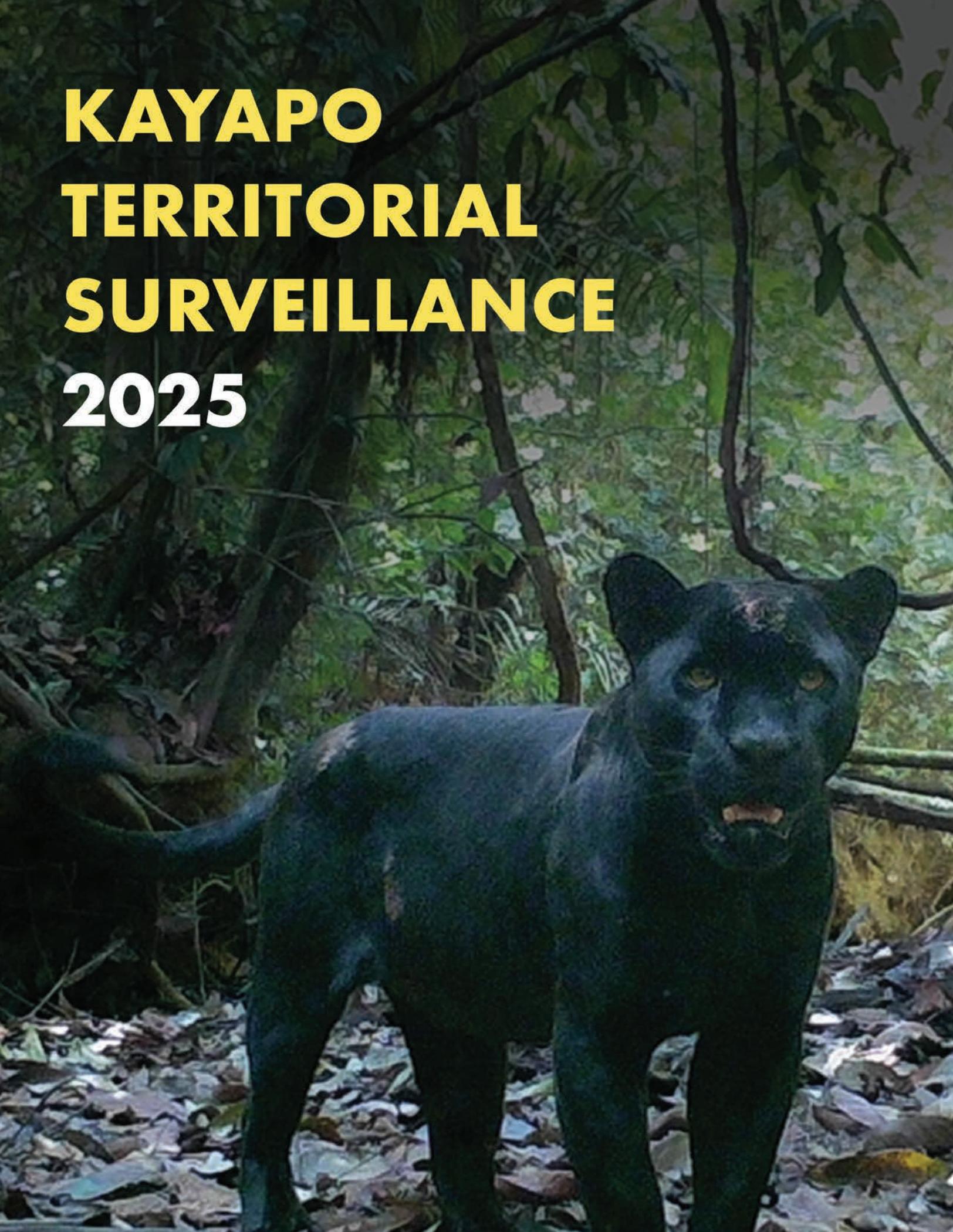


**KAYAPO  
TERRITORIAL  
SURVEILLANCE  
2025**





# Report on Kayapo Territorial Monitoring and Control

January – December 2025

by Barbara Zimmerman

**Barbara Zimmerman**  
**Kayapo Project Director**

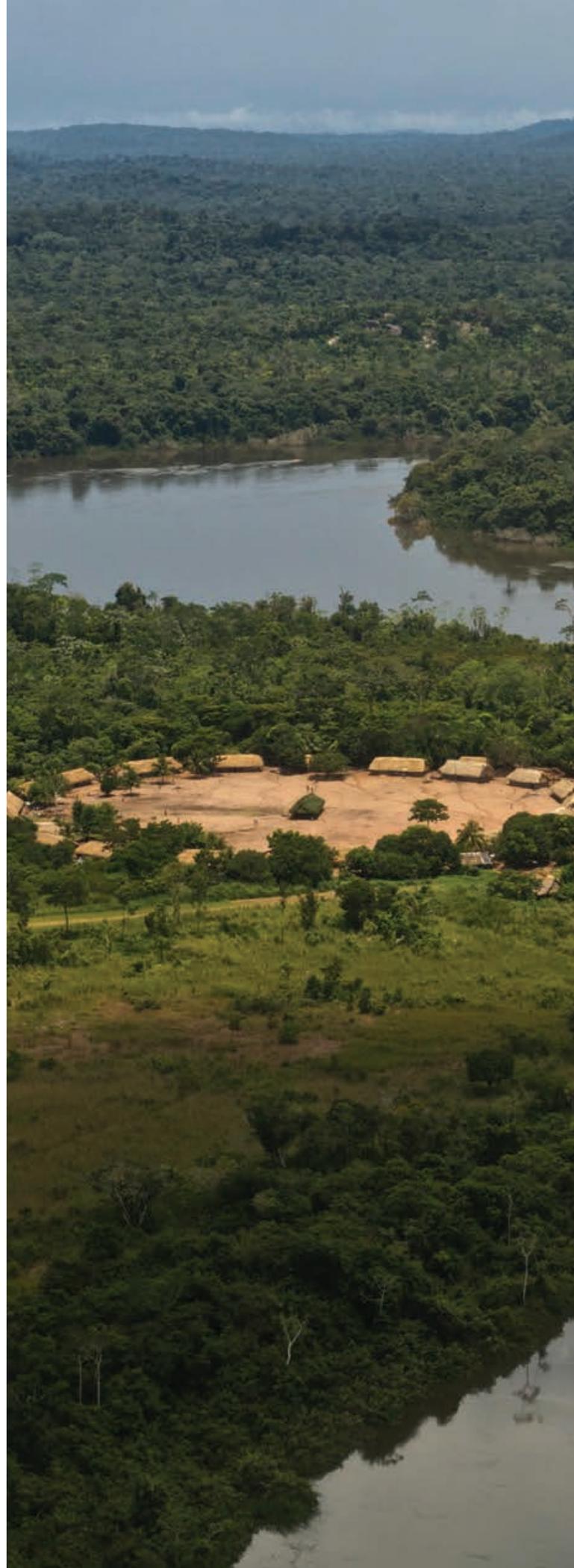
phone: 416 487 0879

email: [zimmerman@biomeconservation.org](mailto:zimmerman@biomeconservation.org)

February 2025

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, the Kayapo Project's territorial surveillance program succeeded in protecting more than 9 million hectares (22 million acres) of Kayapo Indigenous territory within a 10.6-million-hectare contiguous forest block in the southeastern Brazilian Amazon. Approximately 2,000 km of territorial borders remained largely intact despite intense and persistent pressure from illegal goldmining, logging, ranching expansion, and commercial fishing.

Territorial protection remains the foundation upon which all other Kayapo Project activities function, including sustainable enterprise development, institutional strengthening of Kayapo NGOs, territorial management planning, political advocacy, and cultural preservation. While Brazil's federal political climate remains broadly supportive of Indigenous rights, enforcement agencies lack the resources necessary to adequately protect Amazonian Indigenous territories. As a result, frontline defense of Kayapo lands continues to depend primarily on the Kayapo themselves and their NGO partners.

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## Summary of Guard Post Network and Operations

In 2025, **16 guard posts operated** across four ratified Kayapo indigenous territories (TI) under three Kayapo NGOs:

- » Associação Floresta Protegida (AFP) – TI Kayapo
- » Instituto Kabu (IK) – TIs Bau and Menkragnoti
- » Instituto Raoni (IR) – TI Capoto/Jarina and southern Menkragnoti

These posts function as territorial sentinels at strategic entry points. Guard teams of five to six Kayapo rotate weekly or biweekly, combining territorial defense with equitable income distribution across Kayapo communities to broadly engage Kayapo and reduce vulnerability to bribery by illegal actors.

Operating costs averaged **US\$12,000 per post per month**, with most posts active during the high-risk dry season (June–November). The Angme-e post in Bau operated year-round to prevent re-entry by goldminers.

In 2025:

- » Western guard posts (Instituto Kabu) conducted 130 patrols traversing 5,969 km in total
- » River systems including the Xingu, Iri, Pitxatxa (Curuaes), Riozinho, and Curua were systematically monitored
- » Eight groups of illegal fishermen were removed
- » No new logging or goldmining invasions were recorded in protected alliance territories

**over 9 million hectares (>22 million acres)** of Kayapo indigenous territories protected

**16** guard posts

**4** Kayapo indigenous territories (TI)

**3** Kayapo NGOs

**2,000 km** (1,250 miles) of border surveilled

**4** major rivers monitored

**0** new logging or goldmining invasions

**The visible presence of organized Kayapo guards continues to be an effective deterrent against invasion.**



## Regional Results by Territory

### TI Bau and TI Menkragnoti (Instituto Kabu)

**These western territories—forming the largest and least disturbed portion of the Kayapo block—remained largely secure in 2025.**

#### Successes:

- » No new logging incursions
- » Previously destroyed logging bridges (“buchas”) remained disabled
- » Eight western posts maintained continuous border defense

#### Ongoing Challenges:

- » Two small but active goldmining sites (Pista Velha and Garimpo Novo) persist inside TI Bau
- » These sites are politically complex due to involvement of non-allied Kayapo factions
- » Pollution from illegal mining on neighboring ranches continues contaminating the Pitxatxa River (outside the scope of the project to resolve)
- » Lack of a guard post on the upper Curua River leaves a vulnerability point (**a new guard post will be built here in 2026**)

Expansion of these mines has been contained as heavy equipment has not been able to cross the Curua river, thanks to the size of the river and Kayapo patrols.

### TI Kayapo (Associação Floresta Protegida)

**AFP-managed territory reported zero invasions in 2025.**

#### Key achievements:

- » The previously closed P14 and Cheiro goldmining sites remain inactive
- » Extensive river expeditions reinforced territorial presence

- » Infrastructure improvements were completed at Riozinho and Linha Seca guard posts in partnership with FUNAI

However, the eastern 1.2 million-hectare band of TI Kayapo that lies outside the conservation alliance continues to suffer heavy goldmining. A major federal enforcement operation (May–October 2025) temporarily disrupted activity, but mining resumed after authorities withdrew—highlighting the importance of permanent Kayapo-led surveillance.

### TI Capoto/Jarina (Instituto Raoni)

#### In the southern territory:

- » Borders held throughout 2025
- » Three posts operated most of the season, with a fourth (Capoto) added in November
- » Illegal commercial fishing was deterred along the Xingu River
- » Fire risk was significantly lower than in the drought-affected 2024 season

**The new Capoto post strengthens protection in a previously under-monitored area** and provides vital income to community members, reducing susceptibility to illicit activities.

## Government Enforcement Context

Federal enforcement (IBAMA, Federal Police, FUNAI, Army) remains severely under-resourced, with only four helicopters available to protect millions of square kilometers of Amazon territory.

Operations typically lack follow-up, allowing illegal actors to return once authorities leave. This reality underscores **the importance of preventative guard posts rather than relying on reactive enforcement.**



# Innovation and Capacity Building

## Data Monitoring

The ESRI/ArcGIS-based **Survey123 app** continued development in 2025, enabling real-time logging of patrol routes, illegal encounters, guard activities, and GPS data. A full analytical dashboard is forthcoming.

## Guard Post Education Program

Over **2,000 Kayapo participated** in the second year of a guard post video education curriculum designed to:

- » Reinforce cultural identity and territorial pride
- » Educate youth about risks of illegal activity
- » Build capacity to navigate outside society
- » Strengthen long-term forest stewardship

**The program has been widely embraced and is viewed as foundational to sustainable territorial governance.**

# 2025 Highlights

## Recap of Successes

**Over 9 million hectares remain intact**

**Western logging access remains blocked**

**Expansion of active Bau goldmines contained**

**No new invasions in AFP and IR territories**

**Illegal commercial fishing largely controlled**

**Youth education program scaled successfully**

## Primary Challenges

**Two active goldmining invasions in TI Bau**

**Funding limitations restricting full-year coverage**

**Internal Kayapo political divisions in some areas**

**Chronic pollution from mining on adjacent ranches**

**Regional corruption and organized crime**



## ■ Strategic Priorities for 2026

1. Establish additional guard presence along:
  - » Upper Curua River (northwest TI Bau)
  - » Road accessing P14 in the northeast
  - » Interior western flank of eastern TI Kayapo
  - » Western border of TI Capoto/Jarina
2. Expand and strengthen the guard post education curriculum.
3. Complete rollout of the Survey123 monitoring system across all posts.
4. Advance development of a REDD+ carbon project spanning approximately five million hectares of TI Menkragnoti and TI Capoto/Jarina. Following a Free, Prior, and Informed Consent process in 2024, Kayapo communities reached consensus to pursue this initiative. The project aims to generate sustainable revenue through verified carbon credit sales, supporting long-term territorial protection and financial independence.

## ■ Conclusion

The 2025 Kayapo surveillance program demonstrates that sustained, locally led, strategically placed territorial defense—combined with community income, education, and technological innovation—remains the most powerful mechanism for large scale forest conservation in the highly threatened southeastern Amazon.

Despite relentless external pressure and limited government enforcement capacity, the Kayapo and their partner NGOs successfully held the line across one of the largest intact tropical forest blocks in the Brazilian Amazon and the world. Continued investment in surveillance (guard posts and expeditions), youth education, monitoring technology, and sustainable financing mechanisms will be essential to maintaining this critical forest frontier in the years ahead.



# INTRODUCTION

The Kayapo Project team reports on surveillance program activities and results in 2025. Territorial surveillance provides the shield behind which other Kayapo Project programs of conservation and development can function. All programs work in concert to empower the Kayapo for protection of their land and constitutional rights. Other NGO programs vital to Kayapo territorial protection are:

- I.** sustainable enterprise development (Brazil nut, cumaru nut, ecotourism, handicrafts),
- II.** institutional capacity building for administration and management with the three local Kayapo NGOs,
- III.** territorial management planning,
- IV.** political mobilization and protest to uphold indigenous rights, and
- V.** translation of the socio-politico- economic context of the outside world to ensure the Kayapo have the information they need to deal effectively in outside society. (More can be found about the broader Kayapo Project at <https://kayapo.org/> )

In 2025 the Brazilian political context continued supportive of indigenous rights, although in practice government authorities lack resources to adequately enforce protected areas and indigenous territories in Amazonia. Territorial protection, therefore, is largely left up to indigenous people and their partners on their own. Hence the surveillance program described here.

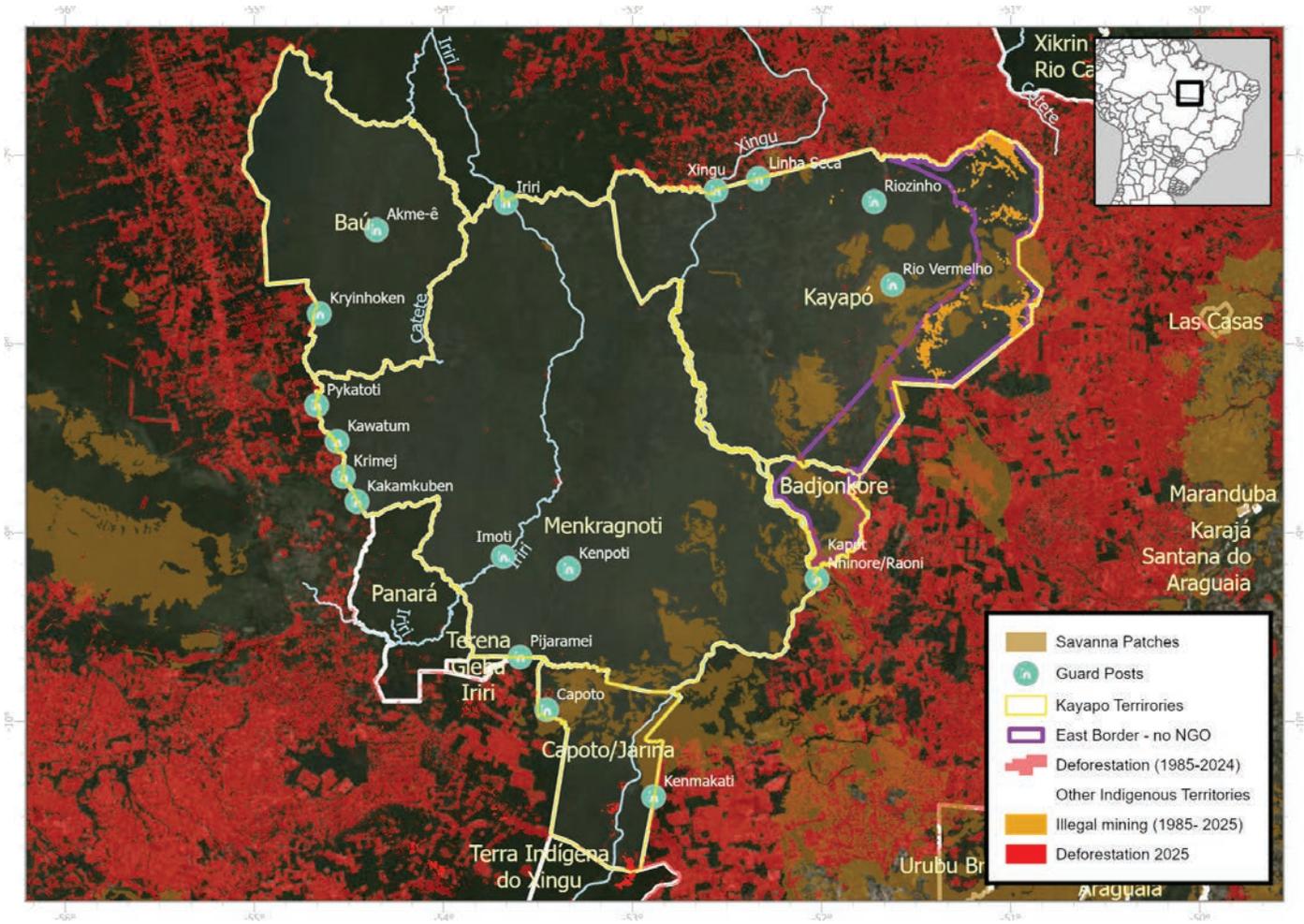


# 2025 KAYAPO TERRITORIAL PROTECTION ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The overall result of Kayapo territorial surveillance in 2025 is presented in Map 1: more than nine million hectares (22 million acres) of Kayapo territory and some 2,000 km of border remained largely intact.

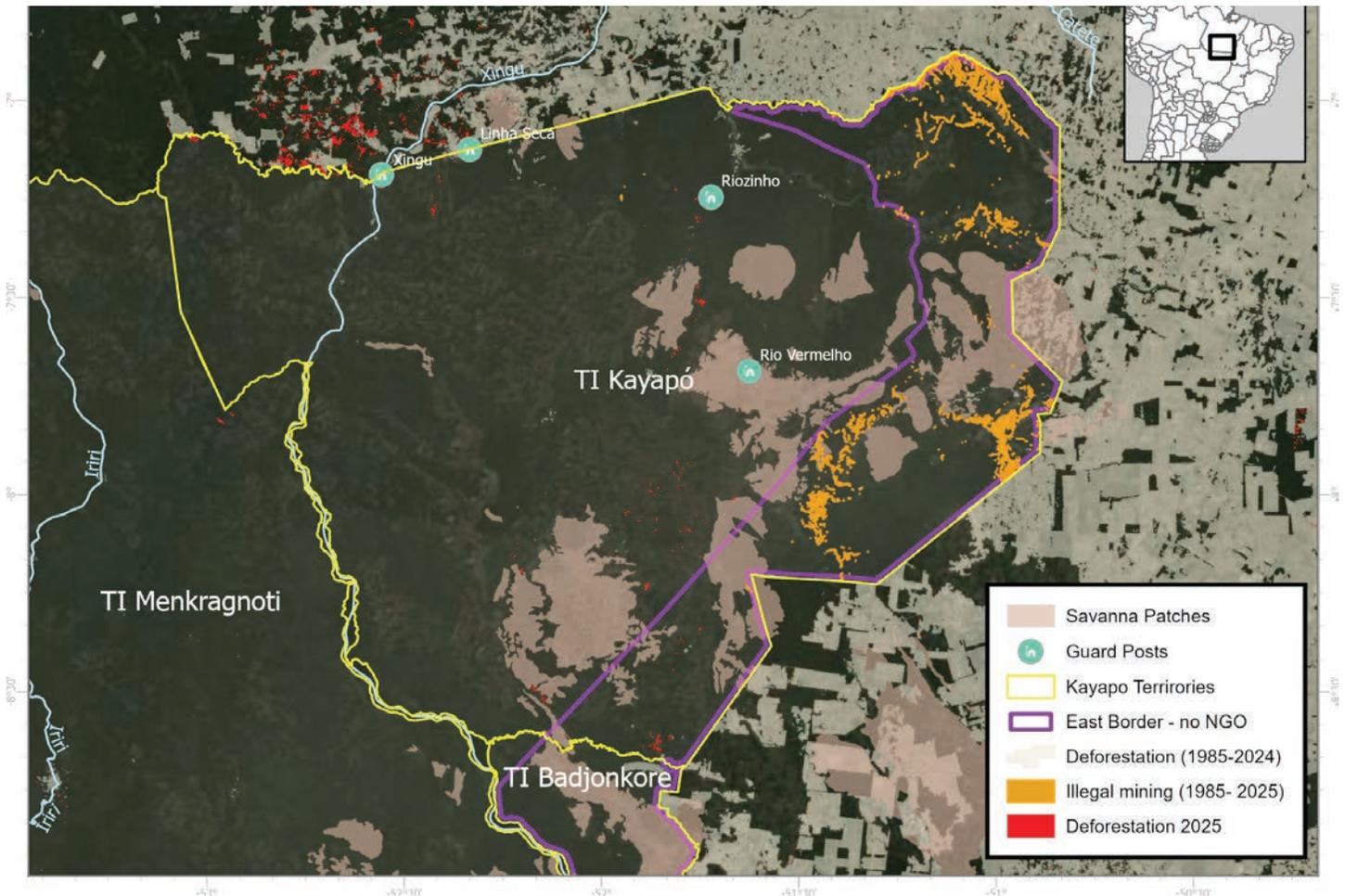
**Map 2** further highlights the striking impact of philanthropic investment on the protection of Kayapo Territory.

**Map 3** demonstrates the rapid march of deforestation around Kayapo territory between 1997 and 2024.

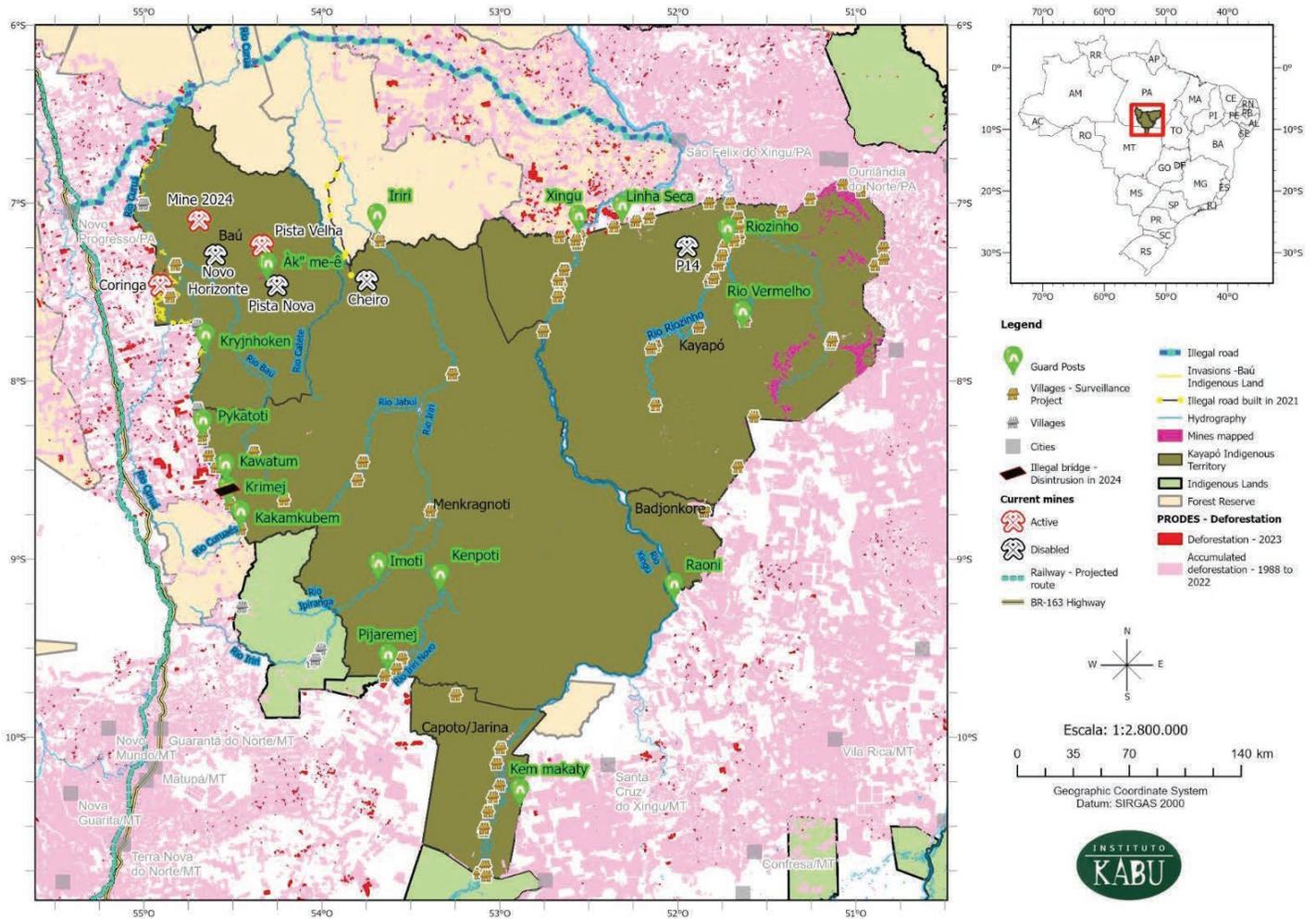


**Map 1.** The state of the 10.6 million hectare block of ratified Kayapo Indigenous territory as of December 2025. Kayapo indigenous territories (TI) are outlined in yellow with an eastern band of ~ 1.2 million hectares outlined in purple that does not form part of this project so receives no conservation NGO investment and has, therefore, been lost to illegal logging and goldmining. Approximately 9.4 million hectares of Kayapo territory to the west of the interior purple border is protected with conservation and development investment and remains intact.

**Map 2.** The northeastern sector of Kayapo territory (TI Kayapó) as of 2025 showing the eastern band of territory (delineated in purple) where the Kayapo did not ally with the conservation NGOs and therefore has been heavily invaded by goldmining (orange) and logging. Guard post locations are shown (green dots). The brown in Kayapo territory are patches of savanna (cerrado) on Brazilian shield rock.



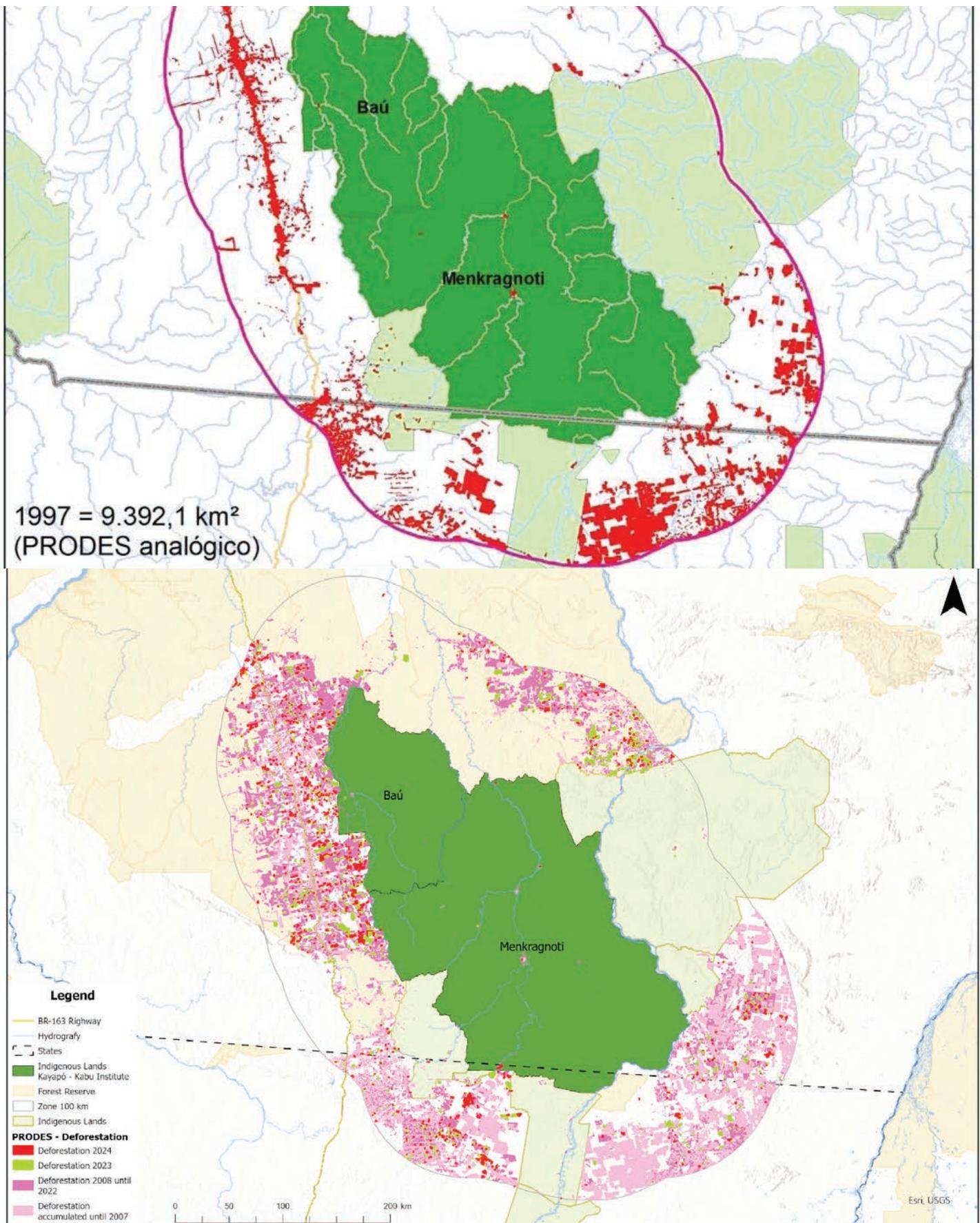
The spreading cancer of goldmining in the non-allied eastern band of Kayapo territory (**Maps 1,2**) that does not form part of this project and receives no conservation investment



**Map 3.** The state of Kayapo territory in 2024 and 2025: Ratified indigenous territories of the Kayapo (green) showing:

- » locations of guard posts (green pins),
- » main villages with 50 people or more (brown hut symbols),
- » de-activated/disabled goldmining sites in Kayapo NGO-alliance territory (black crossed miners picks),
- » the Mine 2024 (Garimpo Novo) and Pista Velha active goldmining sites in Kayapo NGO-alliance territory (red crossed miners picks).
- » The P14 (goldmining) and Bucha 03 (logging bridge) sites were disabled in 2024. Bucha 03 is marked by a black rectangle.

The western Panara indigenous territory (light green) is contiguous with the Kayapo territory of Menkragnoti but does not form part of this project.



**Map 4.** The inexorable march of deforestation: cumulative deforestation as of 1997 and 2024 in Kayapo territories Bau and Menkragnoti (dark green) that are represented by the Instituto Kabu. The study area is delimited by the purple line. Other Kayapo territories (TI Kayapo, TI Capoto/Jarina, and TI Badjonkore) and the neighbouring Panara indigenous territory on the western border are marked in light green. Red and pink indicates deforestation.

An aerial photograph of a settlement on a riverbank. The settlement features several buildings, including a prominent one with a corrugated metal roof. A path leads through the sandy ground. In the background, a dense forest lines the riverbank under a hazy sky. The text '16 GUARD POSTS FORM A SHIELD FOR KAYAPO TERRITORY' is overlaid on the image.

# 16 GUARD POSTS FORM A SHIELD FOR KAYAPO TERRITORY

# GUARD POSTS



The Kenpoti Guard Post on the Iri river in Menkragnoti territory

The guard post program supports the three Kayapo NGOs to organize and administer monitoring and protection along most of the **2,200 km (1,375 miles)** border demarcating over nine million hectares (**22 million acres**) of their territory.

Guard posts are located strategically at vulnerable entry points into Kayapo territory. Guard posts signal to outside society that the Kayapo of an area are organized to defend their land rights. The very presence of organized Kayapo along the border has proven effective to deter invasion.

Under the guard post program, inherent Kayapo drive to protect their territory, culture, and livelihood combines with equitably accessed income to produce a strong social antidote to the bribing of individuals by goldminers, loggers, and fishermen.

Guard post teams are comprised of five or six Kayapo drawn from a single community. Teams from different communities rotate every week at most posts. In some cases guard teams rotate every two weeks or monthly because of daunting transportation logistics. **(Table 1)**.



A guard team working at the Angme-e guard post in Bau territory, November 2025

**Table 1.** 2025 Kayapo Guard Posts

Kayapo NGO responsible, Guard Post Name, (Kayapo Indigenous Territory)	2025 Period of Operation	Coordinates	Participating communities	No. Kayapo guards per team	No. guard teams rotated & (shift change frequency)
<b>Associação Floresta Protegida</b>					
Xingu (TI Kayapo)	May 13-Dec 1	S 07°10'42.90" W 52°33'24.15"	Kokrajmoro, Madjyre, Pokró, Krinhoe-re, Kamoktidjam, Rikaró, Kruwanhongô, Kawatire, Tepdkati, Tepkatinhôngore, Pykararãnkre, Kamoktidjam, Kokokrere, Kamure, Kruwakro, Kakore	06	28 (7 days)
Iriri (TI Menkragnoti)	April 29 – Dec 2	S 07°08'51.2" W 53°44'44.0"	Kendjam, Karemá, Rongwyi	06	15 (14 days)
Riozinho (TI Kayapo)	May 14- Dec 1	S 07°14'46.16" W 51°43'23.44"	Mejkare, Pinkejtykre, Pytore, Ngojamroti, Kenpoti, Kakumre, Pykatykre, Pykakyti, Ngomejti, Ydjyre, Pi-yrejam, Kranat, Bora, Kenmere, Kakam-kubem, Mrybari	05	29 (7 days)
Linha Seca (TI Kayapo)	May 15 –Nov 29	S 07° 7'8.90" W 52°18'52.80"	Akrotidjam, Kremajti, Tepdjati, Katenhoró, Ngroara	06	27 (7 days)
Rio Vermelho (TI Kayapo)	May 13 – Dec 2	S 07°42'47.4" W 51°38'15.1"	A'Ukre, Ngotajte	06	16 (14 days)
<b>Instituto Kabu</b>					
Pykatoti (TI Menkragnoti) Shift change 07 days	May 23-Nov 30	S 08° 19' 32,508" W 54° 40' 13,704"	Pykatoti, Pyngraitire, Pykany, Jabui, Pytareko, Pykatukre	06	27 (7 days)
Kawatum (TI Menkragnoti)	May 27-Nov 30	S 08° 34' 19.2" W 54° 32' 35.8"	Kawatum, Mopkrore	06	27 (7 days)
Krimej (TI Menkragnoti)	June 11-Dec 2	S 08° 42' 05.1" W 54° 31' 44.1"	Krimej	05	25 (7 days)

Kayapo NGO responsible, Guard Post Name, (Kayapo Indigenous Territory)	2025 Period of Operation	Coordinates	Participating communities	No. Kayapo guards per team	No. guard teams rotated & (shift change frequency)
Kenpoti (TI Menkragnoti)	July 24-Dec 2	S 09° 11' 22.8" W 53° 20' 14.8"	Kubenkokre	06	10 (14 days)
Krijnhoken (TI Bau) Shift change 07 days	June 6 -Dec 4	S 07° 50' 35,370" W54° 39' 18,452"	Bau, Kamure	05	26 (7 days)
*Angme-e (TI Bau)	Jan 15 -Dec 24	S 07° 23' 45.1" W 54° 21' 15.02"	Bau	06	14 (30 days)
Imoti (TI Menkragnoti)	June 27 -Dec 3	S 09°7'42,45 W53°41'5,02"	Kubenkokre	06	10 (14 days)
Kakakubem (TI Menkragnoti)	June 17-Dec 2	S 08°50'10.386" W 54°27'31.514"	Kakakubem, Mekragnotire Velho	06	12 (14 days)
<b>Instituto Raoni</b>					
Raoni (TI Menkragnoti)	June 16-Dec 3	S 09°11'38.03" W 52° 1'44.43"	Piaraçu, Kapotnhinore, Maida, Metuktire	06	10 (14 days)
Kenmakatyk (TI Capoto/Jarina)	June 19-Dec 4	S 10°23'41.98" W52°53'37.66"	Mektutire, Kaweretxiko, Tonhore, Mupa, Butyre, Kretyre, Kromare, Piaraçu, Jatobá, More	06	12 (14 days)
Kororoti-Pijaremej (TI Menkragnoti)	May 30 -Dec 1	S 09°39'21.67" W53°35'46.36"	Kororoti, Pidjaremej Omejkrankum, Kadjanhoro, Poreby, Kubara, Kadjenhoro	06	27 (7 days)
**Capoto (TI Capoto/Jarina)	Nov 7 -Dec 20	S 09°56'19,4" W53°27'17,1"	Capoto	06	06 (7 days)

\* The Angme-e guard post in northwestern Bau territory must operate all year round to deter entry by gold-mining

\*\* The Capoto guard post was added in 2025 once funding became available near the end of the year





The Raoni guard post on the upper Xingu river in southern Menkragnoti

## Infrastructure and Administration

Guard posts are built with huts for sleeping, cooking, storage, and a bathroom. Each post is equipped with a freezer, water pump, generator, water tower, parabolic antenna and television, and some solar power. Transportation to and from the guard posts relies on boats and/or 4x4 trucks depending on riverine or road access. Also, all posts are outfitted with starlink internet which greatly facilitates logistics, delivery of a video education program, and safety.

Post operation counts on two non-Kayapo administrators responsible for controlling supplies of food and fuel and coordinating logistics with their regional Kayapo NGO. Following traditional Kayapo values of egalitarianism, Kayapo guard teams rotate weekly to maximize work opportunity and, therefore, benefits sharing. This system necessitates permanent post administrators to coordinate day-to-day logistics, supplies, equipment maintenance, and team rotation.



The Xingu river guard post at closing in December 2025 as the water level rises



## Period of Post Operation

The period of post operation is defined by available funding. On average, each post costs US\$ 12,000/month to operate with expenses of Kayapo guard salaries, post administrator salaries, fuel, food, and equipment. The Kayapo NGO's must also obtain federal authorization for the team of non-Kayapo administrators to enter indigenous territory which can take time given government bureaucracy.

Posts must operate a minimum of six months to ensure a decent measure of territorial control -although eight to ten months would improve security. Given the limit imposed by available funding, post operation is prioritized to span the June to November dry season when forest roads are passable and invasion threat highest.

The Angme-e guard post operates over the entire year to prevent re-entry by goldminers after they were expelled from a site near this post in Bau territory in 2022. Bau territory is largely uninhabited by Kayapo. The goldminers will return without the constant presence of this post and its guards.

The Iri guard post opening day in May 2025:

▶ Video

## Guard Post Duties

Guard post teams of five or six Kayapo plus two non-indigenous administrators are responsible for

- » maintaining the camp, collecting firewood for cooking, fishing for food, and building and maintaining structures
- » checking authorization of any person entering the (Kayapo) indigenous territory. Non-Kayapo persons must have official authorization from the federal Indian Agency (FUNAI) to be allowed entry
- » patrolling sections of border in their area
- » opening and closing the posts



A guard team from the Kakakuben post replaces a roof.



# THE MOST REMOTE GUARD POSTS ARE REACHED ONLY AFTER DAYS OF TRAVEL



## Logistics

Several guard posts are exceptionally challenging to supply and rotate guard teams:

» The Iri post requires transport of supplies over 600 km of bad dirt road (impassable during the rainy season) followed by a 10-hour boat ride. Teams from the village of Kendjam must travel 50 km by river to reach the post. Hauling six months of fuel and supplies to the Iri guard post in May 2025.

### ▶ Video

» Loading up the boats to head to the Iri guard post.

### ▶ Video

» The Raoni post requires transport over 500 km of bad road followed by a three-hour boat trip plus travel through a dangerous lawless frontier area

» The Rio Vermelho post requires a three-day boat trip to transport the bulk supplies for six months. Guard team rotation at the Rio Vermelho post requires a 30 km overnight hike through forest and across a savanna-cerrado.

» The Angme-e post requires one day's boat ride followed by a 35 km hike through forest.

» the Kenpoti post requires a 280 km trip over a very bad road followed by a boat trip of two days up a rapid filled river.

» Supplying the Imoti post requires a trip of 350 km by road from Novo Progresso—of which about 200 km is dirt track through forest to the large interior village of Kubenkokre—followed by a 138 km three-to-four-day boat trip upriver to reach the post. Guard teams rotate via river from Kubenkokre village.

Supplying the Kryinhoken guard post on the Curua river



The poor condition of the unmaintained roads in the region results in **high vehicle maintenance costs**. Boat motors are another source of never-ending maintenance costs especially when rocks reappear in the dry season.

## Note on Guard Post Operations in 2025

Little of great import happened at guard posts in 2025. There were the usual challenges of logistics and equipment but otherwise **the guard posts performed their function of deterring invasion with the Kayapo continuing to be very happy with the program**. The logistical challenges were particularly acute in the west where unmaintained roads and bridges hampered supplying posts accessed by long road trips.

An aerial photograph showing a long, straight dirt road that runs vertically through the center of the frame. To the left of the road is a cleared, brownish landscape with sparse vegetation. To the right is a dense, lush green forest. The sky is clear and blue with some light clouds. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**2,000 km  
OF KAYAPO  
BORDERS  
PROTECTED  
IN 2025**

# EXPEDITIONS, BORDER PATROL, AND STATUS OF THE KAYAPO INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES



A Xingu river expedition in 2025

The primary purpose of expeditions and patrols is to mark Kayapo presence and deter invasion by fishermen, goldminers, and loggers. A secondary purpose of expeditions is to reinforce Kayapo understanding and pride in the important surveillance work they perform and includes facilitating transmission of traditional knowledge from elder to youth.

Expeditions are made by foot, vehicle, boat, or some combination. There are two types of expeditions:

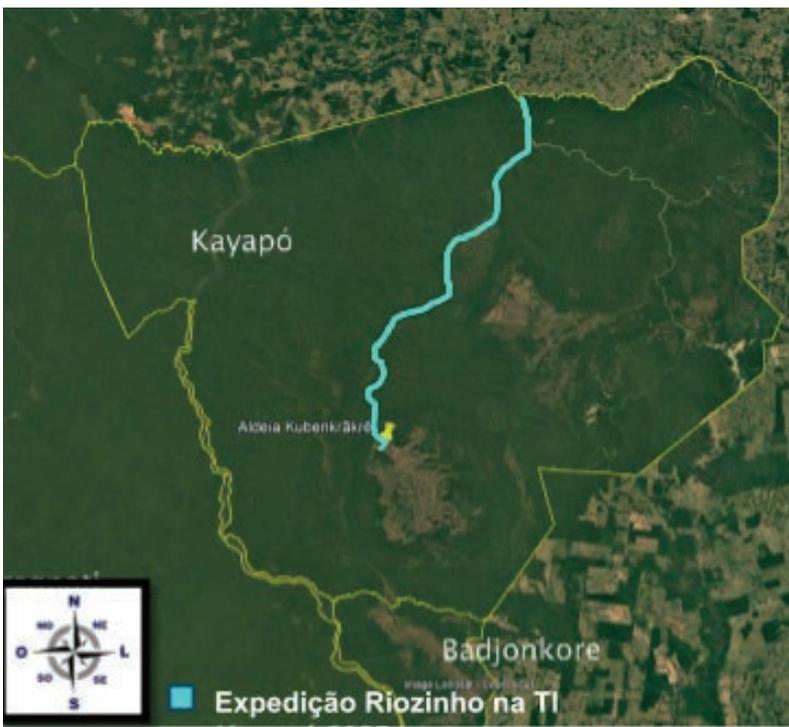
- I. weekly or bi-weekly patrols by post teams along stretches of river, and
- II. expeditions of several days that survey areas not reached by guard posts.



**Table 2.** List of guard post-based patrols and other expeditions by the territorial surveillance program in 2025

GUARD POST-BASED PATROL	Kayapo Indigenous Territory	Total kms per patrol section	Objective and Results
Krimej	Menkragnoti		Weekly patrols along sections of 120 km of the Pitxatxa (Curuaes) river (Map X)
Kenpoti	Menkragnoti		Bi-monthly patrols along sections of 180 km of the Iriri river between the villages of Kubenkokre and Omejkrakum (Map X)
Kryjnhoken	Bau		patrols along 145 km of the Pitxatxa river to limit with TI Menkragnoti (Map X).
Pista Nova/Angme-e	Bau		Patrols in a 5 km radius from post and part of the Curua river.
Raoni	Capoto/Jarina Kaponhinore		Patrols along the southern stretches of the Xingu River in Kayapo territory diminish and prevent entry by commercial fishermen and hunters (Map X). There has been a resurgence of fish and game in the area since the post was established.
Kenmakatyk	Capoto/Jarina		Patrols along the Corgão river that flows into the southern reaches of the Xingu River in Kayapo territory. Prevents and deters entry by illegal fishermen and other bad actors
Pijaremej /Kororoti	Menkragnoti		Guards patrol the upper Iriri river to stop entry by illegal fishermen and prevent re-entry by loggers into the vast Kayapo indigenous territory of Menkragnoti The post hosted training for Kayapo fire brigades
Kakakuben	Menkragnoti		Monitoring sections of the Pitxaxa river (Map X)
Iriri	Kayapo		Monitors the entire river from Kendjam village to the border in the north ~ 80 km
Riozinho	Kayapo		Monitors ~ 50km of the Riozinho river from the Rio Branco River to the village of Moikarako
Rio Vermelho			Monitors ~ 30km of the Rio Vermelho River and environs

GUARD POST-BASED PATROL	Kayapo Indigenous Territory	Total kms per patrol section	Objective and Results
<b>EXPEDITIONS (coordinating NGO)</b>			
<b>AFP</b>			
Iri (May)	Tis Kayapo and Menkragnoti	100 km	the Iri river from the northern border of Kayapo land to Kendjam village. The purpose of this expedition was largely educational to facilitate transmission of traditional knowledge from elder you youth and raise awareness about the importance of territorial control
Riozinho (April)	TI Kayapo	130 km	From P9 on the Rio Fresco (near where the Riozinho river enters the Rio Fresco) until Kubenkranken village on the Riozinho river. A goldmining barge was observed on the Rio Fresco. There was garbage at the portage between the lower and upper Riozinho.
Xingu (January)	TI Kayapo	115 km	From the Xingu guard post upriver to an old village site called Kawatire Velho. All good, no sign of illegal activity
Xingu (December)		115 km	From the Xingu guard post upriver to Kawatire Velho, all good, no sign of illegal activity
<b>IK</b>			
(March)	TI Bau	120km	Surveillance of the Pitxatxa (Curaes) River. No invasions detected and old logging bridges (bucha) remain ruined. A group of fishermen were encountered and sent out from the Kayapo territory
<b>OVERFLIGHTS</b>			
IK: Central TI Bau and northwest TI Menkragnoti,			Survey of illegal goldmining on land adjacent the border of northwestern Kayapo territory that is responsible for polluting the Pitxatxa river; survey the status of goldmining in the interior of Bau territory (Map X)
AFP: Eastern TI Kayapo and Menkragnti (July)			Survey the state of goldmining: P14 and Cheiro continue de-activated
AFP: eastern and southern TI Kayapo (September)			survey the state of goldmining in the 1.2 million ha band of territory along the eastern border that does not form part of the conservation alliance. These illegal goldmining sites overflowed in non-alliance Kayapo territory are Turedjam, Maria Bonita, Kriny, and Santilli. They all returned to active after a major government operation temporarily halted their functioning in July.



**Map 5.** Routes of the Riozinho and Iri expeditions

Elders pass down tradition on a Xingu river expedition



# TI BAU AND TI MENKRAGNOTI: TERRITORIES ADMINISTERED BY THE INSTITUTO KABU

The Instituto Kabu (IK) is based in Novo Progresso, Para, and represents Kayapo of the conservation alliance living in Bau and Menkragnoti indigenous territories (TI) of the Kayapo.

2025 was a year of no news is good news in this western region. The entire highly threatened western border held in 2025: there were no logging or new goldmining invasions. The logging intrusions that were stopped in previous years continued blocked.

However, two small-scale goldmining sites in the interior of Bau Indigenous territory, Pista Velha and Novo Garimpo (**Maps 3, 6**) remained active. These goldmining sites trace their origins to before the conservation alliance was active in the region. The Kayapo of the Instituto Kabu (IK) managed to remove a third site (Pista Nova) in 2022; however internal Kayapo politics complicates removal these last two. Non-allied Kayapo living in the 137,000-hectare strip of Bau territory west of the Curua river (**Map 6**) control this illegal goldmining and therein lies the conflict with their relatives living east of the Curua river who reject illegal activity. A helicopter-supported government operation will be necessary to remove these invasions. Until then (which could be never), the Bau Kayapo are keeping the Pista Velha and Novo Garimpo sites contained by surveilling the Curua river and preventing crossing of heavy equipment. However, another guard post is needed badly on the upper Curua river to prevent goldminers crossing the river and gaining entry to the vast interior of Bau territory.

Overall, eight western guard posts operated by the Instituto Kabu performed 130 patrols that logged a total of 5,969 km (3,730 miles)



Goldmining on a ranch near the border with Menkragnoti territory

there and back from home guard posts (**Map 7**). These were the problems encountered:

- » Contamination of the Pitxaxa river by gold-mining adjacent the border
- » Hunting by non-Kayapo people
- » Eight groups of fishermen were removed -five groups were encountered in southern Bau and three groups removed from the northwestern border of Menkragnoti territory

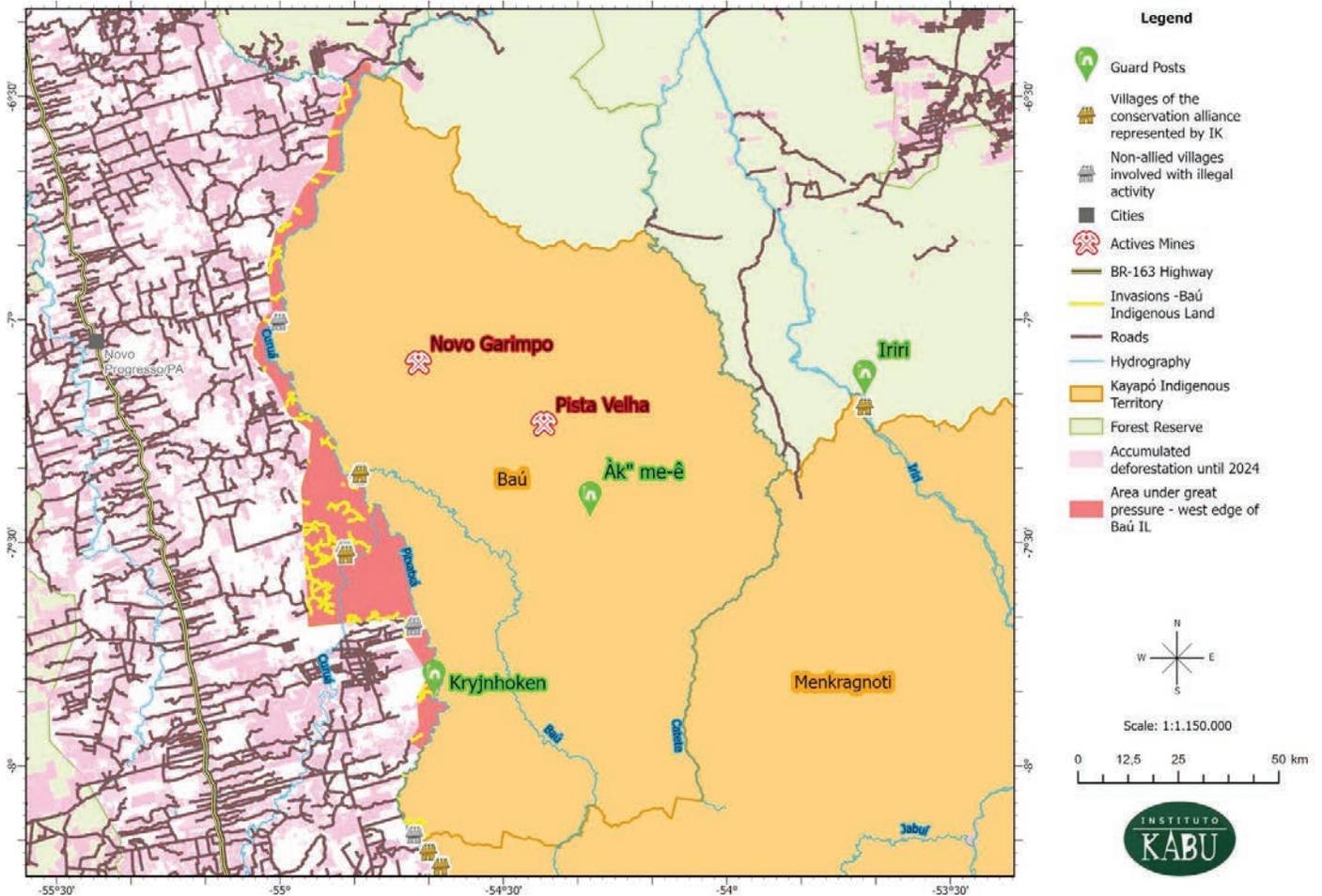
The surveillance program team of the Instituto Kabu notes that illegal fishing concentrated along two sections of the Pitxatxa river: the southwest of Bau territory from the

“dry line” border to the border of Menkragnoti territory, and; the section from the Kawatum guard post to “bucha 3” (a de-activated loggers bridge) (**Map 3**).

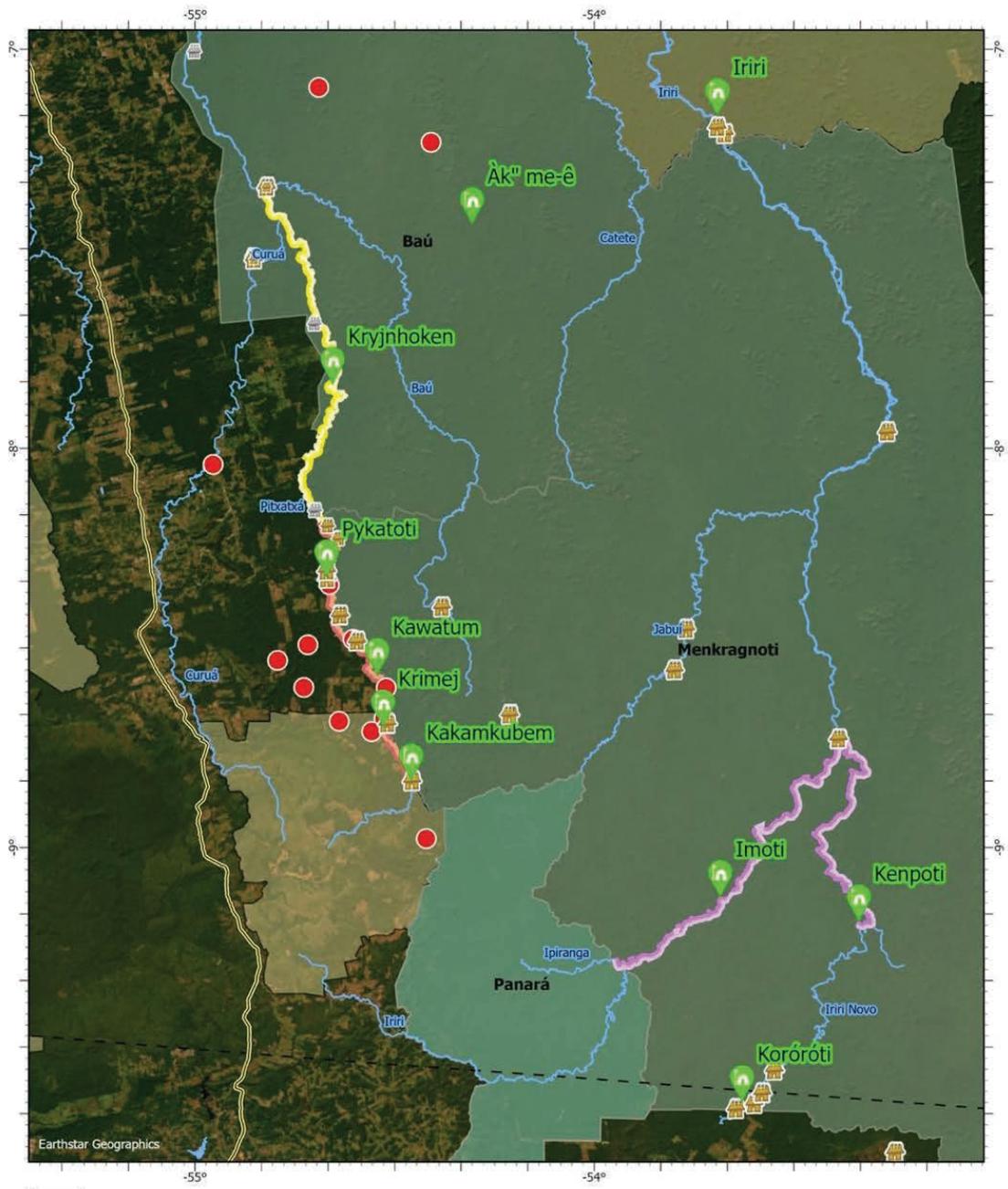
Pollution of the Pitxatxa (Curuaes) river demarcating part of the northwestern border arises from goldmining on neighbouring ranches. This problem is outside the scope of the Instituto Kabu to resolve and must be dealt with by government authorities, - which is unlikely to happen.



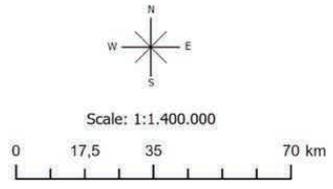
Goldmining on a ranch near Krimei village is polluting the Pitxatxa river, July 2025.



**Map 6.** Northwestern Kayapo territory of Bau and part of Menkragnoti territory controlled by the Kayapo of Instituto Kabu (orange) showing locations of guard posts (green pins) and the two active goldmining invasions, Novo Garimpo and Pista Velha. The 137,000 ha band of territory west of the Curua river (dark pink) is controlled by non-alliance Kayapo involved in goldmining and logging. The Pista Velha and Garimpo Novo goldmines are accessed by one of the illegal roads to the north on the Curua river where supplies are ferried across.



- Legend**
- Guard Posts
  - Villages - Surveillance Project
  - Villages
  - Registered offenses
  - BR-163 Highway
  - Hydrografia
  - Indigenous Lands
  - Panará IL
  - Forest Reserve
  - States
  - Patrol routes
    - Southwest - IL Baú
    - Northwest - IL Menkragnoti
    - Southwest - IL Menkragnoti
    - Northwest - IL Menkragnoti



**Map 7.** Routes patrolled by Kayapo guards based at guard posts operated by the Instituto Kabu. Red dots indicate locations of illegal goldmining (“registered offenses”) in 2025 which lie outside of Kayapo territory except for the “Pista Velha” and “Garimpo Novo” locations in TI Baú. Panara Indigenous territory (light green) belongs to the Panara Indigenous people and does not form part of the Kayapo project. Red dots mark illegal goldmining sites

## TI Bau

The Curua river border of Bau territory in the northwest (**Maps 6,7**) is vulnerable to invasion by illegal activity, especially goldmining. The Kayapo of Bau village are doing their best to hold the line and have been mostly successful until now.



A guard team works at the Kryinhoken guard post on the Curua river

The area west of the Curua river is politically fraught because seven years ago a group of Kayapo from Bau TI that had been allied with the northwestern Instituto Kabu of the conservation alliance were co-opted by goldminers and loggers and left the alliance to pursue illegal activity and easy money. This is when the Kayapo conservation-alliance lost 137,000 hectares to loggers and goldminers. The lost territory is a slice of TI Bau located west of the Curua and Pitxatxa rivers (**Map 6**). Although the loss was unfortunate, the main prize is the millions of hectares of Kayapo territory lying east of the Curua and Pitxatxa rivers. Guards from the village of Bau manning the Kryinhoken and Angme-e posts single-handedly hold this line by blocking miners and loggers from crossing these rivers and accessing the interior of Kayapo territory. (**Map 6**).

The Angme-e post in central TI Bau marks Kayapo presence where once there was a goldmining site, Pista Nova, that the Kayapo closed in 2022. Post guards patrol a radius of about a 5km from the Angme-e post. Without the Angme-e guard post and patrolling of the Curua and Pitxatxa rivers, goldmining would have spread throughout Bau. Map 6 shows expanding road networks used by ranchers, loggers, and goldminers.

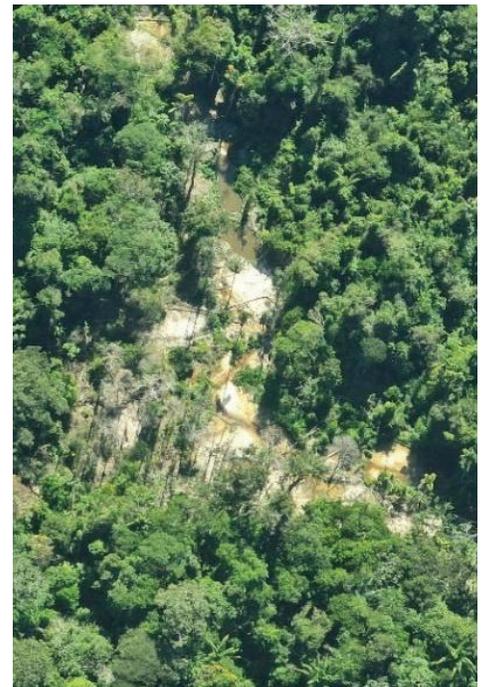


This group of goldminers attempting to reach the Garimpo Novo goldmine was removed from Bau territory by a Kayapo patrol on the Curua river in January 2026

(In January 2026, a Kayapo patrol on the northern reaches of the Curua river removed goldminers who had crossed the river on their way to the Pista Velha or Garimpo Novo goldmining sites. This video shows the expedition leader telling the goldminers to leave peacefully and all would be well. Their boat and motor, starlink, and guns were confiscated by the patrol:



The new Garimpo Novo goldmine that gained entry to Bau territory in 2024 because there is no guard post on the northern reaches of the Curua river to control access





The active Pista Velha goldmine in Bau territory, July 2025

## TI Menkragnoti

At almost 5 million hectares (12 million acres) TI Menkragnoti is the largest Kayapo territory comprising the huge 10.6 million ha block of Kayapo ratified indigenous territory (**Map 1**). The forest of Menkragnoti is the least disturbed in the block having never suffered goldmining or the summer fires that regularly impact the southern Kayapo territory of Capoto/Jarina.

Menkragnoti is a bit moth-eaten around the edges from previous logging that had gained entry before the Pykatoti, Krimei, and Pijaremei (Kororoti) guard posts were established (**Maps 1, 3, 7**). Loggers were accessing Menkragnoti by using large logs to build temporary bridges across the Pitxatxa river in the dry season of low water. These logging bridges are known as “buchas”. The Pitxatxa buchas were destroyed and all logging blocked in 2022 and 2023. Post guards ensure these bridges remain inactivated.

In 2025 the main problem faced by Menkragnoti was pollution flowing into the Pitxatxa river from illegal goldmining on neighbouring ranches. These illegal goldmines are mapped by the Instituto Kabu and official denunciations delivered to the Attorney General and Ministry of Environment.

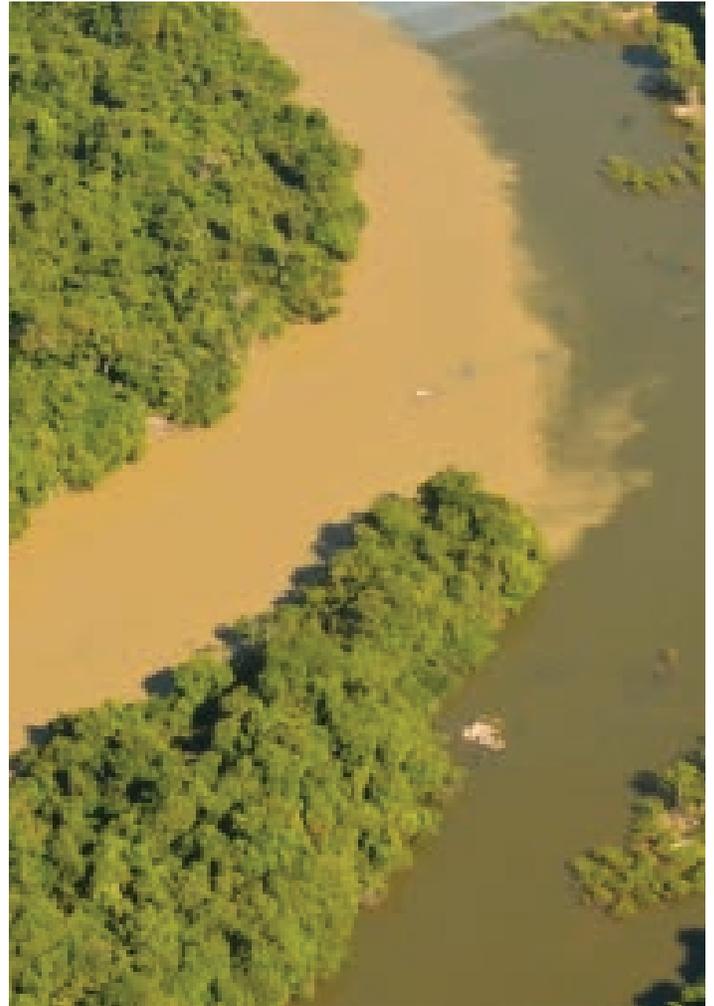


Goldmine on a ranch 13 km from the village of Krimei that is polluting the Pitxatxa river





Guard team from the Pykatoti guard post standing beside the official government sign indicating the border of an indigenous territory, Menkragnoti



Pollution from goldmining on ranches near the western edge of Menkragnoti territory flows into the Pitxatxa river



Pitxatxa river guard post teams maintain the decommissioned status of logging bridges, or "bucha", that once allowed loggers entry to Menkragnoti territory.



Patrols from posts located along the Pitxatxa river ensure that all fishing in this border river is for subsistence only and no commercial fishing

# TI KAYAPO: ADMINISTERED BY THE ASSOCIACAO FLORESTA PROTEGIDA

Kayapo communities of the northeast represented by their Associação Floresta Protegida (AFP) control approximately 1.8 million hectares of official Kayapo indigenous territory (TI Kayapo) that lies mostly to the east of the Xingu river (**Map 1**). The remaining roughly 1.5 million hectares of the ratified TI Kayapo was lost years ago to illegal activity, principally goldmining and logging (**Maps 1,2**). This lost territory does not form part of the Kayapo project conservation alliance.

The AFP is pleased to report no invasions or indications of illegal activity in AFP controlled territory during 2025.

In 2025, expeditions by the Associação Floresta Protegida were performed on long stretches of the Iriri, Xingu, and Riozinho rivers, all major rivers that flow through Kayapo territory. Although the Xingu, Iriri, and Raoni guard posts (**Map 1**) control access to these rivers, expeditions were undertaken to monitor the condition of the forest and river and to look for signs of illegal activity.

These expeditions have another goal which is to amplify Kayapo occupation of their territory while reinforcing Kayapo pride in their territorial protection efforts as well as facilitating transmission of traditional knowledge from elder to youth. The more the Kayapo circulate throughout their territory, the stronger deterrent they pose to would be invaders.

## Highlights:

There were no invasions in TI Kayapo controlled by the AFP Kayapo in 2025. The P14 and Cheiro goldmining sites that were shut down by government operations two and three years ago remain inactive (**Map 3**).



The P14 goldmining site shut down in 2024 remains inactive



The Cheiro (Juandir) goldmining site shut down in 2023 remains de-activated



## Notes on AFP Guard Post operation in 2025.

- ▶ New, improved infrastructure was constructed in partnership with the regional Indigenous Agency FUNAI at the Riozinho guard post.



- ▶ New, improved infrastructure was constructed in partnership with the regional Indigenous Agency FUNAI at the Riozinho guard post.



# TI CAPOTO/JARINA: TERRITORY ADMINISTERED BY THE INSTITUTO RAONI

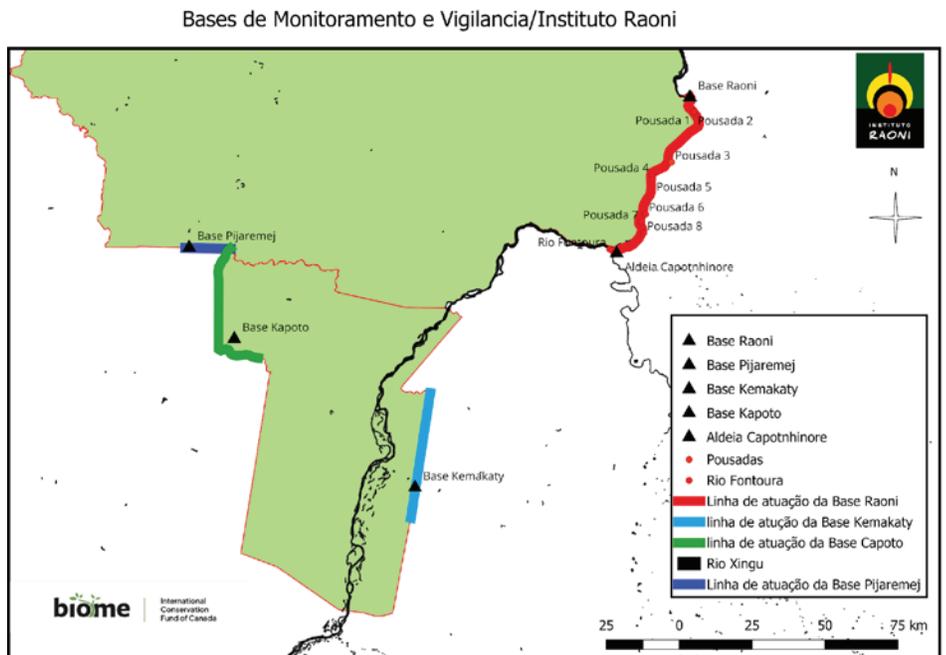
The southern Kayapo territory of Capoto/Jarina is a region where canopy forest begins transitioning to savanna (cerrado) such that the forest here is not as dense or as high as to the north. The more woodland nature of this forest combined with a large area of Brazilian shield rock leaves Capoto/Jarina more susceptible to fire than the higher, denser forest of TIs Menkragnoti, Kayapo, and Bau to the north. In 2024, the major problem faced by Capoto/Jarina was fire during an exceptionally dry year. Fortunately, fire was not widespread during 2025. However, as with virtually all Kayapo territory now, roads and ranches reach the border unleashing relentless invasion pressure.



A Pijaramei guard team controls access to Menkragnoti territory in their area where loggers were previously gaining entry

The southwestern Kayapo NGO Instituto Raoni (IR), based out of Peixoto de Azevedo, PA, represents Capoto/Jarina and part of southern TI Menkragnoti. The IR operated three guard posts in 2025; Pijaramei, Raoni, and Kenmakatyk and then added a fourth at the end of the season in December (Maps 1,8). This new guard post named after the village which works there, "Capoto", is responsible for protecting the southern reaches of Kayapo territory.

We are pleased to report that the borders of Capoto/Jarina territory managed by the IR continued to hold through 2025.



**Map 8.** The four guard posts and their patrol routes (coloured lines) operated by the Instituto Raoni. The "pousadas" are sportfishing camps operated by non-indigenous local people who have the legal right to sport fish in this Xingu river border demarcating Kayapo and non-Kayapo land. The thin red line marks the boundary between TI Menkragnoti to the north and TI Captot/Jarina to the south. The Xingu river is marked in black.

# Notes on AFP Guard Post operation in 2025.

▶ the Pijamei post (formerly Kororoti) continued to block entry by loggers



A Pijamei guard team controls access to Menkragnoti territory in their area where loggers were previously gaining entry.

▶ the Kenmakatyk and Raoni riverine posts block mostly illegal fishing that leads to depletion of fish stocks. Guards from the Raoni post surveil the Xingu river border with the frontier where non-commercial fishing by non-Kayapo is legal. Here Kayapo guards check fishing boats to make sure they are not equipped to fish commercially



the Kenmakatyk guard post



**Map 9.** The yellow track shows the section of the Xingu river exposed on its eastern bank to the frontier and patrolled by the Raoni guard post (base Raoni)

the new Capoto guard post was built in November. This post is necessary for monitoring the southern reaches of Kayapo territory. The Capoto post also generates income for community members of this large village who previously had no sources of income and, therefore, were vulnerable to bribes by illegal actors.



The new Capoto guard post



Constructing the new Capoto guard post in November 2025



Guard teams from the Raoni post check fishing boats to make sure they are not fishing commercially

# GOVERNMENT ENFORCEMENT

Goldmining in the eastern band of TI Kayapo territory where a government operation took place in the summer of 2025

Government enforcement operations are not easily obtained in Brazilian Amazonia. The enforcement agency of the federal Ministry of Environment, IBAMA, has four helicopters to enforce protection of millions of hectares ratified protected areas and indigenous territories across six million square kilometers (2.3 million square miles) of the Brazilian Amazon. Helicopters are necessary equipment to raid and shut down most invasions. This one indicator demonstrates how under-resourced IBAMA is for the size of their mandate, especially when most logging and goldmining in the Amazon is underwritten and operated by organized crime.

After years of denunciations, government forces moved to clear out the illegal goldmining devouring the TI Kayapo which is the indigenous territory in Brazil most afflicted by goldmining in addition to the Yanomami and Munduruku indigenous territories. The government forces involved were the Ministry of the Environment-IBAMA, Federal Police (PF), the federal Indian Agency (FUNAI), and the Army. The operation took place between May and October in the band of eastern territory that was lost to illegal activity years ago and is not part of the Kayapo project (Map 2). However, these federal enforcement operations are almost always only temporarily effective because they lack followup so goldmining simply returns which by the end of 2025 it had begun returning in the TI Kayapo. When an operation is pending, goldminers and loggers remove their equipment from the area and lay low for a couple of weeks until federal forces leave. Every time.

**Although this federal operation did not take place in the project area, we mention it here to illustrate the great difficulty to remove invasions once they gain a foothold and, therefore, the reason border guard posts are so necessary to block invasions from the start.**



The objective of government operations is to destroy high value equipment used in goldmining and logging such as this Hyundai excavator

# DATA COLLECTION APP

Two years ago the Instituto Kabu began developing an ESRI/ArcGIS based data collection app called "Survey123" for use by guards. The objective is to log real-time information on territorial surveillance activities that will form a clear picture of surveillance results.

Data entered by guard teams includes

- I. identities of guards,
- II. activities performed (eg, cleaning, post infrastructure maintenance, equipment maintenance),
- III. GPS locations on patrols and expeditions,
- IV. illegal activity encountered including identities of invaders and their mode of transportation, and
- V. photos.

The 2025 Survey123 data "dashboard" results analysis is not yet available.



Starlink is now essential equipment used in illegal activity



Kayapo guards learn how to enter data into the survey123 app



# GUARD POST EDUCATION PROGRAM



Watching educational videos at the Riozinho guard post

The future of the Kayapo and their land rest with its youth. Today Kayapo youth are exposed to outside influence a great deal more than their elders who grew up at or before contact and are keepers of traditional Kayapo culture. Traditional culture is how the Kayapo gained rights over their vast territory and in large part what protects it today. Therefore, reinforcing traditional culture and helping youth understand the pitfalls and opportunities presented by outside society has become foundational to long-term territorial protection and stewardship.

Towards this end of helping youth navigate the outside world and understand their important place in it as forest protectors, the Kayapo Project team curated a curriculum of videos for viewing at the guard posts. Guard posts are the perfect venue to deliver education and awareness raising because the infrastructure is in place and a wide Kayapo audience circulates through posts. Furthermore, videos are an educational tool suited to a largely illiterate audience. This education program is designed to reinforce the goals of the Kayapo territorial control and sustainable management, focusing on the crucial role of Indigenous territory to sustain a Kayapo future.

Specifically, the objectives of the guard post education program are to:

- I. reinforce the value of Kayapo culture and global importance for large-scale forest protection, and
- II. build capacity for Kayapo youth to understand and navigate the complex foreign world that surrounds and threatens their land and culture.

**This second year of the guard post education program ran successfully and again was embraced by all. We will continue to build this program with more content and activity because the more the Kayapo learn and hear from the good side, the stronger their territorial protection and chances of survival.**



In the unedited video below Kayapo youth working at the Rio Vermelho guard post watch a film and then discuss it. The young man articulates in halting Portuguese what the film means to him which is:

- I. the importance of the guard posts for protecting their territory,
- II. how young people, male and female, are learning technology to help them deal with outside threats, and
- III. how the internet improves communication among each other and therefore strengthens unity of purpose

▶ Video

In the video below from the Linha Seca guard post a non-Portuguese speaking woman articulates how important the guard posts are to keep out invaders that every day threatens their forest and existence as an indigenous people. She mentions how important the well being of the forest, animals, and fish are to the Kayapo and how the guard posts play a pivotal role to protect Kayapo life. Her daughter translates for her.

▶ Video



Setting up a camera trap





**THE KAYAPO PROTECT THE LARGEST  
OFFICIALLY PROTECTED AREA OF  
TROPICAL FOREST IN THE WORLD.**

# 2025 TERRITORIAL SURVEILLANCE HIGHLIGHTS

## Success

Previous invasions of NGO Kayapo territory remained closed down after action taken by the Kayapo NGOs and federal authorities in 2021, 2022, and 2023 (**Map 3**):

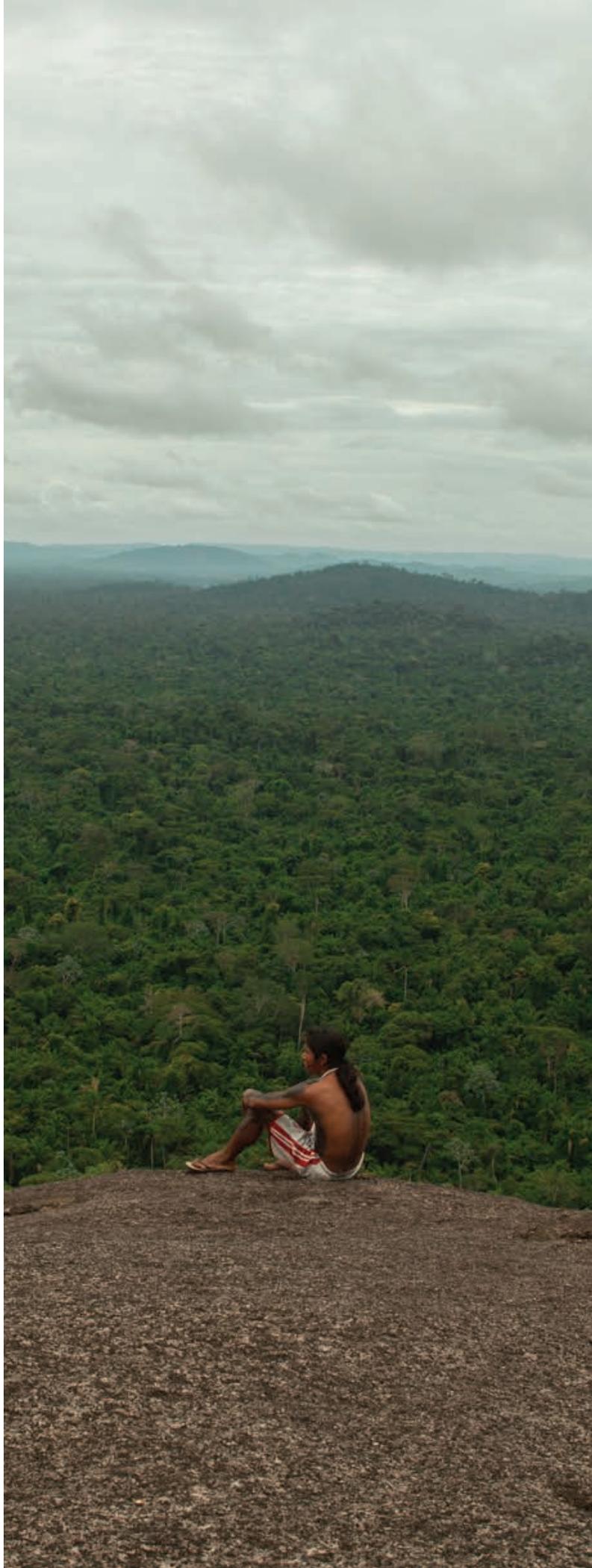
- » logging access at Kororoti (Pijaramei) in the southwest
- » goldmining in the northwest at the Pista Nova and Novo Horizonte sites in the interior of Bau territory
- » goldmining at the Cheiro site near the northwestern border
- » goldmining at the P14 site

Guard posts located along the western border continued blocking loggers from crossing the Pitxatxa river by building temporary bridges called "buchas" using large trees

Illegal commercial fishing was kept mostly out of Kayapo rivers and fish stocks are preserved.

The Pista Velha and Garimpo Novo goldmining sites in Bau territory continue to be active but their growth is being held in check by the Angme-e guard post and patrolling on the Curua river. The very slow expansion of these goldmines means that miners have not been able to transport heavy excavating equipment across the Curua river.

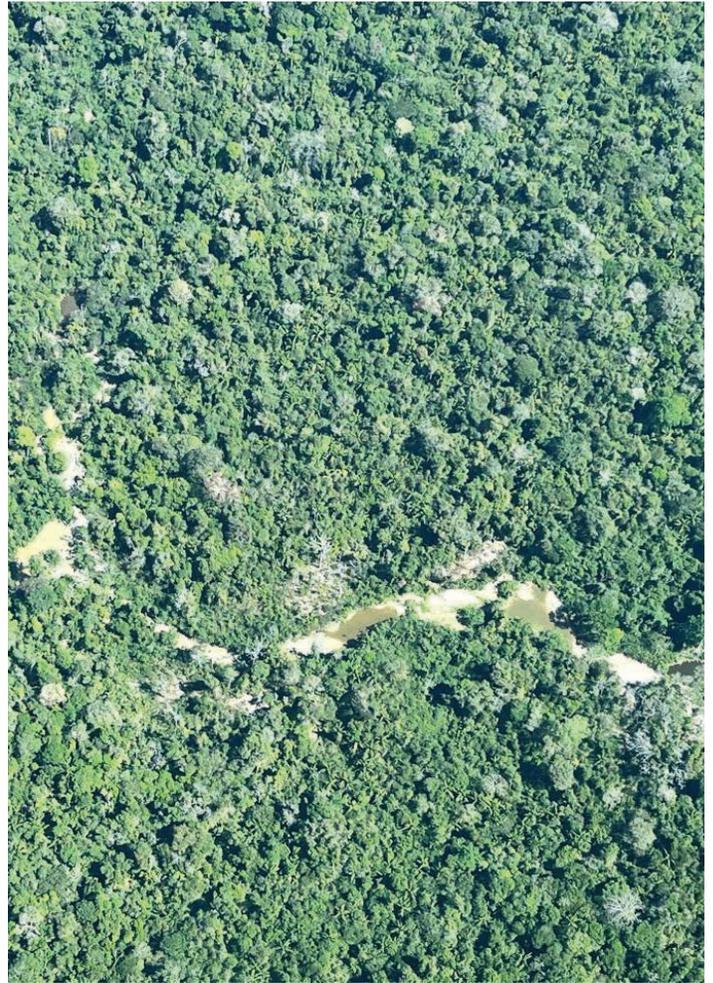
The video education program was delivered by more than 2,000 Kayapo who worked at the 16 posts over the 2025 season. This program raises awareness about the critical importance of territory to the Kayapo future as well as dangers and opportunities presented by outside society. The program also emphasizes the high value the international community places on forest protection services by indigenous people.



## Problems

Invasion threat is widespread and relentless. In 2025, there were two ongoing goldmining invasions, Pista Velha and Garimpo Novo (Mine 2024) in over nine million hectares of Kayapo territory of this project (**Maps 3, 6**).

The ongoing Pista Velha and Garimpo Novo goldmining invasions in central TI Bau reflect complicated Kayapo politics mentioned previously. The few northwestern Kayapo who left the alliance for the promise of easy money in 2020 and control (or believe they do) the invaded slice of Bau territory west of the Curua and Pitxatxa rivers (**Maps 3, 6**) are paid by the Pista Velha and Novo Garimpo goldminers. Although Kayapo from the IK community of Bau on the eastern bank of the Curua river could expel the miners, this action could lead to violence which NGOs cannot risk involvement.



The active Pista Velha goldmine in Bau territory

## Other Challenges

### Funding

Limited funding is the reason invasions have occurred in alliance territory. Neither of the two active invasions reported here are unresolvable. Sustainable funding is an ongoing challenge.

### Internal Kayapo Politics

Internal Kayapo politics presents challenges as well. As with all peoples, there is jockeying to access benefits and fights over power that usually lead to founding of new communities. However, the

greatest internal political threat to Kayapo territorial sovereignty is when Kayapo individuals fall prey to the “promises of sugarplums and fairies” pressed on them by loggers and goldminers.

Participating in illegal activity leads ultimately and inevitably to loss of territory and culture. Hence it is vitally important to provide sustainable, equitable alternatives to illicit regional activities and to educate and orient youth on the serious nature of dangers lying await the moment they step out of their territory.





# NEXT STEPS

## Guard posts and Expeditions

Additional guard posts and/or expeditions are needed where sections of border lack Kayapo presence, i.e.

- I. the northwestern-most border of TI Bau along the Curua river border,
- II. the road that accesses the P14 goldmine in the northeast,
- III. the interior of eastern Kayapo territory to the west of the Rio Vermelho for halting the advance of goldmining and logging from the non-allied band of territory (Maps 1, 2), and
- IV. the western border of TI Capoto/Jarina.

## Education Program

We will expand and enhance the guard posts educational curricula program. By investing in the education and empowerment of Kayapo youth, we aim to ensure the continuity of their cultural heritage, strengthen their ability to protect their territories, and create a sustainable future that balances tradition and innovation.

## Technology and Monitoring

We will work to perfect and roll out the Survey 123 App across all guard posts to facilitate real time monitoring, data collection, and reporting of monitoring activities.

## REDD+ carbon project

The Kayapo project and Kayapo NGOs seek financial stability and sustainability. Therefore, in 2023 the Kayapo and their partners embarked

on development of a carbon project based on protection of standing primary forest and associated ecosystem services, i.e. a REDD+ project. The Kayapo could generate significant income from selling carbon credits under a well-structured, verified carbon project. In 2024 a comprehensive, months-long “Free, Prior, Informed Consent” process was implemented in communities that ended in Kayapo consensus to develop a REDD+ project.

Last year a project developer was identified, Systemica (<https://systemica.digital/en/>), as well as a law firm, Mattas Filho, for legal assistance. The Kayapo Project then hosted various meetings to help leaders define a project area given the complication of illegal activity being present in both the northwestern Bau and eastern Kayapo indigenous territories. The final decision that meets both legal and Kayapo political constraints was for the first iteration of the REDD+ project to span approximately five million hectares of Menkragnoti and Capoto/Jarina territories where there is no illegal activity and no Kayapo communities involved in illegal activity. Systemica is bankrolling project development and verification in exchange for 30% of future carbon credit sales.



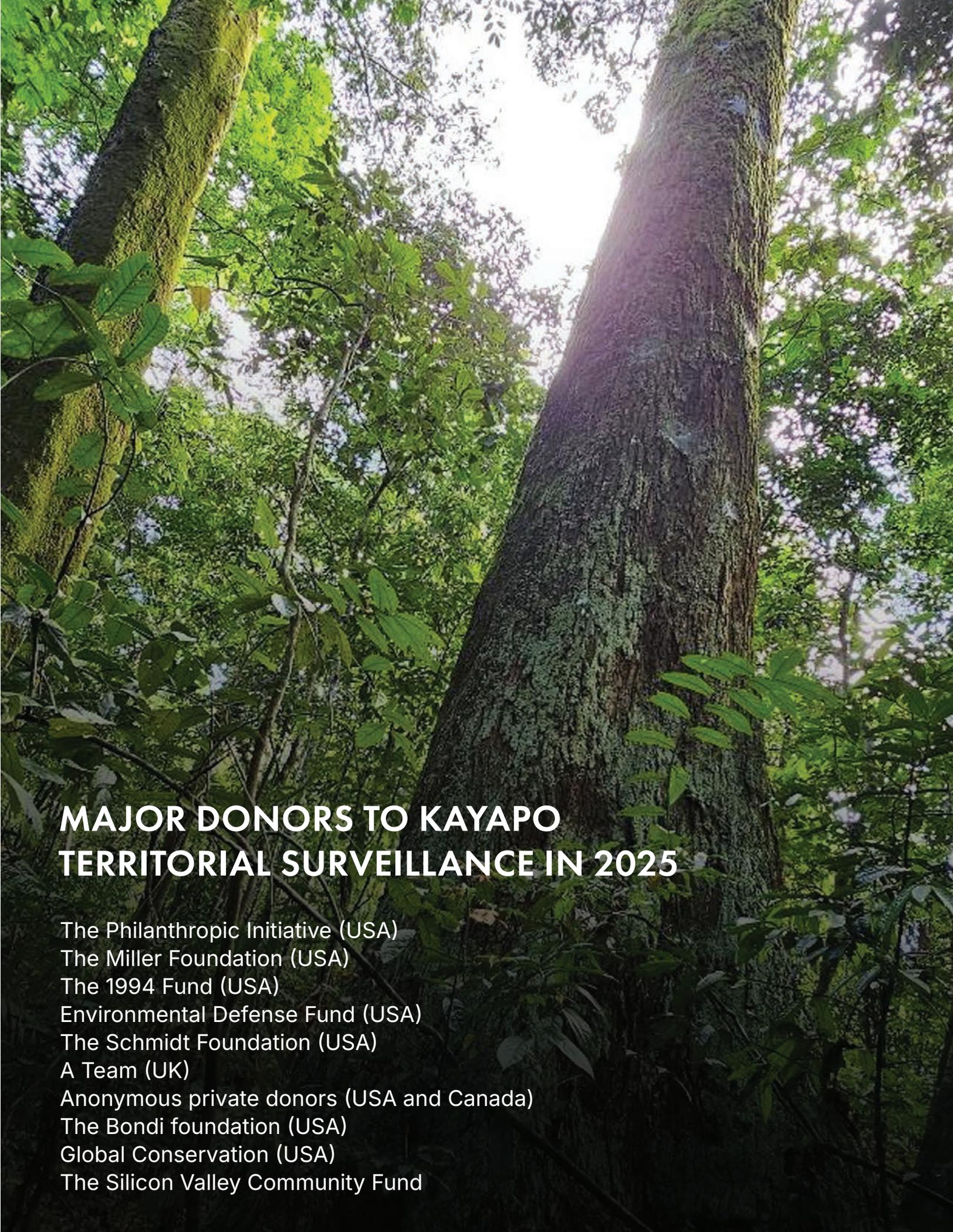
# CONCLUSION

The 2025 Kayapo surveillance program demonstrates that sustained, locally led, strategically placed territorial defense—combined with community income, education, and technological innovation—remains a powerful mechanism for large-scale forest conservation in the highly threatened southeastern Amazon. Despite relentless external pressure and limited government enforcement capacity, the Kayapo and their partner NGOs successfully held the line across one of the largest intact tropical forest blocks in the Brazilian Amazon and the world. Continued investment in guard posts, youth education, monitoring technology, and sustainable financing mechanisms will be essential to maintaining this critical forest frontier in the years ahead.

The survival of the Kayapo's vast block of forest and their own survival depends continued philanthropic investment in territorial protection.

**The Kayapo and all the plants and animals they protect are forever grateful for your support.**





## **MAJOR DONORS TO KAYAPO TERRITORIAL SURVEILLANCE IN 2025**

The Philanthropic Initiative (USA)  
The Miller Foundation (USA)  
The 1994 Fund (USA)  
Environmental Defense Fund (USA)  
The Schmidt Foundation (USA)  
A Team (UK)  
Anonymous private donors (USA and Canada)  
The Bondi foundation (USA)  
Global Conservation (USA)  
The Silicon Valley Community Fund