired many environmental rights defenders, among them José Claudio's sister and Maria do Espírito Santo's sister-in-law, Claudelice Santos. Claudelice was one of the nominees for the 2019 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, presented by the European Parliament.

The threats and murders of human rights defenders in Pará are endemic to the business practices of mining, logging and cattle ranching in this region, and indeed across the country, because resource extraction and agribusiness are prioritized over the lives of rural populations, indigenous communities and quilombolas.

Artist: Ty Silva

tysilva.com.br

**MORE THAN FAITH, MARY HAD HOPE THAT WE
COULD LIVE ON THE MANNA OF LIFE...**




**WHICH PROVIDES
SUSTENANCE!**



**HOLY SPIRIT? HE WAS ALWAYS WITH HER ON
HER NAME...**



**AND INDEED WITNESSED HER COURAGE AND
HER WILLINGNESS!**



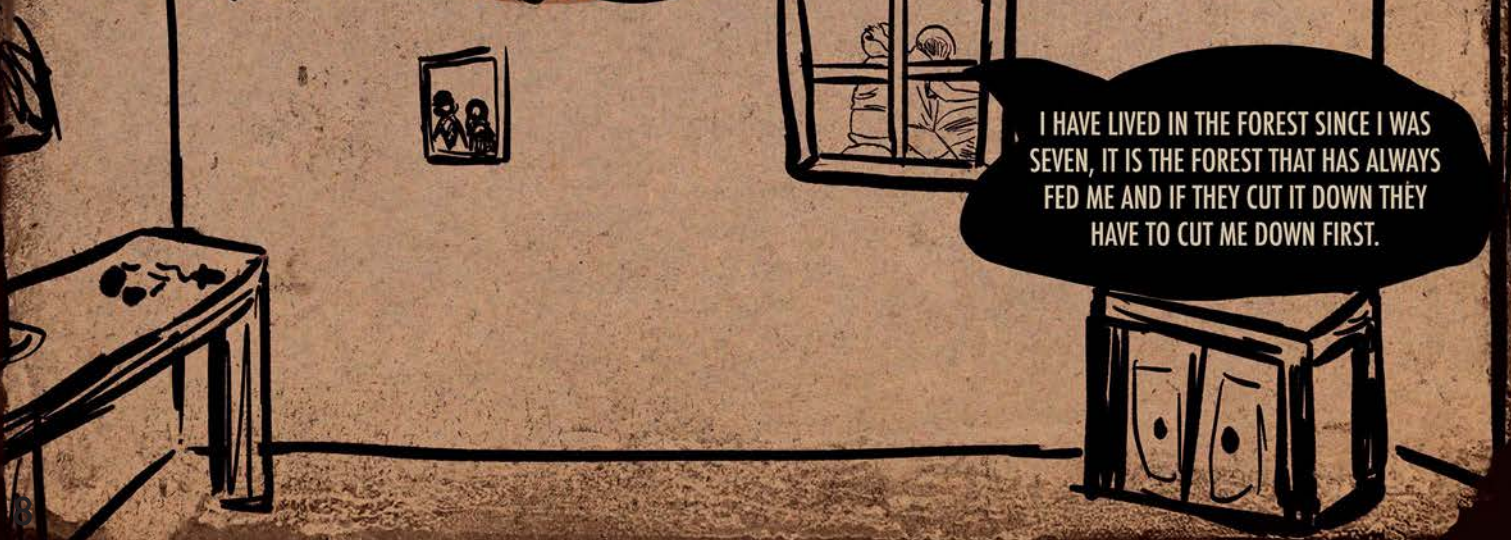
JOSÉ, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS THE ADOPTIVE FATHER OF A SECULAR BEING. THIS BEING FED COUNTLESS FAMILIES FOR YEARS ON THAT LAND, LAND THAT TODAY IS UNDER GREAT THREAT.


SEE YOU LATER,
MAJESTADE!

DEAR CHESTNUT TREE


LIVE FOR ANOTHER
600 YEARS!

WELCOME TO THE
PRAIA ALTA
PIRANHEIRA
AGRO-EXTRACTIVE
SETTLEMENT





WHERE THE BUSINESSMEN SEE ONLY FIGURES, MARIA AND JOSÉ SAW NOTHING BUT LIFE. THE LIFE OF THE FOREST AND OF THOSE WHO INHABIT IT. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS PERSPECTIVE IS SLOWLY BEING SWALLOWED UP.

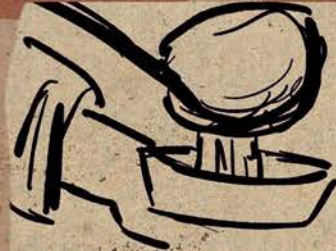


ACCORDING TO THE LOGIC OF THE SLAVE, IT IS ALWAYS IMPORTANT TO PROVE ONESELF NECESSARY. LOGGERS AND LANDOWNERS, WHO LIVE AT THE EDGE OF THE LAW, KNOW THIS VERY WELL.

AS A SLAVE IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TO SEE FAVOURS WHERE THERE IS MISERY.



COME AND EAT!



IN THE EYES OF THE HUNGRY, FOOD IS A MIRACLE

AND A MIRACLE IS SOMETHING THAT COMES FROM GOD.



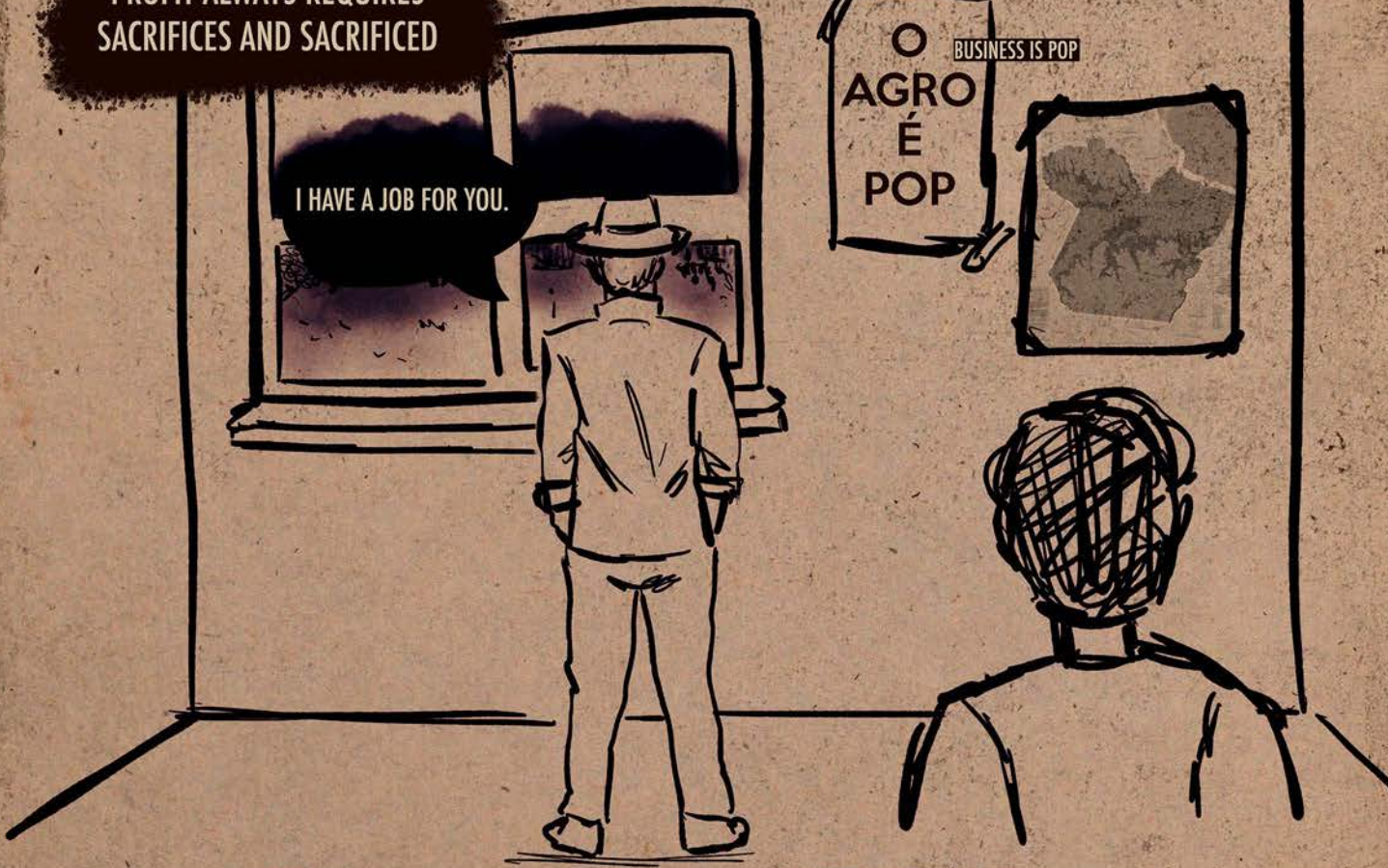
HOW GOOD IT IS TO PRACTICE KINDNESS, WHAT WOULD THESE PEOPLE BE WITHOUT THE FOOD I SERVE THEM?



PROFIT ALWAYS REQUIRES
SACRIFICES AND SACRIFICED

I HAVE A JOB FOR YOU.

BUSINESS IS POP
AGRO
É
POP



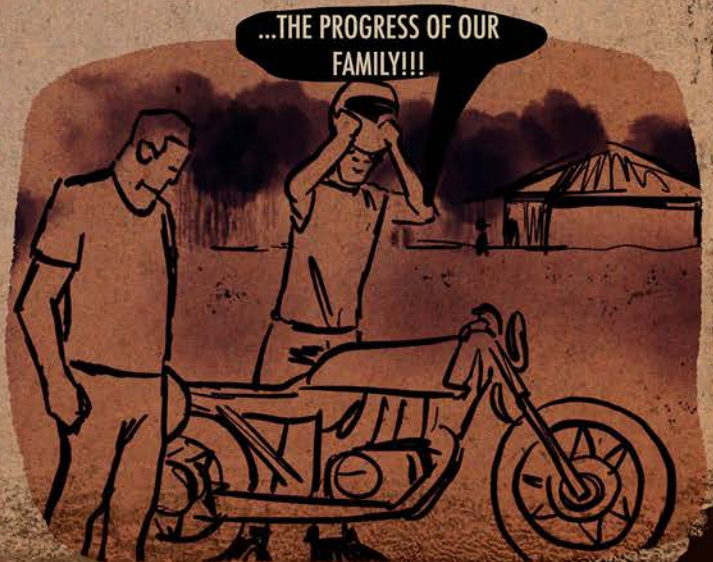
WORK HARD AND YOU
WILL BE WELL REWARDED!

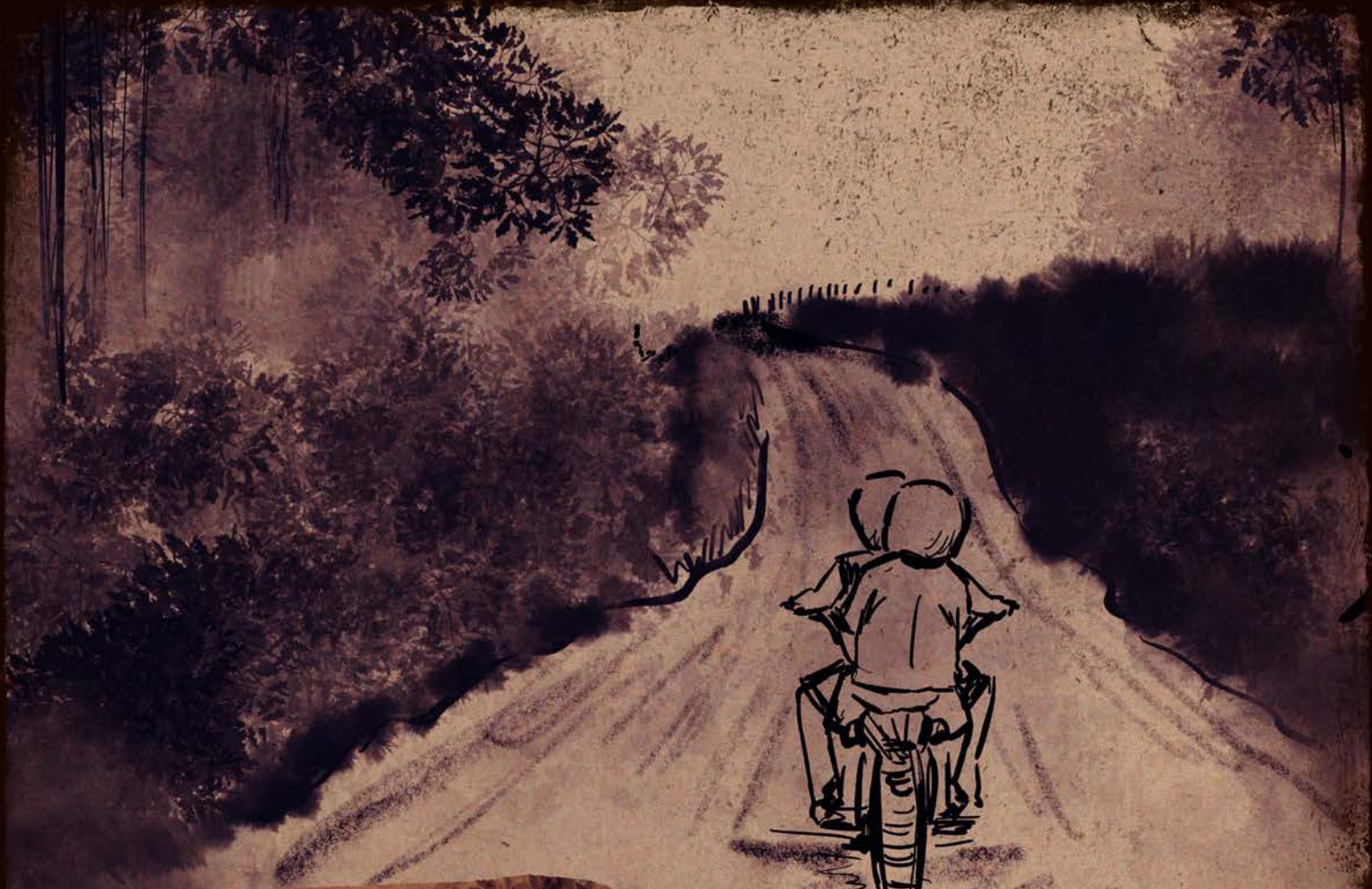
I NEED YOU TO DO
IT.



MY BROTHER PLEASE DO IT IN THE
NAME OF PROGRESS...

...THE PROGRESS OF OUR
FAMILY!!!







NATURE DOES NOT SPEAK, BUT
WITNESSES...WELCOMES



AND SO SHE CARRIED THE SOULS OF
ZÉ CLAUDIO AND MARIA TO WHERE
THEY ALWAYS BELONGED



TOGETHER WITH THE FOREST.



AMAJESTADE FICOU ORFÃ

THE MAJESTADE WAS ORPHANED

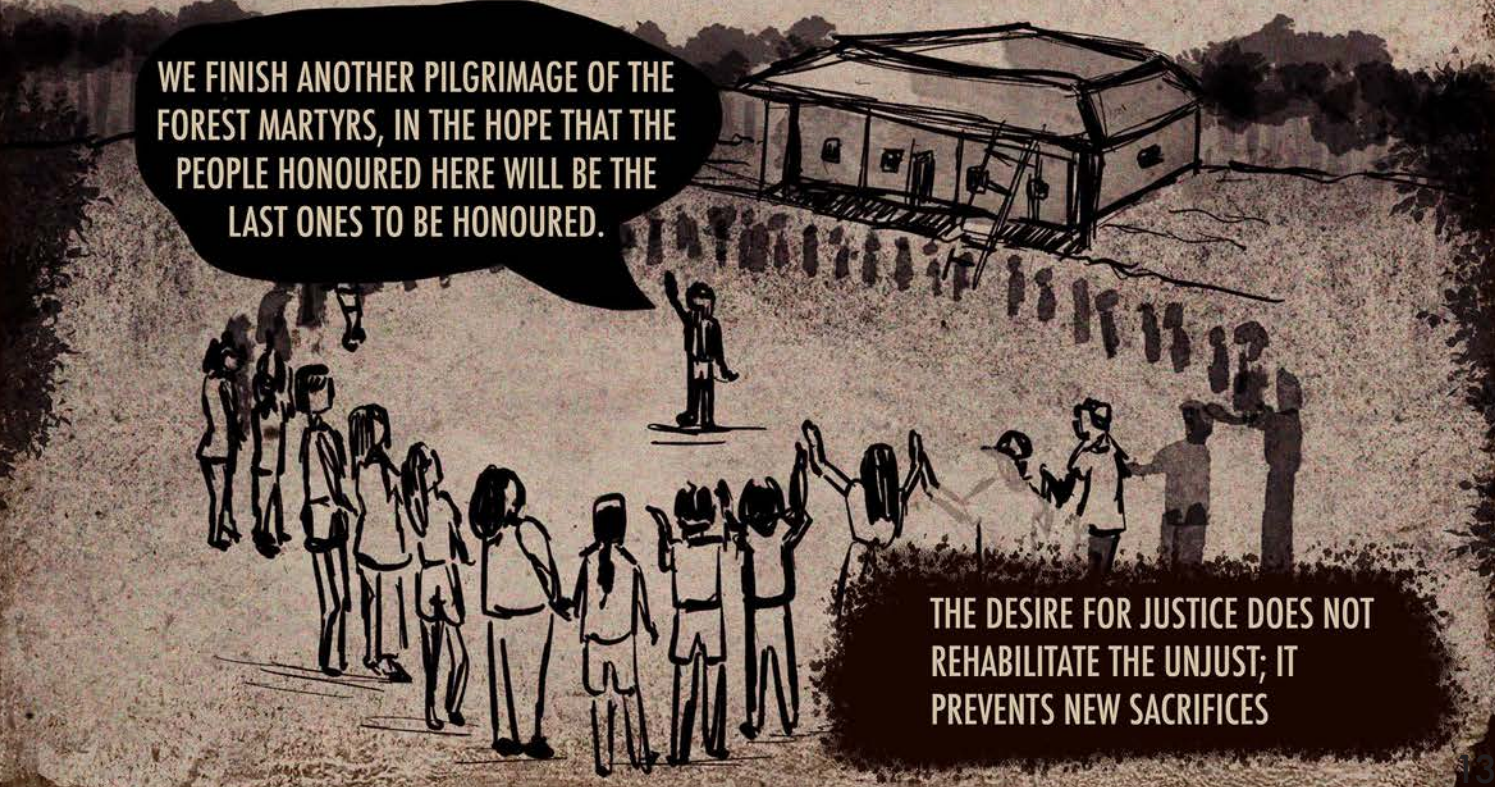
PERHAPS JOSÉ DID NOT SEE HIMSELF AS A FATHER OF THE FOREST, NOR MARIA AS HER MOTHER, BUT THEIR STRUGGLES ADOPTED MANY, AND MANY ADOPTED THEIR STRUGGLES



CONVICTED!

AND JUSTICE IS SERVED...

OUR PEACE COMES FROM OUR FIGHT FOR JUSTICE.



WE FINISH ANOTHER PILGRIMAGE OF THE FOREST MARTYRS, IN THE HOPE THAT THE PEOPLE HONOURED HERE WILL BE THE LAST ONES TO BE HONOURED.

THE DESIRE FOR JUSTICE DOES NOT REHABILITATE THE UNJUST; IT PREVENTS NEW SACRIFICES

WHEN JOSÉ AND MARIA WERE TAKEN FROM US, SOME PEOPLE MADE A COMMITMENT TO PURSUE JUSTICE.



SHE, CLAUDELICE, WAS ONE OF THESE PEOPLE

AS TIME WENT BY, I REALIZED THAT MY MISSION WOULD NOT ONLY BE TO SEEK JUSTICE FOR THE MURDERS OF MY BROTHER AND SISTER-IN-LAW, BUT ALSO TO CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE OF MANY ANCESTORS WHO DEFENDED THE FOREST.



THE ONLY THING WE CAN DO IS NOT PANIC, SO WE DON'T STOP OUR FIGHT!




I FOUND IN BOOKS THE NECESSARY STRENGTH TO FIGHT AGAINST CRIMES IN THE RURAL AREAS.



AFTER GRADUATING IN AGROECOLOGY, SCIENCE PROVED TO ME THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO LIVE OFF THE FOREST IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY.



I JOINED OTHER WOMEN TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO VALUE NOT ONLY THE FOREST BUT ALSO THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN IT.



MARIA AND JOSÉ, THE FIGHT GOES ON!

THEY HAVE CUT DOWN ONE, TWO TREES, BUT ANOTHER THOUSAND, FIVE THOUSAND, WILL BE REBORN. THIS IS HOW WE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE THE WORLD A PLACE WITH HOPE, WITH PEOPLE SEEING THE FUTURE WITH WISHFUL EYES AND WITHOUT FEAR OF LOSING THEIR LIVES TO THE CHAINSAWS OF GREED AND EVIL, OF THOSE WHO DO NOT AGREE WITH THE IDEA THAT THE ENVIRONMENT IS LIFE, AND THAT THOSE WHO DEFEND IT ALSO DESERVE TO LIVE.

TEXT: MARCELO BORARY
ART: TY SILVA

Chile

Mapuche human rights defenders in Chile face an increasing struggle for the protection of their native land and traditional way of life, as many of their leaders find themselves facing criminalisation, imprisonment and torture. Mapuche women HRDs are often in the front line of protests, and face both state repression and gender-based violence.

Nora Ñancul and Grisel Ñancul are women human rights defenders and Werkenes who defend the rights of the Mapuche people in the Likankura autonomous Lof. They are known for their commitment to the revitalisation of Mapuche identity, knowledge and customs and for their defence of indigenous land rights and encouragement of the Mapuche peoples' spiritual and social reconnection to their land. Nora Ñancul and Grisel Ñancul have spent most of their lives fighting for the recuperation of indigenous land occupied by State or private interests, including some occupied by the company Forestal Mininco at Collipulli Commune in the Malleco Province in Araucanía. The community of Likankura represented by the Ñancul sisters have denounced the company for a violation of land rights and have affirmed that they have no other option except for the pursuit of peaceful land requisitions in order to once again provide enough sustenance for their community.

Mapuche resistance against large scale illegal deforestation is mostly concentrated within the Araucanía region, a sacred place for the Mapuche with a rich landscape comprised of ancient forest. However the region is also one with the highest rates of multidimensional poverty in Chile. The country's economic model based on privatised resource extraction—backed by a high degree of militarisation—has played a central role in the disenfranchising of Mapuche people, principally through violations of indigenous, environmental and land rights.

Artist: Marcela Trujillo / Maliki
www.marcelatrujillo.cl

THE ÑANCUL SISTERS

DRAWING & SCRIPT : MARCELA TRUJILLO (MALIKI)
STORY & GLOSSARY : ONÉSIMA LIENQUEO



fünkey anümka
fünkey, fünkey ♪
fünkey anümka ♪



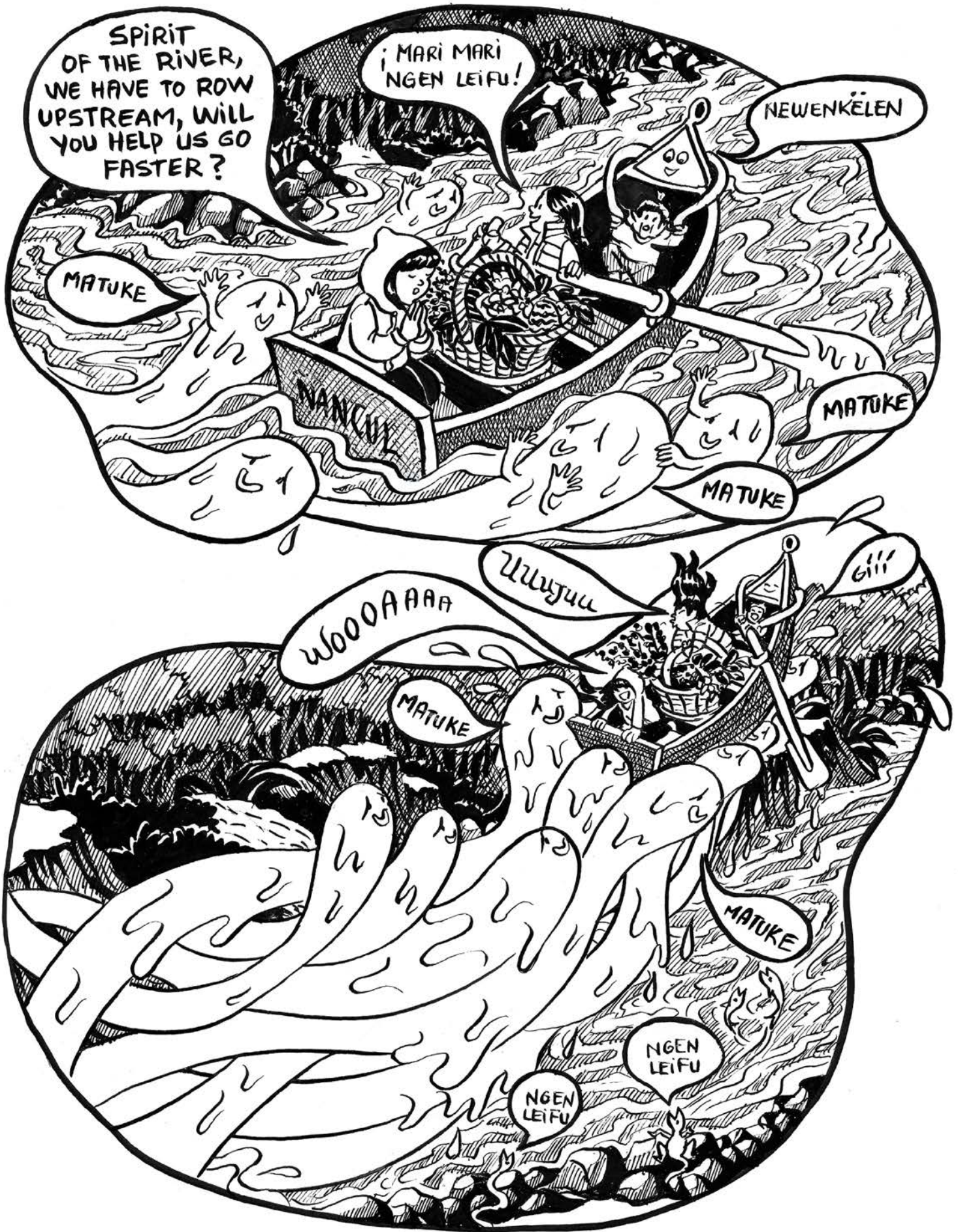
Amuy nü ♪
pewman
reke ♪

♪ fünkey anümka
fünkey, fünkey
fünkey anümka

♪ amuy nü
pewman nü
♪ ♪ reke









THANK YOU
NGÜRÜ WE ARE
GOING TO THE MOUNT
OF GREAT KIMÜN

HOP OVER
HERE WITH
ME LAMNGEN

MARI MARI
NGEN KULLİN
Jİ, Jİ, Jİ, Jİ

WUF
WUF
WUF



!NUKE
!NUKE!

IT SEEMS
LIKE THEY'RE
STILL SLEEPING

THE
PANGUI ARE
ALREADY DOWN
THERE

!GROAR!



PEWMA
PEWMA

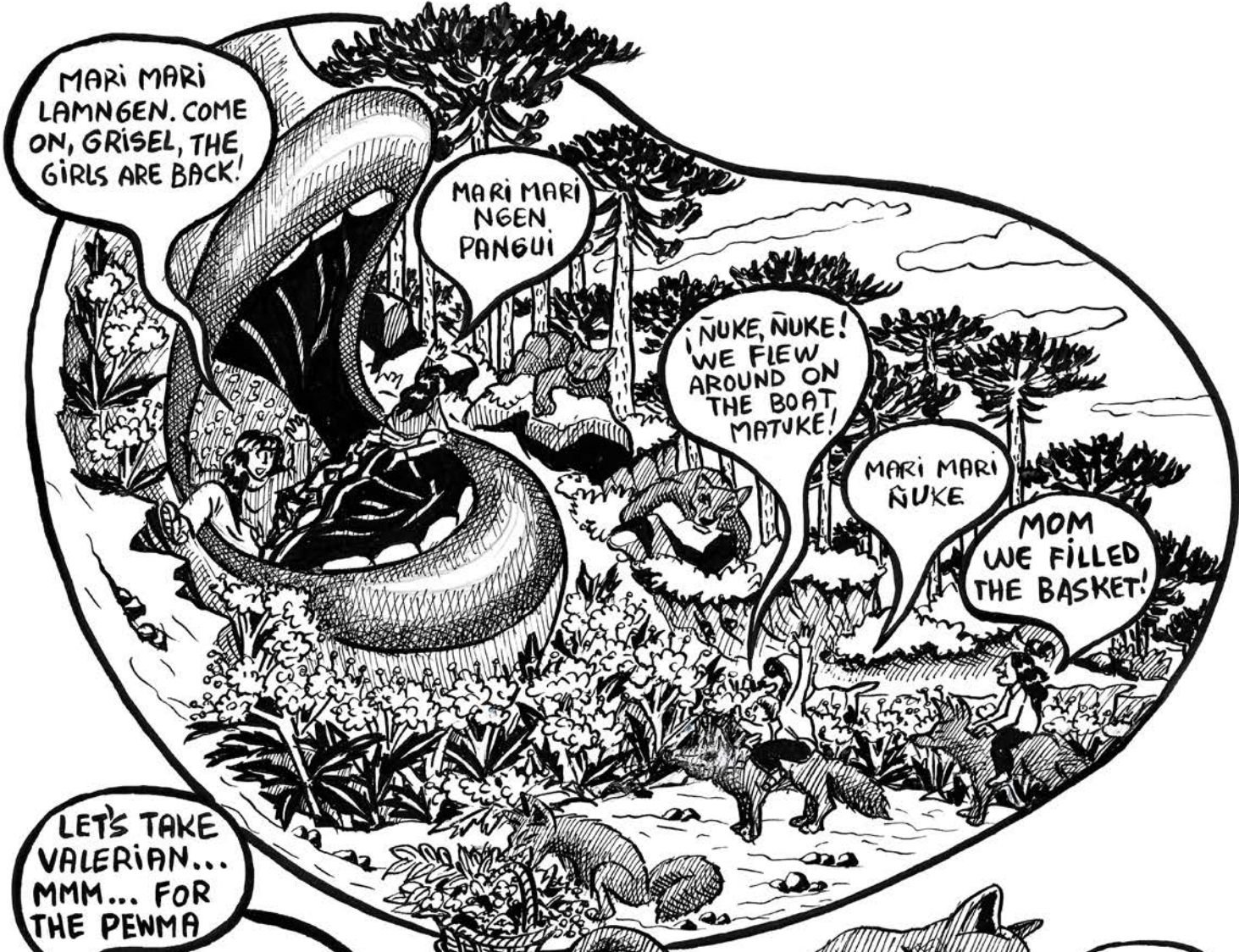
PEWMA
PEWMA



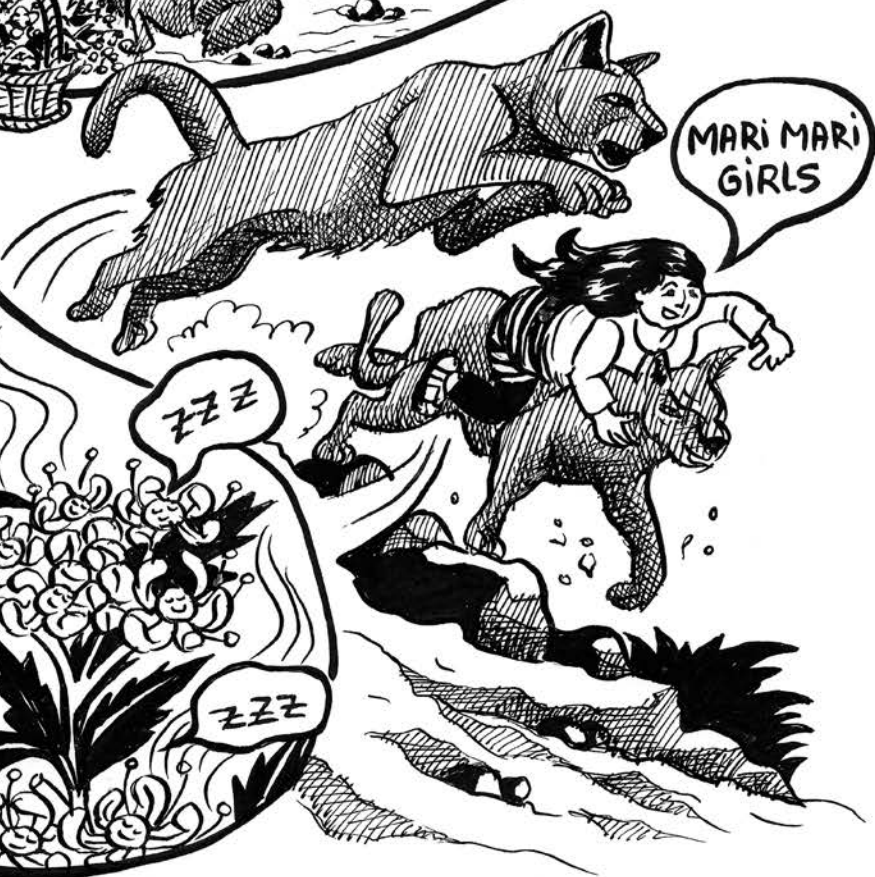
¡YAAA AWWNN!

LAMNGEN NORA...
THE GIRLS, THE BASKET,
NGURU, PANGUI, PILLAN

WAKE UP
NUKE!



LET'S TAKE VALERIAN...
MMM... FOR THE PENMA





HOW BIG AND
BRAVE THESE
GIRLS ARE!

PIWKENIEEYU

PANGUI, TAKE US
TO MY PŪNĒN

PŪNĒN

NGÜRŪN, IF YOU
STOP, WE GET TIRED.
PANGUI KNOWS
THE WAY

PŪNĒN
WE'RE COMING
TO SEE YOU

BROTHER
WE BRING A
LOT OF DELICIOUS
THINGS FOR YOU



~NUKE
HOW CLOSE
WE ARE?

CAN YOU
FEEL NGEN
LEIFU ?

WE ARE
ALMOST TO
THE TOP



DEAR
PUÑEÑ
HERE WE
ARE

MARI MARI
CHEMAMUL



MARI MARI
CHEMAMUL

MARI MARI
NEPHEW

MARI MARI
PU PICH
NANCUL

MARI MARI
COUSIN

MARI
MARI

MARI MARI
PU LAMNGEN

MARI MARI
NUKE

PUÑEÑ
THOSE FLOWERS
ON YOUR
CHEMAMULL
ARE VERY
NICE

BROTHER,
WE PICKED SO-
ME HERBS AND
FRUITS FOR
YOU TO
SMELL

MMM...
VERY NICE, IT SMELLS
LIKE HOME, PU
LAMNGEN

CHALTUMAY
LAMNGEN

¡NGÜRÜ!







BROODOMMM

¡MININCO!

¡MININCO!

BROODOMMM

BROODOMMM

BROODOMMM

BROODOMMM

BROODOMMM

BROODOMMM

¡MININCO!

MININCO IS CUTTING DOWN THE NATIVE FOREST

¡MININCO!

WE CAN'T LET MININCO DESTROY OUR ÑUKE MAPU!

PU LAMNGEN BRING OUR ÜKÜLLA

BRING THE TRARIWE AND THE TRAPE-LAKUCHA TOO

LET'S GO DOWN

MAI NUKE

¡GRRR!

MAI NUKE

¡GRRR!



COME ON
LAMNGEN
LET'S STOP
MININCO

PU PANGUI
TAKE US
FAST

BROOMM
BROOMM
BROOMM
BROOMM
BROOMM
BROOMM

MARI MARI
PIÑEN

¿PU
LAMNGEN?

YA, YA, YA, YA,
YA, YA, YA, YA,
YA, YA, YA, YA

TUM-TUM
TUM-TUM
TUM-TUM

¿I WHAT NGÜRÜ ?!
PLEASE TAKE ME TO
THEM NOW

YA, YA, YA, YA
YA, YA, YA
YA, YA, YA

MATUKE NGÜRÜ
MININCO IS DANGEROUS,
WE MUST HELP THEM

TUM-TUM
TUM-TUM
TUM-TUM

BROOOOMM
BROOOOMM

TUM-TUM
TUM-TUM



i ik, ik, ik
ik, ik, ik, ik!

YA, YA, YA
YA, YA, YA,
YA, YA, YA

TUM-TUM

BROOM
BROOM

NGEN
MAWIDA

MININCO!
DON'T CUT THE
NATIVE TREES!



ik, ik, ik,
ik, ik, ik!

STOP!



MININ CO
DON'T DESTROY
OUR ÑUKEMAPU
NO MORE!!



NGEN
MAWIDA LIVES
IN EVERY TREE
YOU CUT

isiKE

ik, ik, ik,
ik, ik, ik,
ik, ik, ik!



TUM-TUM, TUM-TUM,

YA, YA, YA,
YA, YA, YA, YA,
YA, YA, YA, YA,
YA.

ik, ik, ik
ik, ik, ik
ik, ik, ik

IF YOU
REFUSE TO
HEAR US, THEN
WE WILL NOT LET
YOU DESTROY
THE FOREST
PANGUI
LETS GO!

**BROOHH
BROOHH**

ISIKE
ISIKE



TURN THAT
MACHINE OFF
AND LEAVE OUR
NGEN MAWIDA
BE!

TUM-TUM, TUM

YA, YA, YA, YA,
YA, YA, YA, YA,
YA, YA, YA, YA

TUM-TUM,

IK, IK, IK,
IK, IK, IK,
IK, IK

BROOMMM
BROOMMM
BROOMMM



NO! LET HER GO
MININGO, YOU
MURDERER

YA, YA, YA, YA,
YA, YA, YA, YA,
YA, YA, YA, YA

ik, ik, ik
ik, ik, ik,
ik, ik, ik

iNORA!

i ÑUKENTU!

iSIKE
iSIKE
iSIKE

iSIKE
iSIKE
iSIKE

, LAMNGEN!









PEUMA
PEUMA

PEUMA
PEUMA

~NUKE
WAKE UP
BREAKFAST
IS READY

PU LAMNGEN
I'M GOING TO TELL
YOU A DREAM THAT
I HAVE

WHERE MY
BROTHER, MY
COUSINS, AND I
IN IT, ~NUKE?

IT'S IMPORTANT
TO TELL OUR PEWMA,
LAMNGEN, THIS IS HOW
WE RECEIVE MESSAGES
FROM OUR
ANCESTORS

YES, THERE
WERE MA-
NY NGEN
TOO



THE
END

THE MAPUCHE SISTERS, NORA AND GRISEL ÑANCUL, HAVE SPENT 10 YEARS DEFENDING THE FORESTS AND RIVERS FROM THE PRESENCE OF LOGGERS AND HYDROELECTRIC PLANTS THAT ATTACK THE VALUES AND SPIRITUALITY OF THE MAPUCHE PEOPLE.

BOTH LIVE IN THE LIKANKURA TERRITORY IN COLLIPULLI, RECLAIMED LAND FROM THE FORESTAL MININCO COMPANY, WORKING THE LAND, REPLANTING THE FOREST WITH NATIVE TREES AND PROTECTING THE SPIRIT OF THE RENAICO RIVER.

AS A RESULT, THEY HAVE SUFFERED VIOLENT PHYSICAL ATTACKS THAT HAVE CAUSED THEM TO HAVE SCARS FROM BEING SHOT ON THEIR BODIES.

IN 2019, NORA WAS ATTACKED WITH A CHAINSAW BY AN EMPLOYEE OF FORESTAL MININCO THAT LEFT HER SEVERELY INJURED, WITH MULTIPLE WOUNDS ON HER ARMS AND CHEST.

HOWEVER, THEY HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO CRIMINALIZATION BY THE CHILEAN POLICE AND THE STATE OF CHILE.

RECENTLY, IN SEPTEMBER 2020, ONE OF THEIR CHILDREN OF 14 YEARS OLD, WAS BEATEN AND DRAGGEN IN THE MUD BY THE POLICE LEAVING HIM WITH A BROKEN NOSE. THE SISTERS WERE ARRESTED, ASSAULTED AND PREVENTED FROM RECEIVING MEDICAL ATTENTION AND WERE EXPOSED TO THE COLD. GRISEL WAS HANDCUFFED IN DETENTION OVERNIGHT.

TODAY A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT IS BEING CARRIED OUT ACCUSING THE CHILEAN INVESTIGATIVE POLICE OF TORTURING THE SISTERS.

ONÉSIMA LIENQUEO, WOMAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER OF INDIGENOUS CHILDREN'S RIGHTS.



IN MY ROLE AS AN EDUCATOR AND WORK DEFENDING THE TERRITORY, I MEET THESE TWO GREAT WOMAN, WHO WORK TO RECOVER THE FOREST AND THE RIVER, FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND FOR ALL MAPUCHE CHILDREN.

GLOSSARY MAPUDUNGUN/ENGLISH

A

AMULEPE : CONTINUE
AMUY : TO GO
ANÜMKA : SPROUTS

CH

CHALTUMAY : THANKS
CHEMAMUL : WOOD PEOPLE
CHUMLEYMI : HOW ARE YOU ?

F

FÜNKEY : FRUITS

I

ISIKE : INSECT

K

KAPU TXAPELAKUXA : METAL
FEMALE GARMENT
KIMÜN : WISDOM
KULLIÑ : ANIMALS
KULTRUN : MUSICAL INSTRUMENT
FOR CEREMONIES
KUMELKALEN : I'M ALL RIGHT

L

LAMNGEN : SISTER
LEIFÜ : RIVER

M

MAI : YES
MARI MARI : HELLO
MATUKE : FAST
MAWIDA : FOREST

N

NEWEN :
NGEN : PROTECTOR SPIRIT
NGÜRÜ : FOX

Ñ

ÑOCHI : SLOW
ÑUKE MAPU : MOTHER EARTH
ÑUKE : MOM

P

PANGUI : COUGAR
PEWMA : DREAM
PICHI : SMALL
PILLAN : VOLCANO SPIRIT
PWIKENIEYU : I LOVE YOU
PU : PLURAL
PUÑEÑ : SON

T

TANI : MY
TXARINE : BELT LOOM

U

ÜKILLA : FEMALE KNITTED BLANKET

W

WINKUL : HILL

One year of Cypher, an update.

Hong Kong

THE ANNUAL MEMORIAL.



On 30 June 2021, Hong Kong woman human rights defender and lawyer Chow Hang-tung was re-arrested after the police revoked her bail, under which she was released from an earlier arrest on 4 June 2021. She is facing the charge of “inciting others to knowingly participate in unauthorized assemblies” in relations to events on 4 June to commemorate the anniversary of the Tienanmen massacre and 1 July to mark the return of Hong Kong to Chinese control in 1997. The [August 2020 edition](#) presents a story of pro-democracy activism in Hong Kong inspired by Tienanmen.



Disappearance of Idriss
Khattak and his return to the existing

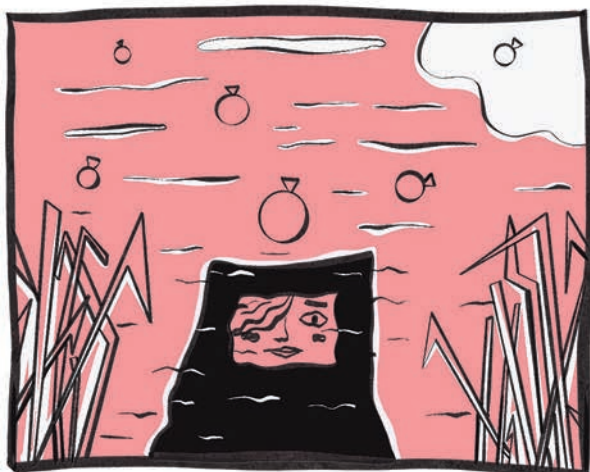
Pakistan

In November 2020, Talia Khattak, daughter of imprisoned Pakistani HRD Idriss Khattak, was brought to visit her father, who she had not seen for a year. She was taken to Mangla Cantonment, a Pakistani military garrison in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, to the house where her father was being held. In February 2021, the Peshawar High Court ruled against Khattak's petition challenging the military's jurisdiction to detain and charge him, allowing a military trial to proceed. The story of Idriss' forced disappearance, as told by Talia, was in the [first edition of Cypher](#) in July 2020.



Turkey

In July, President Erdogan removed the rector of the Bogazici University whom he had appointed in January. The students, alumni and the academic have been fighting against the "appointed rector" since that day, resulting in hundreds of arrests, at least 5 legal cases, beatings, attacks, injuries and travel bans. Their resistance was one of the stories in the [May 2021 issue](#). Unfortunately, measures taken against students and faculty have persisted, with many of them now challenging dismissals, etc. in administrative and legal processes.



Iraq

The [October 2020 edition](#) presented the 2020 Front Line Defenders Award winners, including Fatima Al-Bahadly from Iraq. On 24 July, Fatima's son Ali Karim, was kidnapped and the next day his bullet-riddled body was found, having been murdered. Fatima has received threats to her and her family for years, but has continued her activism despite the wave of killings against HRDs.

Italy - TAP

On 19 March 2021, the Lecce Court of First Instance found 67 human rights defenders from the No-TAP Movement in Italy guilty on charges of unauthorized protest, damage to private property, resistance to and contempt toward public officials and interruption of public service in three different legal cases. They were issued sentences ranging from three months to three and a half years imprisonment and/or fined up to €4280. A further 25 human rights defenders also on trial were acquitted. The story of No-TAP was presented in the [September 2020 issue](#).





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Find us online



frontlinedefenders.org/cypher

EM PÉ!!!

f FRONT LINE
DEFENDERS

