



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Deforestation in the Amazon: Despite the Sale of Some of Its Assets, the Casino Group Will Have to Face Justice

Paris / Bogotá / São Paulo - 10 July 2023 - Burdened with a debt of more than \$6 billion the French retail group Casino is considering selling its Brazilian and Colombian stores to boost its liquidity. For the coalition of representatives of Indigenous peoples, lawyers and international CSOs that has taken Casino to court in Paris, even in the event of a sale of its South American stores, the group will still have to face justice for failing in its duty of vigilance with regard to alleged deforestation and violations of the rights of Indigenous peoples in the Amazon and Colombia.

At the end of June, following the opening of a conciliation procedure to repay its creditors, the Casino Group [announced](#) the sale of its Latin American brands, the Brazilian Grupo Pão de Açúcar (GPA) and the Colombian Exito, by the end of 2024. With 1,000 stores in Brazil and more than 2,000 in Colombia, the Casino Group will have generated more than half of its sales (53%) in Latin America by 2022.

Despite the uncertainty hanging over Casino's future, the 40-strong coalition say Casino will still have to answer for its actions before the Paris high Court. "We cannot accept that groups can circumvent national administrative and legal systems to avoid being held accountable for violations in their supply chains," says Kari Guajajara, a lawyer from COIAB, a network of Brazilian Indigenous organizations. "In Brazil in particular, we have historically witnessed such strategies and, in many cases, impunity persists and allows criminal practices against peoples and their territories to continue. It is essential that the Casino Group be held accountable for the damage it has caused to date, and that there be no judicial tolerance."

A recent [investigation](#) by InfoAmazonia also confirms that the due diligence measures put in place by Casino Group in Brazil are still inadequate in terms of the French supply chain duty of vigilance legislation. The investigation identified 15 beef farms operating illegally in the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau Indigenous territory in Rondônia in the Amazon, which transferred, via other farms, 815 steers between 2018 and 2022 to two JBS slaughterhouses supplying the Casino Group in Brazil. The products from these JBS slaughterhouses were identified in 2023 by Mighty Earth, after the Casino Group had been taken to court in France in March 2021.

The InfoAmazonia report also indicates that the French group's supply chain has caused material damage estimated at €54 million in this Indigenous territory alone. This result reflects only a tiny part of the impact of the Casino Group, which has a strong presence in Brazil and Colombia.

At a time when deforestation in Colombia has [increased](#) by 32% in 2022 and Brazil



remains the country most affected by tropical [deforestation](#), the future owners of Casino supermarkets in Brazil and Colombia will have to make control of beef supply chains, particularly indirect suppliers, a top priority.

Casino first supermarket to face legal action over deforestation

In March 2020, the civil society coalition [filed](#) a groundbreaking lawsuit in a French court against the Casino Group for selling beef products linked to deforestation and land grabbing in Colombia and the Brazilian Amazon. This was the first time a supermarket chain had been taken to court over claims of deforestation and human rights violations. The case was brought under the French duty of vigilance law adopted in March 2017, which states that French companies with over 5,000 employees must take adequate and effective measures to prevent serious human rights and environmental violations in their supply chains.

Evidence submitted in the Casino lawsuit highlighted violations of Indigenous rights. In one of the documented cases, customary land owned and managed by the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau Indigenous community in Rondônia in Brazil was invaded and converted to cattle farms supplying beef to Casino's Brazilian retailer, Grupo Pão de Açúcar.

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