

Indigenous Brazilians launch coronavirus tracing app

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Indigenous and environmental organizations in Brazil launched an app on Friday aimed at alerting indigenous communities to the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in their lands.

"The application maps and periodically updates the situation regarding

the pandemic in cities within a 100 kilometer radius of indigenous lands," said the Coordination of the Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB) and the Amazon Environmental Research Institute (IPAM) in a joint statement.

The app, called "COVID-19 Indigenous Alert" aims to help indigenous people identify areas with high infection rates.

Provided free on the Android system, the app uses data from Brazil's [health ministry](#), people working in the indigenous health system, leaders from indigenous organizations and the COIAB network.

"This collection of information, as well as directing our strategies and actions to combat COVID-19, has exposed the lack of notification from public authorities and the serious way in which the new virus affects us," said Mario Nicacio Wapichana, the deputy co-ordinator of COIAB.

With four million cases and 125,000 deaths amongst its 212 million population, Brazil is the worst affected country in the world by the virus after the United States.

Amongst the 900,000 [indigenous people](#) there have been 30,000 infections and 785 deaths, according to The Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB.)

"Indigenous peoples are especially vulnerable to the new [coronavirus](#), presenting an incidence rate 249 percent higher than the national average and a 224 percent higher mortality, according to analysis of the registered cases up to August 28," said COIAB.

The network said low levels of immunity, the invasion of indigenous land by outsiders, the introduction of foreign pathogens and a weak health system "are some of the motives behind such alarming numbers."

Several high-profile indigenous leaders have died of COVID-19.

However, earlier on Friday the 90-year-old iconic chief Raoni Metuktire, one of the most famous defenders of the Amazon rainforest, was released from hospital after a week receiving treatment for COVID-19.

The leader of the Kayapo people, known for his colorful feather headdresses and the large disc inserted in his lower lip, has returned to his territory in Xingu National Park, in the center-west of Brazil.

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