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**INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN FRENCH GUIANA**  
HISTORY, DEMOGRAPHICS, LIVING AND USER AREAS, SOCIO-POLITICAL  
ORGANIZATION, AND PERSPECTIVES ON MINING

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Aluku	One of the four main <i>bushinenge</i> groups (Aluku, Ndyuka, Paamaka and Saamaka) that inhabit French Guiana. Villages and <i>goong kampus</i> of the Aluku are mainly found along the Lawa, as well as in the lower Maroni River.
bushinenge	French Guiana term for maroons; the descendants of run-away African slaves who established independent communities in the interior of Suriname and, later, French Guiana.
Espérance	Mining concession to which the Compagnie Minière Espérance holds an exproation title. The Espérance mining property is situated in the area just north of the Beïman creek, roughly across the Maroni River from Newmont's active gold mine at Merian, in neighbouring Suriname.
gaanman	Paramount chief among the <i>bushinenge</i> .
garimpeiro	Brazilian gold miner.
iopoto (yopoto)	Indigenous leader, war lord.
kabiten	Head of an Indigenous community or <i>bushinenge</i> clan. Often also thereby representative of the tribal group in a more ethnically diverse community.
chweli	Blood oath or a ritual alliance-swear used between the <i>Bushinenge</i> .
commune	Level of administrative division in the Republic of France.
Indigenous Peoples	First, original inhabitants of the American continent.
Koriabo culture	A large-scale pre-Columbian Indigenous cultural complex, which extended into the hinterland of the Guianas between the 11th and the 15th centuries.
Lower Maroni	Maroni River from its mouth to the Hermina soula, just upstream from Apatou.
Maroni	Maroni River and its source rivers, including the Lawa and Litani.
Ndyuka	One of the four main <i>bushinenge</i> groups that inhabit French Guiana.
piaye	Shaman, Indigenous healer.
tamouchi (tamusi)	Wayana Indigenous village chief.
Tiliyo	Indigenous group living primarily in Brazil and South Suriname.
Upper Maroni	Most Southern part of the Maroni River, where it is called Litani.
Wayana	Indigenous people populating both banks of the Lawa River, as well as the Tapanahoni River in Suriname. The Wayana traditionally have strong friendship bonds with the Aluku.
Zones de Droits d'Usage Collectif	Collective land use zones where Indigenous Peoples have the right to use designated land for traditional livelihood activities, such as hunting, fishing, gathering and agriculture.

## ACRONYMS

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AAGF	Association des Amérindiens de Guyane Française
ASM	Artisanal and Small-scale Mining
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CCPAB	Conseil consultatif des populations amérindiennes et Bushinenge
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CME	Compagnie Minière Espérance
CMO	Compagnie Minière Montagne d'Or
COICA	Coordinadora de Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica
CPN	Collectif des Premières Nations
CTG	Collectivité Territoriale de Guyane
DOM	Départements d'Outre- Mer
EROM	Égalité Réelle Outre-Mer
FOAG	Federation des Organisations Autochtones de Guyane
GCC	Grand Conseil Coutumier des peuples Amérindiens et bushinengué de Guyane
IGN	Institut Géographique National
IHSR	International Service for Human Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
JAG	Jeunesse Autochtone de Guyane
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
ONAG	Organisation des Nations Autochtones de Guyane
PAG	Parc Amazonien de Guyane
RNSP	Réseau National de Santé Publique
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	UN declaration on the Rights of indigenous Peoples
WHO	World Health Organization
ZAR	Zone d'Accès Réglementé
ZDUC	Zones de Droits d'Usage Collectif
ZOC	Zone de Cœur (of the Parc Amazonien)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Glossary of Terms .....	1
Acronyms .....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Use of local terminology .....	5
Executive Summary .....	6
Résumé .....	7
1 Introduction .....	9
1.1 This study .....	9
1.2 Structure of the report.....	10
2 Background and Demographics .....	11
2.1 Indigenous Peoples .....	11
2.2 Demographics .....	12
2.2.1 Current population numbers .....	12
2.2.2 Demographic trends .....	13
2.2.3 Geographic distribution of Indigenous communities along the Maroni and Lawa.....	13
2.3 Cultural characteristics and acculturation .....	16
2.3.1 Language .....	16
2.3.2 Social and political organisation .....	16
2.4 Status of Indigenous Peoples in French Guiana.....	17
2.4.1 Legal status of Indigenous Peoples .....	17
2.4.2 Political relations between the French administration and Indigenous groups .....	19
3. Pre-Columbian Indigenous History of the Maroni River region.....	21
3.1 The Maroni and the first Indigenous settlements.....	21
3.2 Diversity of Indigenous occupation during large pre-Columbian period .....	22
3.3 Expansion of the Kali'na and the Contact Period .....	24
4. 1610-1900: economic transformations, disease and warfare .....	26
4.1 Kali'na .....	26
4.2 Teko and other smaller Indigenous groups .....	27
4.3 Wayana .....	27
4.4 The 19th century; forgotten people .....	29
5. 20 <sup>th</sup> century-present: Integration of Indigenous Peoples into French Guiana Society .....	30

5.1	Creation of the Inini territory and the <i>Département d’Outre-Mer</i> La Guyane .....	30
5.2	1969: End of the Inini Territory.....	31
5.3	Mid-1970s to 1980s: Rise of an Indigenous movement.....	31
5.4	Mid 1980s-Present; Continued strengthening of the Indigenous Identity and Rise of Indigenous Activism .....	32
5.5	Indigenous Self Organization .....	34
6.	Relations between Indigenous peoples and Maroons along the Maroni River .....	38
7.	Indigenous Peoples and Gold Mining in French Guiana .....	40
7.1	Indigenous Peoples and Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining.....	40
7.2	Parc Amazonien as a means to protect the environment and Indigenous populations from ASM 41	
7.3	Indigenous Peoples and large-scale mining in French Guiana .....	42
7.4	Montagne d’Or Mining Project .....	43
	Concluding Comments .....	46
	References .....	48
	Annex 1. Linguistic map of Indigenous Peoples in French Guiana.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

## USE OF LOCAL TERMINOLOGY

In this report, we use local (French Guiana) names for certain groups of people, specific cultural practices, and geographic places. For example, we use the word *bushinenge* rather than the more international “maroons” or “*marrons noirs*”, because the French Guiana maroons refer to themselves as *bushinenge*.

Indigenous groups are often known under different names. For example, the Indigenous peoples we refer to as Palikur are mentioned in reports and maps by variations of this name, such as: Paricuria, Paricura, Paricores, Palincur(s), Palicur, Palicours, Paricur, Pariucur, Parikurene, Parikur, and Parincur-léne (ISA, 2018). When they refer to themselves, the Palikur use the term Parikwene, “the people of the river of the middle”, alluding to the geographic position of the Urukauá river, which lies between two other significant rivers (ibid). Table 1 lists the Indigenous names used in this reports, and variations used to refer to the same Indigenous group in the literature.

Table 1. Indigenous names used in this report and alternative names used for the same group

Name used in this report	What countries do they live?	Alternative names/ spelling variations
<b>Kali’na</b>	French Guiana, Brazil, Suriname, Venezuela	Karîna, Carib, Galibi do Oiapoque, Galibi, Kaliña, Cariña, Kariña, Kalihna, Kalinya, Maraworno, Marworno
<b>Lokono</b>	French Guiana, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, Barbados	Arawak, Arowak, Aruák, Locono, Taino (term mostly applied to Arawak speakers in the Caribbean region)
<b>Palikur</b>	French Guiana, Brazil	Paricuria, Paricura, Paricores, Palincur(s), Palicur, Palicours, Paricur, Pariucur, Parikurene, Parikur, and Parincur-léne, Parikwene, Païkwené, Pahikweneh
<b>Wayãpi</b>	French Guiana, Brazil	Wayampi, Wajãmpi
<b>Teko</b>	French Guiana	Emerillon, Emerilon, Emerion, Mereyo, Melejo, Mereyo, Teco
<b>Wayana</b>	French Guiana, Brazil, Suriname	Ojana, Ajana, Aiana, Ouyana, Uajana, Alucuyana <sup>1</sup>
<b>Apalai<sup>2</sup></b>	French Guiana, Brazil, Suriname	Aparai, Appirois, Aparathy, Apareilles, Apalaii, Aparis and Apalaís.

1 This name is used by the Aluku *bushinenge* to refer to the Wayana, to emphasize their strong friendship bond.

2 The Apalai are often lumped together with the Wayana, because their languages and cultures are quite similar. Today, the Apalai are largely assimilated by the Wayana, but members of the groups still assert their separateness and cultural differences.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report presents a review of the history, living and user areas, social and political structure, and cultural details of Indigenous peoples in French Guiana, with an emphasis on the Indigenous groups populating the east banks of the lower and upper Maroni River. French Guiana hosts six ethnically distinct Indigenous groups: Kali'na, Lokono, Palikur, Wayãpi, Teko and Wayana. The Maroni River watershed provides a home and sustenance to Kali'na, Lokono, Wayana and Teko. The Wayana are the only Indigenous group who live in close proximity of, and have established friendship relations with, *bushinenge* (Aluku). At present, an estimated 7,500 to 30,000 Indigenous individuals live in French Guiana, and their numbers appear to be growing.

The first human migrations from the Amazon region into the Guianas took place some 10,000 years ago. By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, Kali'na had occupied the entire Maroni River. European conquest of the Guianas resulted in decimation of the number of Indigenous Peoples, who may have numbered 100,000 in French Guiana. Subsequently, the Kali'na lost their dominant position and withdrew to the Lower Maroni. In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the Wayana moved from North-East Brazil, across the Tumuc-Humac mountains, into French Guiana. Here they settled, by the end of the 18th century, in the Upper Maroni watershed.

Indigenous peoples do not have a special status in the French legal system. Nevertheless, by establishment of Communal User Right Zones (ZDUC) for Indigenous Peoples and specific user rights within the *Parc Amazonien de Guyane* (PAG), French laws recognize the traditional livelihoods of Indigenous peoples. Commitment to protection of Indigenous cultures is also visible in several new laws for the Overseas Territories, which, among others, “encourage the respect, protection and maintenance of knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous and local communities” (Law No. 2000-1207, 13 Dec. 2000).

Indigenous peoples were long ignored by the French administration, but in the 1960s and '70s there were strong efforts to assimilate these “primitive” populations. In the 1980s, a young generation of French educated Kali'na began to criticize francization policies; demanding recognition of their peoples, territories, cultures, and self-determination. Inspired and supported by the international Indigenous movement, French Guiana Indigenous people created different Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). On the national political level, Indigenous Peoples (and *bushinenge*) are represented by the *Grand Conseil Coutumier* (GCC). Initially (1990-2000), the Indigenous movement was predominantly a Kali'na affair, but other Indigenous groups are also represented in the GCC, and have increasingly taken seat in the various Indigenous NGOs.

French Guiana Indigenous participation in Artisanal and Small-scale gold Mining (ASM) is negligible. In fact, Indigenous peoples and organizations have collectively, publicly and fervently spoken out against ASM. Particularly the Wayana from the Upper Maroni are victims of the nearby presence of ASM, which has resulted in negative health impacts, including mercury contamination. Establishment of the Parc Amazonien has not provided the protection from intrusion of garimpeiros that was hoped for. Indigenous interests groups also have unanimously spoken out against large-scale industrial mining in French Guiana. Having adopted the rhetoric of the international environmental movement, and in partnership with international, national and regional organizations, French Guiana Indigenous peoples have become the charismatic faces of a strong lobby against large-scale, industrial mining in French Guiana. The example of Montagne d'Or demonstrates that this lobby has the political leverage to affect national level decision-making about mining projects.



## RESUME

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Ce rapport présente un état des lieux de l'histoire, des aires de vie, de la structure sociale et politique ainsi que des particularités culturelles des peuples autochtones de Guyane française, en mettant l'accent sur les Amérindiens peuplant la rive droite du Maroni en Guyane française. La Guyane comporte six groupes autochtones distincts sur le plan ethnique : Kali'na, Lokono, Palikur, Wayãpi, Teko et Wayana. Les rives françaises du Maroni servent d'habitat et de subsistance aux Kali'na, Lokono, Wayana et Teko. Les Wayana sont le seul groupe amérindien à vivre à proximité des Bushinenge (Aluku) et à établir des relations d'amitié avec eux. Actuellement, entre 7 500 et 30 000 Amérindiens vivent en Guyane et leur nombre est en augmentation.

Les premières migrations humaines de la région amazonienne vers les Guyanes ont eu lieu il y a environ 10 000 ans. Au début du 17<sup>ème</sup> siècle, les Kali'na occupaient l'ensemble du fleuve Maroni. La conquête européenne des Guyanes a entraîné une disparition de nombreux peuples autochtones, qui auraient été 100,000 environ à cette époque en Guyane française. Par la suite, les Kali'na ont perdu leur position dominante et se sont retirés dans le Bas-Maroni. Au milieu du XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle, les Wayana quittèrent le nord-est du Brésil pour se rendre en Guyane française à travers les monts de Tumuc-Humac. Ils s'y installèrent vers la fin du XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle, dans le bassin versant du Haut Maroni.

Les peuples autochtones n'ont pas de statut particulier dans le système juridique français. Néanmoins, en établissant des zones de droit d'usage commun (ZDUC) pour les peuples autochtones et des droits d'usufruit spécifiques au sein du Parc amazonien de Guyane (PAG), la législation française reconnaît des moyens de subsistance traditionnels aux Amérindiens. L'engagement en faveur de la protection des cultures autochtones est également visible dans plusieurs nouvelles lois des territoires d'outre-mer, qui, entre autres, «encouragent le respect, la protection et le maintien des connaissances, des innovations et des pratiques des communautés autochtones et locales» (loi n° 2000-1207, 13 Dec. 2000)

L'administration française a longtemps ignoré les peuples autochtones, mais dans les années 60 et 70, d'importants efforts ont été déployés pour assimiler ces populations dites «primitives». Dans les années 1980, une jeune génération de Kali'na éduqués en français a commencé à critiquer les politiques de francisation; exigeant la reconnaissance de leurs peuples, territoires, cultures et du droit à l'autodétermination. Inspirés et soutenus par les mouvements autochtones internationaux, les Amérindiens de Guyane française ont créé différentes organisations autochtones non gouvernementales (ONG). Au niveau politique régional, les peuples autochtones (et bushinenge) sont représentés par le Grand Conseil Coutumier (GCC). Initialement (1990-2000), le mouvement autochtone était principalement une affaire de Kali'na, mais d'autres groupes autochtones sont également représentés au sein du CCG et occupent de plus en plus d'importance dans les diverses ONG autochtones.

En Guyane française, la participation autochtone à l'extraction de l'or artisanale et à petite échelle (ASM) est négligeable. En effet, les peuples et les organisations autochtones se sont collectivement et publiquement prononcés contre l'ASM. Les Wayana du Haut Maroni, en particulier, sont victimes de la présence à proximité de leurs lieux de vie de l'ASM, qui a eu des effets négatifs sur la santé, notamment la contamination par le mercure. Le Parc Amazonien n'a pas réussi jusqu'à présent à garantir la protection escomptée contre l'intrusion de garimpeiros. Des groupes d'intérêts autochtones se sont également prononcés à l'unanimité contre l'extraction minière industrielle à grande échelle en Guyane française. Ayant adopté la rhétorique du mouvement environnemental international, et en partenariat avec des



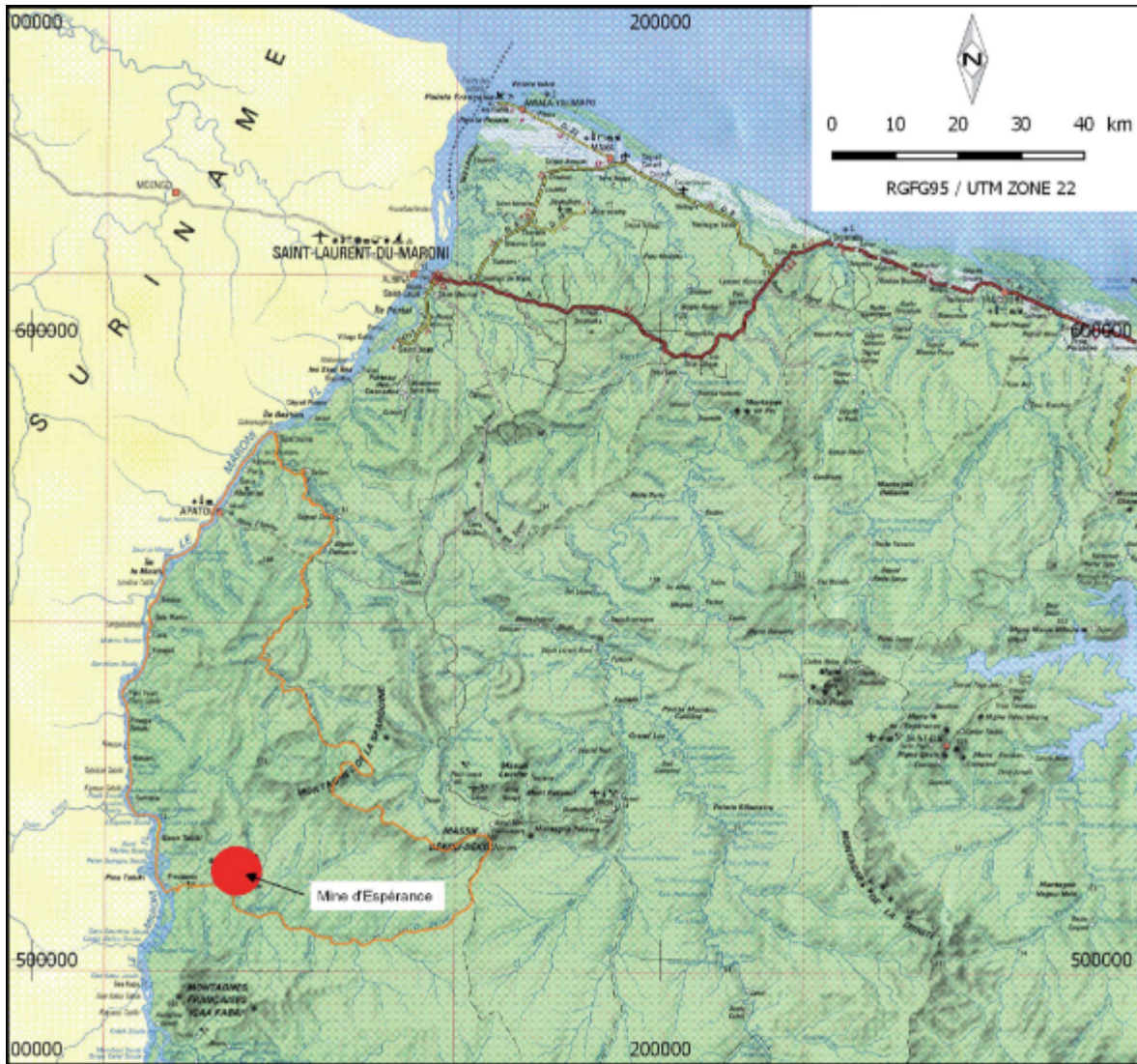
organisations internationales, nationales et régionales, les peuples autochtones de Guyane française sont devenus le visage charismatique d'un puissant groupe de pression contre l'exploitation minière industrielle à grande échelle en Guyane française. L'exemple de Montagne d'Or montre que ce lobby dispose de l'influence politique nécessaire pour influencer sur les décisions prises au niveau national concernant les projets miniers en Guyane française.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 THIS STUDY

Newmont Mining Corporation (hereafter: “Newmont”) agreed to a partnership with the Compagnie Minière Espérance (CME). CME is a French company that is specialized in the exploitation of gold mining deposits, and operates exclusively in the French department of La Guyane (French Guiana), in South America. The Espérance mining property is situated in the area just north of the Beïman creek, roughly across the Maroni River from Newmont’s active gold mine at Merian, in neighbouring Suriname (Figure 1). Through its agreement with CME, Newmont expressed its intent to further explore the prospective Espérance gold discovery. Newmont is entitled to earn up to a 70 percent interest in the property through multi-year investments.

Figure 1. Location of Espérance gold mining placer



In August 2019, Newmont commissioned the present study as part of its general efforts to better understand the history and sociocultural context of the Indigenous populations who are living nearest to the proposed concession area.

This report specifically focusses on the Indigenous peoples who populate the East banks of the lower and upper Maroni River in French Guiana. To provide a better understanding of the history and contemporary context of these groups, the analysis includes information on the past and present of Indigenous groups in other parts of French Guiana and Suriname as well. Figure 2 shows the location of different ethnic groups in French Guiana, including the Indigenous groups.

## 1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is structured according to the following sections:

- Chapter 2 provides background information about the Indigenous peoples. This chapter also discusses demographics and the location of the Indigenous Populations along the Maroni and Lawa Rivers. It also discusses the legal status of Indigenous peoples in French Guiana.
- Chapters 3, 4 and 5 describe the history of the Indigenous Peoples along the Maroni, starting, in Chapter 3, with pre-Columbian history. Based on the limited historical records that are available about this period, Chapter 3 reconstructs what Indigenous groups lived along the Maroni prior to the arrival of European colonists.
- Chapter 4 describes Indigenous peoples during the early colonial history, up to the 1900s. In this period, the Indigenous ethnic groups were decimated in number. They continued to live in relative isolation – their main contacts with Colonial settlers often being through the *bushinenge* groups who had fled to, and settled on, their ancestral lands.
- Chapter 5 focusses on the French efforts to stronger integrate Indigenous communities into mainstream French society, through assimilation and francization policies. This section also describes the emergence of an Indigenous movement in French Guiana, and the creation of different governmental and non-governmental indigenous Organizations.
- Chapter 6 describes relations between indigenous peoples and *bushinenge* along the Maroni River.
- Chapter 7 analyses Indigenous attitudes vis-à-vis mining in French Guiana; both Artisanal and Small-scale mining and Large Scale Mining. It describes the alliances that Indigenous Peoples have formed with French environmental activists and international NGOs, highlighting the active role that Indigenous peoples are playing in the political arena as lobbyists for green development, and against mining.
- The conclusions synthesize the main findings

## 2 BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHICS

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### 2.1 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Indigenous peoples are the first, native inhabitants of the American continent, including the French overseas territory of La Guyana, also known as French Guiana.

French Guiana hosts six main ethnically distinct Indigenous groups:

- The Kali'na (Carib), the Palikur<sup>3</sup> (Païkwené, Pahikweneh), and the Lokono (Arowak) peoples live along the coast between Saint Laurent du Maroni and Saint Georges de l'Oyapock.
- The Wayãpi (Wayampi) and the Teko (Emérillons) peoples live in the Upper Oyapock,
- The Wayana peoples<sup>4</sup>, plus a few Teko (Emérillons), populate the Upper Maroni and its tributaries the Tampok and Marouini.

It is difficult to say how many ethnically distinct Indigenous groups there really are in French Guiana as through time, the larger, dominant indigenous groups have assimilated many smaller Indigenous groups. Oftentimes, individuals from the smaller groups no longer speak their original language and have become an integral part of the dominant groups. For example, the Brazilian *Instituto Socioambiental* (ISA, 2018) reports about the Apalaï and Wayana, who live in French Guiana, Brazil, and Suriname, that:

[their] present-day makeup and composition is the result of the integration of several other groups with whom they have maintained close relations, above all from the 18th Century on. The Wayana assimilated the Upurui, Kukuyana, Opagwana and Kumarawana, among other peoples; while the Aparai incorporated the Apama, Pirixiyana and Arakaju peoples. Although they recognize this primordial diversity and even point to certain individuals as "pure" descendants of some of these groups, the Aparai and Wayana emphasize today that all are "mixed".

On their turn, the Apalaï in French Guiana have lived as a minority group<sup>5</sup> among, and intermarried with, the Wayana. There are, for example, no separate Apalaï villages in French Guiana. In line with these findings, a 2006 study among the Suriname Wayana finds that:

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<sup>3</sup> Sometimes named : Palikur-Téleuyu

<sup>4</sup> The IWGIA lists the and Apalaï (Aparai) as a separate Indigenous group, but this group is mostly assimilated by the Wayana and does not have independent villages. Most authors, as well as French Indigenous groups, consider the Apalaï currently as part of the Wayana.

<sup>5</sup> In 2011, a Brazilian researcher estimated that there were in total 40 Apalaï individuals living in French Guiana (Camargo, 2011).

The Upului, Roucouyenne, and Apalaï have become part of the Wayana population long ago. More recently Emerillon, Tiliyo (Trio), and some Akurio and Wayapi have been taken up by the Wayana (Heemskerk et al., 2006).

## 2.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

### 2.2.1 Current population numbers

It is difficult to estimate the total number of Indigenous persons in French Guiana. Adding figures from different field studies suggests that between 7,000 and 8,000 Indigenous persons live in French Guiana (Table 2). This figure is considerably lower than estimates that the Indigenous population of French Guiana makes up between 4 percent (Hidair and Ailincal, 2015) and 5 percent (IWGIA, 2019) of the *Departement's* total population. With current population numbers (Pop: 296,711; INSEE, 2019), 4-5 percent amounts to roughly between 11,800 and 14,800 individuals. The Federation of Indigenous Organizations of French Guiana (FOAG - Fédération des Organisations Autochtones de Guyane, FOAG) – has estimated the total number of indigenous people at approximately 10% of French Guiana's entire population, or 29,700 individuals (Climate Alliance, 2016).

*Table 2. Number of individuals belonging to different Indigenous groups in French Guiana, reported by different sources*

Indigenous group	Est. number in FG	Est total number (FG, Sur & Brazil)	Source for number in French Guiana
Lokono	1,500	10,000-20,000 (incl. Guyana, Venezuela, Barbados)	Crevels, 2012
Palikur	720	2432	Passes, 1994 (ISA, 2018)
Kali'na	3,000	10,000 (incl. Venezuela)	Collomb, 2000
Wayana	1500	2,000 (only French Guiana and Suriname)	Mairie de Maripasoula 2019, Heemskerk et al. 2006 for Sur. data
Apalaï	40	564	Camargo, 2011 (ISA, 2018)
Teko	400	400	Crevels, 2012
Wayãpi	950	2171	Grenand, 2009 (ISA, 2018)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,410</b> <b>4% (11,868)</b> <b>5% (14,836)</b> <b>10% (29,700)</b>		Various sources above Hidair and Ailincal, 2015 IWGIA, 2019

Part of the difference in population estimates may be due to the fact that some field studies focussed on the population in traditional villages, excluding people of Indigenous descent living in Kourou, Cayenne, or other urban areas. Movements of indigenous peoples between French Guiana, Suriname and Brazil further complicate size estimation. And finally, there are indications that Indigenous populations in French Guiana have grown in recent years (Tritsch, 2013), thus elevating the numbers from especially the older field studies.

### 2.2.2 Demographic trends

Immediately after the European conquest of the Guianas, numbers of Indigenous Peoples dropped dramatically in all areas where Indigenous people came into contact with colonial settlers. It has been estimated that before colonization, approximately 50,000-100,000 Indigenous persons inhabited the territory now covered by French Guiana (Migeon, 2014). Their numbers dropped to less than a thousand throughout the territory in the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries. The main causes of decimation of the native Indigenous population were the same as elsewhere on the American continent: illness and wars.

Demographic changes did not affect all indigenous groups in the same way, or at the same time. The southern Amazon Indigenous groups (Wayana, Apalaï, Teko, Wayãpi) remained for a long time isolated from the coastal economic developments. As a result, the demographic impacts on these groups took place much later than impacts on the Kali'na and Lokono. The Wayãpi provide a telling example. Up to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Wayãpi were a powerful Indigenous group; counting an estimated 6,000 people. They occupied a vast territory covering approximately 15,000 square kilometers (Tritsch et al., 2015). Between 1820 and 1840, the population was severely reduced by disease, and in 1840, fewer than 1,500 Wayãpi were still alive (Grenand et al., 1999, in: Tritsch et al., 2015). Communities responded to epidemics by geographical dispersion and fragmentation: large areas were deserted and the habitat areas consisted of small settlements located far apart from one another. By 1947, only 212 Wayãpi inhabited French Guiana, living in isolation in the hills in the Eastern part of French Guiana (Grenand, 1982, in Tritsch, 2013). Around the same time, in 1953, only 52 surviving Teko were registered, living scattered in Eastern French Guiana (Hurault and Frenay, 1963, in: Tritsch et al. 2015).

In the 1950s, the French administration expanded the provision of public health care in its interior regions. The health policies had a rapid effect and from the early 1960s, the Indigenous population of Wayãpi and Teko, began to increase and reached more than 1,600 people in 2010. The population is still growing rapidly, with an annual growth rate of 4.5 per cent between 1999 and 2009 (Tritsch, 2013).

The demographic trend of the Wayãpi is characteristic of that of other Indigenous groups in French Guiana. Yet because French census data do not include ethnicity, public data do not provide information about population trends among Indigenous peoples. In general, French Guiana has a high population growth rate; the fertility rate of women in French Guiana is 3.4 percent, and between 2010 and 2015, the general population grew with 2.6 percent per year (INSEE 2019b). Population growth has been disproportionately large in West-Guyane (+4%/Yr), where most Indigenous peoples and bushinenge live. It is uncertain how much of this population growth can be attributed to Indigenous peoples.

### 2.2.3 Geographic distribution of Indigenous communities along the Maroni and Lawa.

Indigenous peoples living on the French banks of the lower and upper Maroni Rivers include the Kali'na, Lokono, Wayana and Teko.

Along the northern stretch of the Maroni River, the Kali'na have their most prominent presence in the province (commune) of Awala-Yalimapo, where one finds the Kali'na villages of Awala (town hall), Yalimapo, Ayawande, and Piliwa. The only Lokono village along the Maroni River is the small settlement

of Balaté, situated in the province of St. Laurent –du-Maroni<sup>6</sup>. Figure 2 and the linguistic map of French Guiana (Annex 1) show the location of Kali’na and Lokono settlements and user areas.

Wayana villages in western French Guiana include:

- Along the Lawa River: Abunasunga (Lensidede)<sup>7</sup>, Tadamali, Alawataimë enï, Talhuwen (Epoja), Kulumuli (Twenkë), Antecume Pata,
- Along the Tampok: Élahé (Malipahpan), Kayodé
- Along the Litani: Palasisi (Wapahpan), Pëleya, Palimino, Pilima

Along the Lawa, the Teko Indigenous group only live in the village of Kayodé. This village is divided into a Wayana and a Teko section (Figure 3).

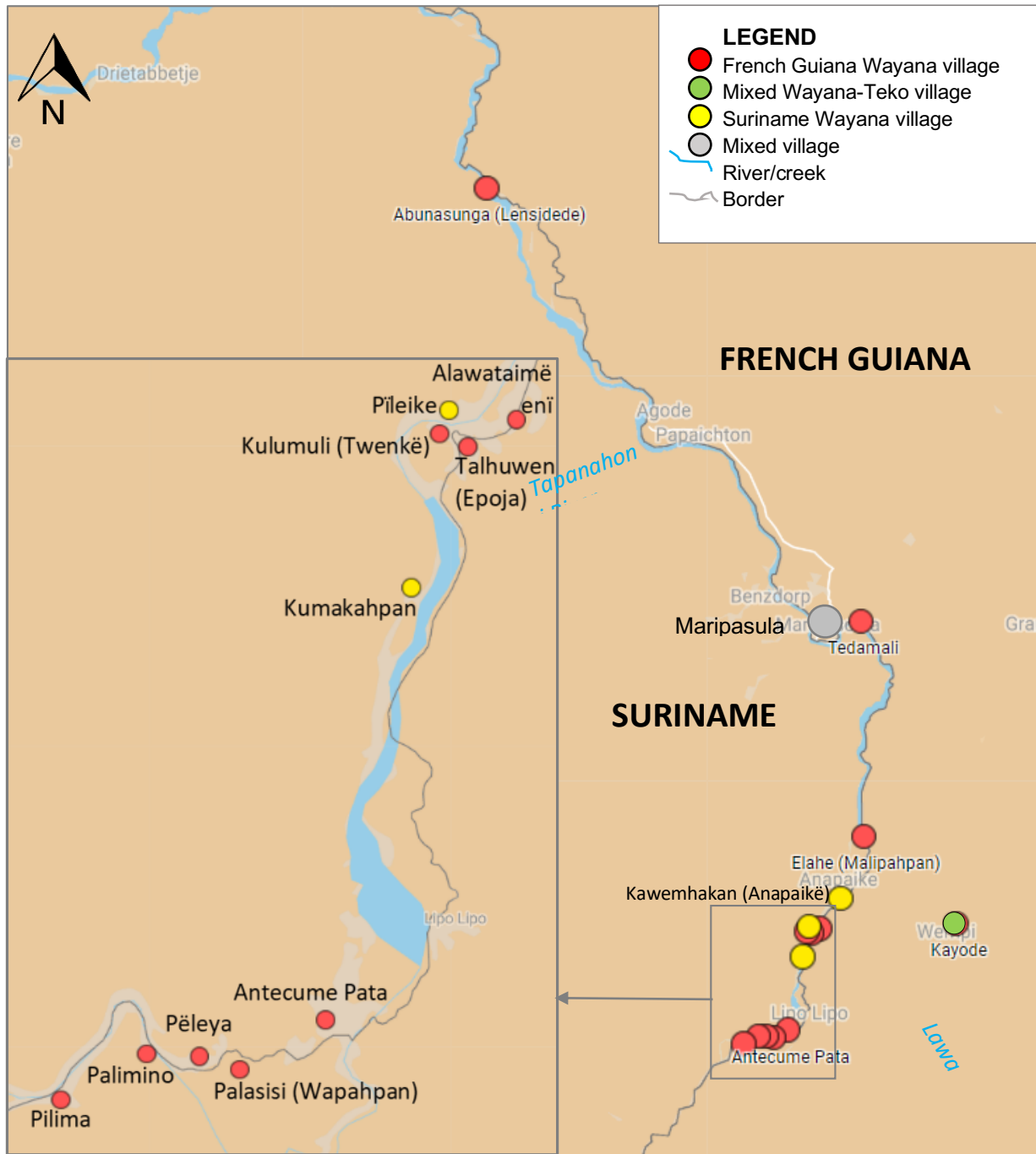
All of these present-day Indigenous communities are very far removed from the Espérance mining property. It is extremely unlikely that either the Wayana, 140 km to the South, or the Kali’na, more than 100 km to the north of Espérance, use this area for traditional livelihood activities.

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<sup>6</sup> Other Lokono villages in French Guiana include Ste Rose de Lima, near Matoury, where a common family name is Sabajo – which is derived from the ancient Shebaye Indigenous group from the mouth of the Maroni. This village is outside of the target area.

<sup>7</sup> Ambiguous status; unclear whether it is a French Guiana or Suriname settlement.

Figure 2. Location of Wayana (incl. Apalai) villages in West French Guiana



Source: Map by M. Heemskerk. Location of villages: Wikipedia "Wayana"; base map: Google maps



## 2.3 CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ACCULTURATION

### 2.3.1 Language

Indigenous societies in French Guiana linguistically belong to three distinct language families. The Kali'na, Wayana, and Apalaï are linguistically members of the Karib language family. The Wayãpi and Emerillon languages are mutually intelligible, and part of the Tupi-Guarani language family. The Lokono (Arawak) speak an Arawakan language, and the Palikur speak Parikwaki, a language also affiliated to the Arawak (Aruak) language family (ISA, 2018)<sup>8</sup> (See Annex 1 for the linguistic map of indigenous Peoples in French Guiana).

There are large differences between the different Indigenous groups with regard to the extent to which they still speak their traditional Indigenous languages. For example, linguists have classified the Arawak language as “severely endangered” (Rybka, 2015). Research suggests that of the estimated 1,500 ethnic Lokono individuals in French Guiana, only 380 are still able to speak the Arawak language; most of whom are elderly (Eberhard et al., 2019). Meanwhile Arawak language skills are rare in younger generations:

The oldest generations of Lokono (70+) are fluent Lokono speakers, that is, they have active and passive knowledge of many domains. Lokono language skills are decreasing with age. People between 50 and 70 are usually ‘advanced’ speakers of all three languages, but use Lokono sporadically... The generation of 30- to 50-year-olds has, at best, ‘intermediate’ (usually passive) knowledge of Lokono... The youngest generation has neither active nor passive knowledge of the Lokono language (Rybka, 2015).

On the other hand, Wayana children grow up speaking –typically- exclusively Wayana. Only when they enter school, they will start to use French. Teenagers, especially those following continued education, as well as young adults, are often fluent in both French and Wayana. In addition, particularly men who have travel to Suriname may also speak Sranantongo, the Suriname *lingua franca*, or Dutch. Even though the Apalaï have largely merged with the Wayana, the Apalaï language also is still actively spoken in Wayana villages. This language is much respected by Wayana and often the language of choice during traditional ceremonies (Heemskerk et al., 2006).

### 2.3.2 Social and political organisation

With regard to social organization, the different Indigenous societies in French Guiana can roughly be divided between clan-based societies (Palikur have patrilineal clans, and Lokono matrilineal clans) and so-called undifferentiated societies where people trace their descent along both maternal and paternal lines (Kali'na, Emerillon, Wayana and Wayampi) (Barret, 2001).

The indigenous societies in French Guiana traditionally do not have a strong central (group) leadership or chieftaincy. In the Pre-Columbian era, Indigenous communities were organized into autonomous family groups, which cooperated as clusters and networks of adult men, domestic groups, and leadership that was composed of elders, skilled warriors and other influential people. Authority positions were

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<sup>8</sup> See for the website Povos Indígenas no Brasil, of the Instituto Socioambiental: <https://pib.socioambiental.org/>

traditionally separated according to different spheres of responsibility: families were responsible for internal social affairs, *piayes* (shamans) were responsible for maintaining a well-balanced relation with the supernatural world, and warlords managed external relations (Filoche, 2011). In this sense, the Indigenous populations differed from the *bushinenge* (in French Guiana and Suriname), where each group has a central tribal paramount chief (*gaanman*). The Ndyuka (*bushinenge*) *gaanman*, for example, is recognized by all Ndyuka people and communities – in Suriname, French Guiana, and even the Netherlands and France.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the French administration superimposed the idea of central leadership upon the different Indigenous groups to facilitate management and communication (Filoche, 2011). After the example of the *bushinenge*, *kabiten* (village heads) became responsible for relaying information and rules of the central administration to their people, though they did not have the coercive power to do so. Since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Kali'na are increasingly placing the Indigenous customary leader position of *iopoto* (*yopoto*) to the foreground, to counterpoise the function of *kabiten*, which is considered a construct of the colonial administration (Collomb, 1999). The *iopoto* is often the person who founded the village, and the main *pater familias* of an extended family. The Wayana name their principal village chief *tamouchi* (*tamusu*). The term *iopote* also has been used among the Wayana, but mostly to refer to warlords. Still, the indigenous groups do not recognize one central leader. There is, for example, not one Wayana *gaanman* ruling over all Wayana in French Guiana, Suriname and Brazil.

## 2.4 STATUS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN FRENCH GUIANA

### 2.4.1 Legal status of Indigenous Peoples

The French Guiana legal system treats Indigenous Peoples like any other French citizens in French Guiana, with the exact same social, economic and political rights. In this system, there is little room to recognize either the Indigenous individual or Indigenous communities as distinct legal entities<sup>9</sup>. Article 1 of the 1958 Constitution stipulates among the core values of the Republic that: "France is an indivisible, secular, democratic and social republic". Hence, as per the constitution, all French citizens are equal before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion (Filoche, 2011). In other words, the French constitution does not recognize Indigenous Peoples as a distinct group within the national population with a special position and/or special rights (ibid.)

As a result of the above, French law can only deal with affairs related to Indigenous peoples through the principle of non-discrimination of individuals. On their term, however, Indigenous peoples are increasingly seeking recognition and protection of their rights as the first inhabitants of the land, and the recognition of some form of self-determination (Filoche, 2011).

Notwithstanding its constitutional principles of indivisibility and equality, the French administration has adopted –since the 1970s- several official measures to protect the culture and lands of Indigenous peoples

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<sup>9</sup> This is different from the situation in most Latin American countries. In Brazil, for example, the constitutional rights of Indigenous Peoples are expressed in a specific chapter of the Constitution of 1988 (title VIII, "Of the Social Order", chapter VIII, "of the indigenous peoples") as well as in other regulations throughout the text and an article of the Acts of the Transitory Constitutional Regulations.

of French Guiana. In 1970, a prefectural decree (*Arrêté préfectoral*) restricted access to southern French Guiana, south of an imaginary line from Elahé in the west to Camopi in the east, by classifying this area as a *Zone d'Accès Réglementé* (Restricted Access Zone; ZAR). Non-Indigenous persons wishing to visit this area needed administrative authorisation. One of the primary aims of this restriction was to protect the southern Indigenous peoples from the intrusion of outsiders into their territories, in order to keep external diseases away.

In 1987, a Ministerial Decree delineated 40,000 ha of Communal User Right Zones (*Zones de Droits d'Usage Collectif*- ZDUC) for the benefit of the Indigenous Peoples and *bushinenge* of French Guiana (Figure 4)<sup>10</sup>. These ZDUC, which today cover 750,000 ha or 9% of the area of French Guiana, give Indigenous Peoples the right to use designated land for traditional livelihood activities, such as hunting, fishing, gathering and agriculture (Tiouka and Karpe, 1998). The legal provisions that create the ZDUC explicitly obviate use of the land for commercial purposes such as logging and mining (Filoche, 2011).

Partly as a (non-intended) result of this measure, Indigenous groups have begun to self-organize around the notion of common Indigenous lands, which has become the basis of ongoing territorial claims.

Figure 3. Collective user zones (ZDUC) of Indigenous Peoples in French Guiana



The French State also has acknowledged special rights for the traditional inhabitants of the *Parc Amazonien de Guyane* (PAG, see Figure 11 for a map). The decree creating this huge protected area states that the residents of traditional communities in the PAG, unlike non-residents, are not restricted in terms of their transportation, fishing, hunting, shifting cultivation, building new villages, and the domestication

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<sup>10</sup> Of the 27 ZDUC that have been established, only 3 have been requested by *bushinenge* communities (Aluku de Maripasoula and Ndjuka of Saint John of Maroni), plus one for the joint benefit of indigenous peoples and busginenge. The remaining 24 (88% of the zones) were requested by Indigenous communities.

of wild animals in core zone of the park - within the limits of customary law. The Indigenous and *bushinenge* inhabitant have negotiated these provisions fervently before the creation of the national park.

In 2017, France adopted the UN declaration on the Rights of indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Nevertheless, France wields a restricted meaning of these indigenous rights. The French State recognizes certain claims of autochthony insofar as they refer to "populations" (*populations*) - and not to "peoples" (*peuples*), a concept contrary to the principle of indivisibility of the Republic (Guyon, 2013). Moreover, these claims must be attached to clearly demarcated territories (*ibid.*). Indigenous groups have referred to the UNDRIP in their opposition to the Montagne d'Or mining project (see § 6.3). To date, France has not ratified ILO Convention 169.

#### 2.4.2 Political relations between the French administration and Indigenous groups

Even though Indigenous people are not recognized as a separate group, indigenous leadership is *de facto* recognized by the French administration as an important stakeholder group to take into account in political decision-making. Generally, the French administration consults Indigenous customary chiefs on issues that affect the living environment of the indigenous populations, during official visits by important national politicians, or during events related to their territories.

In daily political decision-making, municipal French authorities, such as the mayor (*maire*), operate alongside and interact with customary authorities, where each has its own roles and responsibilities. Disputes between members of an Indigenous community are typically submitted to the arbitration of the customary chiefs. Thus, the mayor of the municipality often leverages with the customary chief(s) prior to taking decisions, even though there is no legislation requiring such consultation. On the other hand, customary Indigenous chiefs can call upon State representatives to draw attention to specific problems that affect Indigenous people. Such problems have involved the impacts of illegal gold mining on the health and environment of Indigenous communities.

On the political level, as a group, Indigenous Peoples (and *bushinenge*) are represented by the *Grand Conseil Coutumier* (GCC -Grand Customary Council)<sup>11</sup>. The GCC, which was installed on February 10, 2018, includes representatives of all Indigenous and *bushinenge* groups that have traditionally populated French Guiana<sup>12</sup>. These representatives are elected (or appointed after deliberation) by their various ethnic groups. Among the *bushinenge*, only the Aluku have representation in the GCC; the other *bushinenge* groups (e.g. Ndyuka, Samaka) arrived in French Guiana relatively more recently and they do not have the same historic customary rights as the Aluku.

While the GCC was established by the French government, it would not be correct to portray it as a lame duck without true representation of traditional populations. On the contrary, the GCC was established to better take into account the customary rights and interests of the Indigenous and (Aluku) *bushinenge*

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<sup>11</sup> Most recent elections were held on 11 February 2018, in the presence of the Indigenous and Bushinenge chiefs and associations

<sup>12</sup> The GCC has reserved seats for six Indigenous leaders, six *bushinenge kabiten*, four representatives of organizations, and two persons who will ensure representation of Indigenous and *bushinenge* peoples vis-à-vis State authorities, and submission of referrals to the Assemblée de Guyane (French Guiana assemble).

populations in regional development projects. As the Law *Égalité Réelle Outre-Mer* – EROM (No. 2017-256 of 28 February 2017) stipulates, the aim of the Grand Customary Council is:

... to provide representation of French Guiana’s Indigenous and Bushinenge populations and to defend their environmental, educational, cultural, social, economic and legal interests (Article L7124-11)<sup>13</sup>.

This new Council<sup>14</sup> replaced the former Consultative Council of Indigenous and *Bushinenge* Populations (*Conseil consultatif des populations amérindiennes et Bushinenge* - CCPAB). Among the first actions of the Grand Customary Council was to discuss the negative impacts of ASM with French state authorities. In this communication, the Indigenous and *bushinenge* representatives lamented the inefficiency of actions against illegal gold mining.

In addition to the GCC, Indigenous peoples have political representation through their participation in the administrative council of the *Parc Amazonien de Guyane* (PAG). Since 2007, Teko, Wayampi and Wayana customary leaders, as well as representatives of the Aluku, are members.

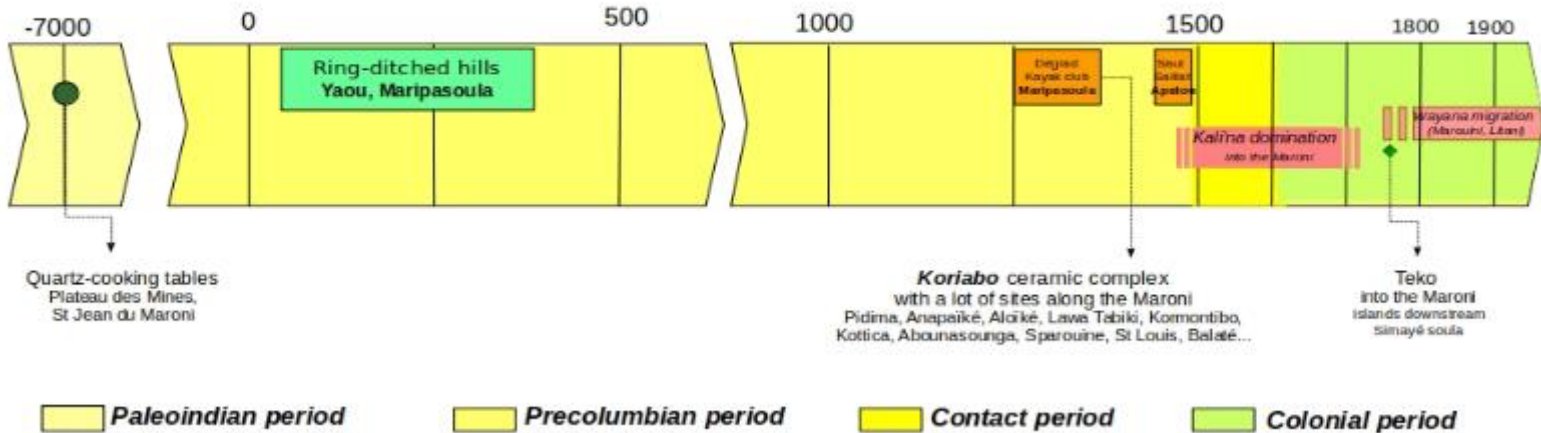
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<sup>13</sup> See the General Code on Territorial Authorities, Article L 7124 on Légifrance: <http://Legifrance.gouv.fr>,

<sup>14</sup> Decree No. 2018-273, of 13 April 2018, on the Grand Customary Council of Amerindian and Bushinenge Populations draws on Article 78 of Law No. 2017-256 - EROM by updating the Grand Council’s operating procedures

### 3. PRE-COLUMBIAN INDIGENOUS HISTORY OF THE MARONI RIVER REGION

#### INDIGENOUS OCCUPATION OF MARONI (from archeological and historical sources)

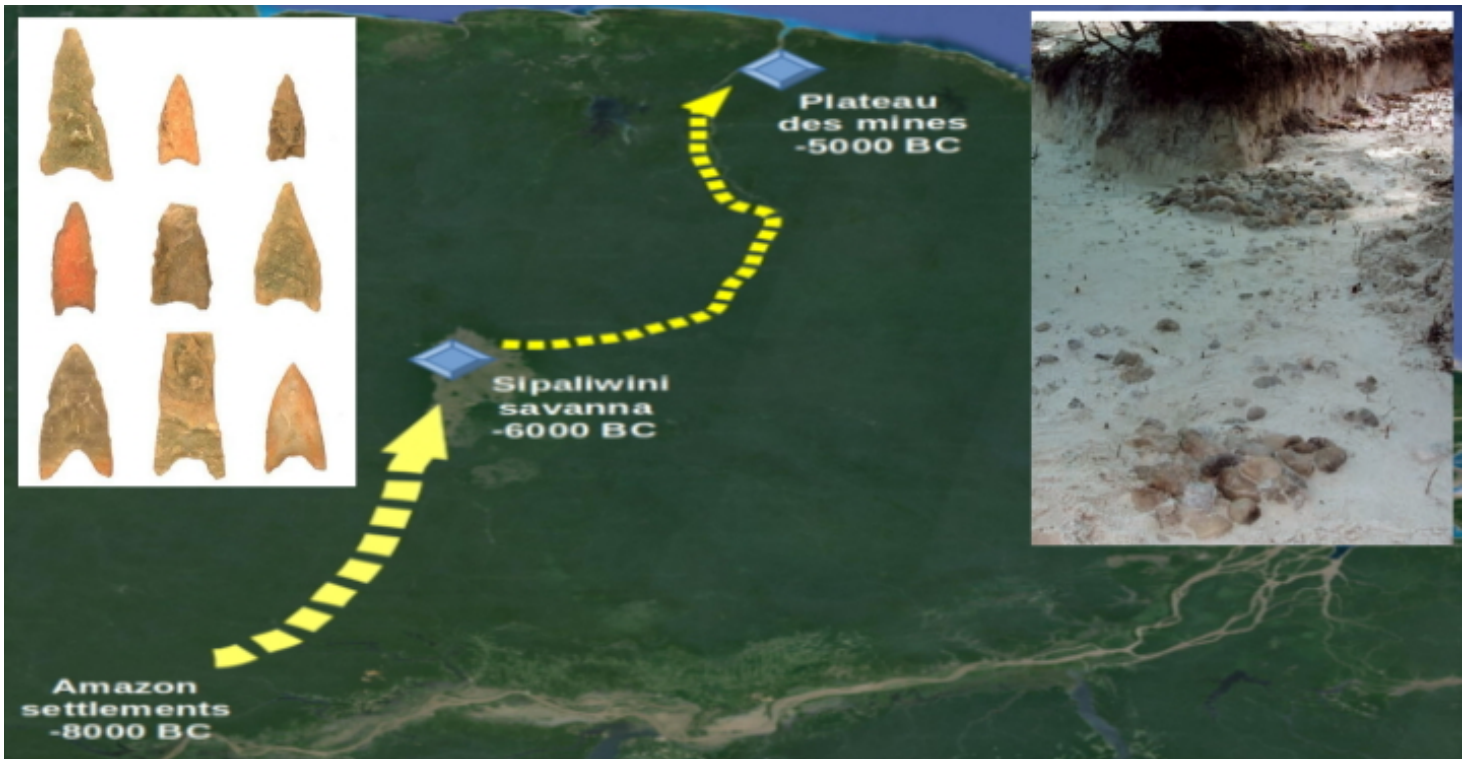


#### 3.1 THE MARONI AND THE FIRST INDIGENOUS SETTLEMENTS

The first migrations from the Amazon region to the Guianas took place some 10,000 years ago. Pre-Columbian inhabitants of South Suriname’s Sipaliwini savana, which is connected to the head waters of the Maroni, produced stone artefacts with quartz and rhyolite. These artefacts included tools like projectile points (right frame, Fig.4), knives, nucleus and debris, and hammer-stones; some of which are about 8,000 years old (Veersteg, 2003). During the building of the road from St Laurent du Maroni to Apatou, archaeological remains of cooking tables/pits made with piles of quartz pebbles (left frame, Fig.4), hammer-stones and waste of stone working from the same period have been found. These remains were encountered less than 100 km from the mouth of the Maroni. Based on carbon dating, this archaeological site is estimated to be approximately 7000 years old (Mestre, 2008).

Archaeological records suggest that the Maroni River was a primary transportation route, along which the first migrations of Indigenous hunters-gatherers moved into the Guianas. Also in French Guiana, the Maroni area beholds the oldest testimony of human activity.

Figure 4. Projected migration of the first native inhabitants of the Guianas from the Amazon region.



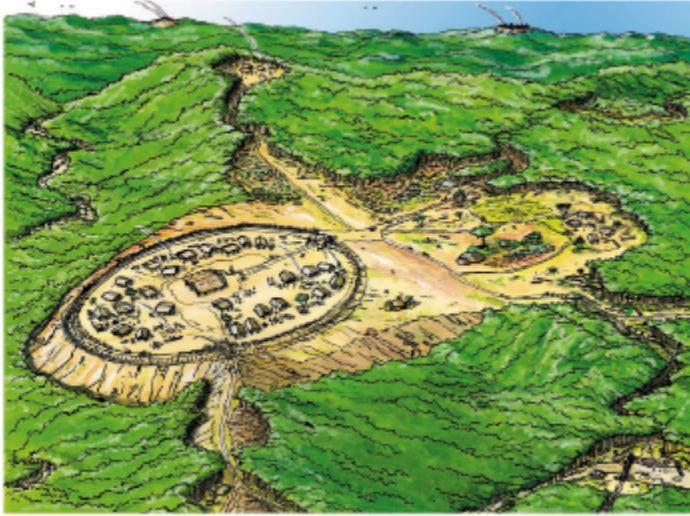
### 3.2 DIVERSITY OF INDIGENOUS OCCUPATION DURING LARGE PRE-COLUMBIAN PERIOD

At the beginning of our era, Indigenous peoples inhabited the Maroni River along its entire course. The Maroni valley is scattered with evidence of human presence in the form of so-called “ring-ditched hills”. These ring-ditched hills, also known as crowned mountains, were often located on the top of a hill and surrounded by a circular ditch (Figure 6). Archaeologists are still uncertain about the use of those sites; they may have been funeral sites or protected villages.

Food was primarily obtained through slash-and-burn agriculture. In this form of agriculture, a piece of forest was cleared and burned to increase soil fertility, with cassava as principal product. Food production required special tools, such as cassava graters, and stimulated the development of pottery production.

The location of the present-day gold mine of Yaou, not far from Maripasoula, hosts one of these Pre-Columbian Indigenous sites, which was inhabited from 100 to 500 AD.

Figure 5. A free interpretation of Pre-Columbian Indigenous settlement of Yaou in the Maroni area, known as ring-ditched hills (Mestre, INRAP, 2014)



During the pre-Colombian period, between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Maroni area was integrated into the Koriabo culture; a large-scale cultural complex, which extended into the hinterland of the Guianas. There are numerous Koriabo archaeological records along the Maroni and its tributaries (Groene, 1976; Hildebrand, 2008; Van den Bel, 2008; Bellardie, 2013). A couple of these sites have been carbon dated, including the Sparouine Creek (1250-1300 AD) and Serpent Creek (1400-1450 AD) on the lower Maroni area, and Maripasoula (1280-1390 AD) on the upper Maroni area.

Figure 6. Pottery from the Koriabo culture with characteristic scraped lines.



Figure 7. Toric pot remains characteristic of the Koriabo culture





The Koriabo culture is defined by specific forms of ceramic vessel shapes, such as toric pots and rims, lobed plates, and adornments: curvilinear thin-line incisions, shallow and wide scraped lines (Fig.7), and simple and complex drawings with zoomorphic / anthropomorphic adornments (Fig.8).

These centuries prior to colonization were seemingly a period of significant demographic development, with a lot of settlements established on the river banks. A generally accepted scientific hypothesis is that the Koriabo culture was the cultural expression of a large-scale migration of proto-Karib populations from the Amazon basin to the Guiana shield area, between 1000 and 1500 AD (Boomert, 1986 ; Rostain, 1994; Migeon, 2010). According to Grenand (1997), most of the toponyms of the Guianas come from Arawak languages. Thus, the Koriabo culture could have been that of proto-Arawak groups before Karib populations occupied the hinterland of the Guianas.

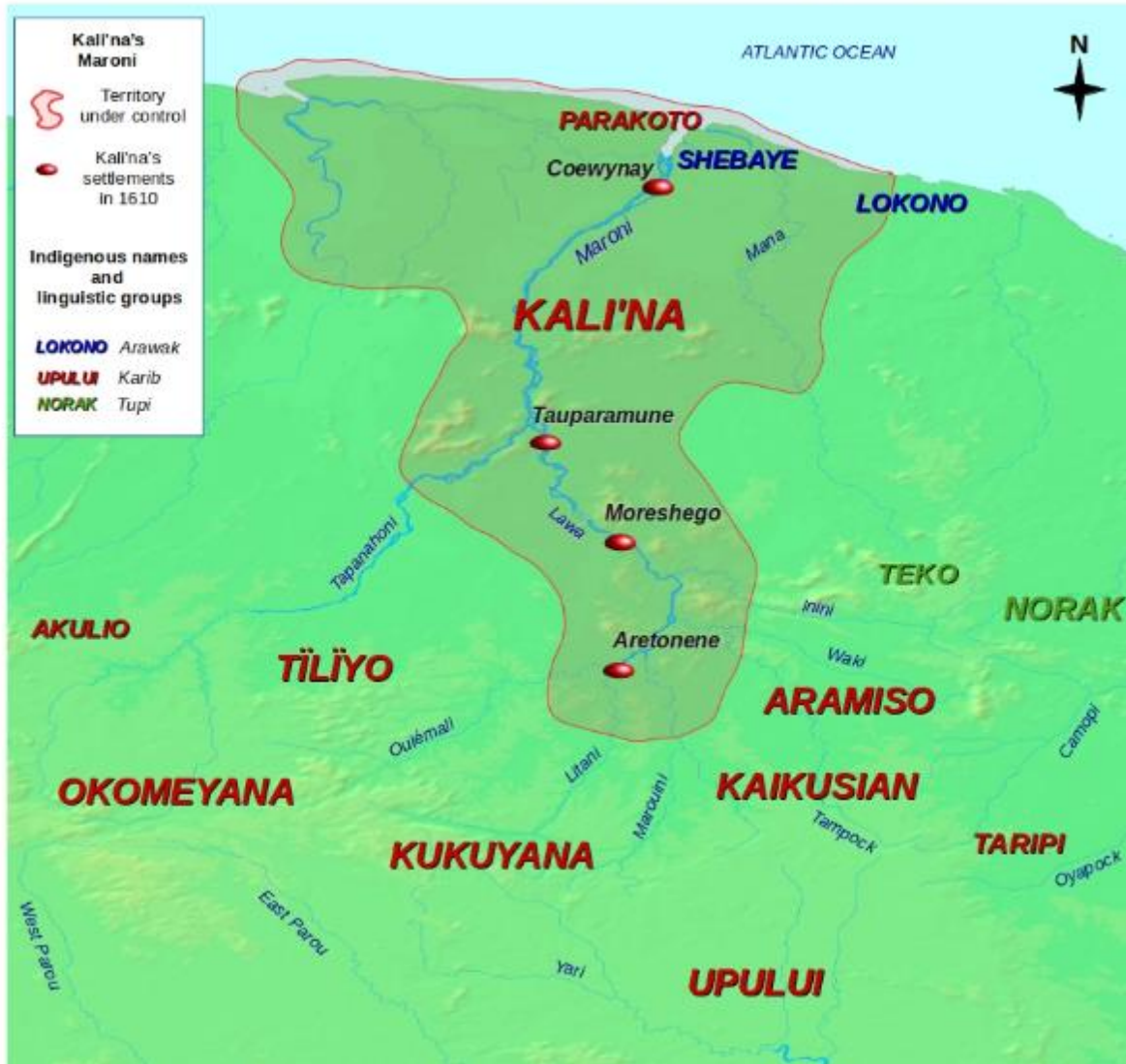
Historic records suggest that the Koriabo cultural complex had already gone extinct prior to arrival of the Europeans to the New World.

### 3.3 EXPANSION OF THE KALI'NA AND THE CONTACT PERIOD

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century, European written sources and oral histories of modern Indigenous Peoples provide a better understanding of the Indigenous history of the Maroni region. The Kali'na, belonging to the *Karib* linguistic group, went from the Oronoque River to the Caribbean islands to the north and to the Guianas to the east about a century prior to European conquest. They fought against Arawak populations and conquered large areas along the coast of the Guianas, from the mouth of Suriname River to the Island of Cayenne. They also occupied the Maroni River from the mouth to the head. Wayana oral histories account that the Kali'na even established themselves on the upper-Yari River, on the Amazon side of the Tumuc-Humac mountains (Chapuis & Rivière 2003). In these days, the Kali'na dominated extensive Indigenous exchange networks between the Amazon region and the Guianas. Their language was considered as *linga geral* for Indigenous trade networks in French Guiana. For example, the *Tupi* group of Norak from central French Guiana typically spoke the Kali'na language during their commercial exchanges in the coastal area (Grenand 1989).

By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Kali'na had occupied the entire Maroni River, from the river mouth to the confluence of the Litani and Oulémali. Their population at the time may have numbered approximately 6000 individuals (Hurault 1972). In 1610, the English Harcourt-Fisher report mentions three large villages on the upper Maroni: Tauparamune at the confluence of the Lawa and Tapanahoni Rivers, Moreshego, in the area of present-day Papaïchton-Maripasoula and Aretonene on the Litani, near the confluence of Oulémali creek. In addition, a variety of other Indigenous ethnic groups, mainly from the *Karib* language family, inhabited the upper Maroni, especially the Kukuyana, a component of the current Wayana Indigenous group (Bellardie 2011).

Figure 8. Indigenous peoples of the Maroni region, in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.



## 4. 1610-1900: ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS, DISEASE AND WARFARE

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Between 1610 and 1650, European colonization severely affected Indigenous populations. Common European diseases to which Indigenous populations had no resistance, and the import of parasitic strains from Africa, such as malaria, decimated population numbers soon after contact (Boudheri, Esterre and Migeon, 2014).

### 4.1 KALI'NA

The Kali'na, who had numbered nearly 6,000 individuals when Harcourt arrived, were reduced to merely half that number fifty years later (Hurault, 1972). Within a century, the Maroni River area was virtually emptied of those who had occupied and dominated a space that stretched for several hundreds of kilometres land inward.

Decimated in numbers, the Kali'na lost their superior position on the upper-Maroni, leading to a shift in local power relations. The Kali'na had dominated the entire Maroni River basin, relying on strong communication and exchange networks, with strategically positioned villages controlling the Litani-Oulémali confluence. In this position, they had also appropriated a dominant role in exchanges with the Europeans in the coastal zone. With the Kali'na weakened, the Kukuyana waged a war to put an end to the Kali'na trade monopoly in the Maroni region. By the early 18th century, battles had destroyed the Kali'na villages of Yakutooku and Alupentu on the Litani (Chapuis and Rivière, 2003 ; Bellardie, 2019). These events ended the centuries-long Kali'na presence along the upper Maroni River.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Kali'na survived as a group primarily thanks to the Jesuit missions along the coast of French Guiana. In this period, the changing nature of trade profoundly changed the relationship with neighbors. Neighborly contacts increasingly focused on capturing slaves, rather than the exchange of goods and marital relationships. Accessing European goods no longer depended upon the group's ability to produce and trade, but on agility in plundering for resale. In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, encouraged by the Dutch planters of East-coastal Surinam, the Kali'na still traveled up the Maroni to look for these slaves in the interior. The Teko, a *Tupi* group, were the main victims; the Kukuyana and the Tiliyo (Trio) on the Oulémali perhaps too, but to a lesser extent. In fact, by that time, the Kali'na no longer had the strength to raid these populations this far south (Collomb and Chapuis, 2009, Bellardie, 2011).

The Kali'na raids and the last battles with the Wayana and Tiliyo on the Litani, from about 1765 to 1775, were most likely the consequence of the expulsion of the Jesuits from French Guiana. Closure of the Jesuit missions on the coast, where a large part of the Kali'na had settled, at Sinnamary and Kourou, left this group on its own, destitute. The remaining Kali'na moved to the mouth of the Maroni to join the last core of the original Kali'na from the river (Grenand 1997). By the 1770's, the Kali'na from the Maroni River had withdrawn to the lower Maroni, downstream from Sparouine creek (present Bastien island). Here they lived in two villages, housing approximately 150 persons total. Around the same period, another group of Kali'na moved their most important villages to the Mana River. The official census of 1787 in French Guiana counted 200 persons for the whole Kali'na group (Hurault 1972).

## 4.2 TEKO AND OTHER SMALLER INDIGENOUS GROUPS

By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, only the Teko remained in the upper Maroni. They had come from central French Guiana and settled between the Inini creek and the Lawa, near the first islands upstream from present-day Maripasoula. They were apparently a nomadic group of hunters-gatherers, who used tree bark to make hammocks, and did not use of pottery or cotton (Hurault & Fresnay 1963). In 1767, the French botanist-traveller Patris met the Teko at the Inini, and estimated their population at approximately 350 people. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, fleeing Kali'na raids, the Teko recoiled again towards the centre of French Guiana, between the sources of Inini and Inipi.

In this same period, a small number of survivors from Indigenous groups such as the Norak and the Tariapi lived in the religious missions of the Oyapock-Camopi area. The Aramiso and the Kaikusian, also very weakened, established themselves along the Tampock and Waki creeks. By the late 1700s, the former group was integrated into the Kali'na group and ceased to exist as a separate Indigenous group. The Kaikusian, on their turn, were integrated into the *Tupi* group of the Wayampi from the upper-Oyapock after a defeat against the Wayana (Grenand 1982).

## 4.3 WAYANA

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the ancestors of the Wayana lived both along the Yari and Paru Rivers in Northeast Brazil, and along the upper Maroni and its side branches. At this time, the people we now know as Wayana lived as distinct semi-nomadic groups<sup>15</sup>. In colonial literature of the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, for example, one finds referrals to the Wayana under the name of Roucouyenne<sup>16</sup>. Social and cultural life of these different Indigenous groups was largely organized around warfare with neighboring tribes, and their chiefs performed a role as military warlords: *yapotoli* (Hurault 1972). War was waged to obtain resources and women, to take revenge, to settle trade disputes, and to establish a larger, unified group.

By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, fleeing raids by slave-hunter Amazonian Indigenous peoples<sup>17</sup> -armed by the Portuguese, a subgroup of Wayana traveled north. They were led by the legendary *yapotoli* Kaïlawa, who is still perceived as the father and founder of the Wayana nation. Kaïlawa led his multi-ethnic Wayana-group along the Yari and Paru Rivers in North-East Brazil and across the Tumuc-Humac mountains (Chapuis et Rivière 2003). In 1767, Patris met the Wayana for the first time – just like the Teko. At that time, the Wayana had begun their slow migration from the south through the Tumuc-Humac mountains, to enter French Guiana. After a series of wars, the Wayana settled in the area of the upper Marouini creek, the

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15 Anthropologist Karin Boven (2006), who conducted extensive oral history interviews with the Wayana, names as the main ethnic groups that later formed the Wayana: the Upului (Upurui, Poupouloui), the Opagwana(i), and the Kuku(i)yana

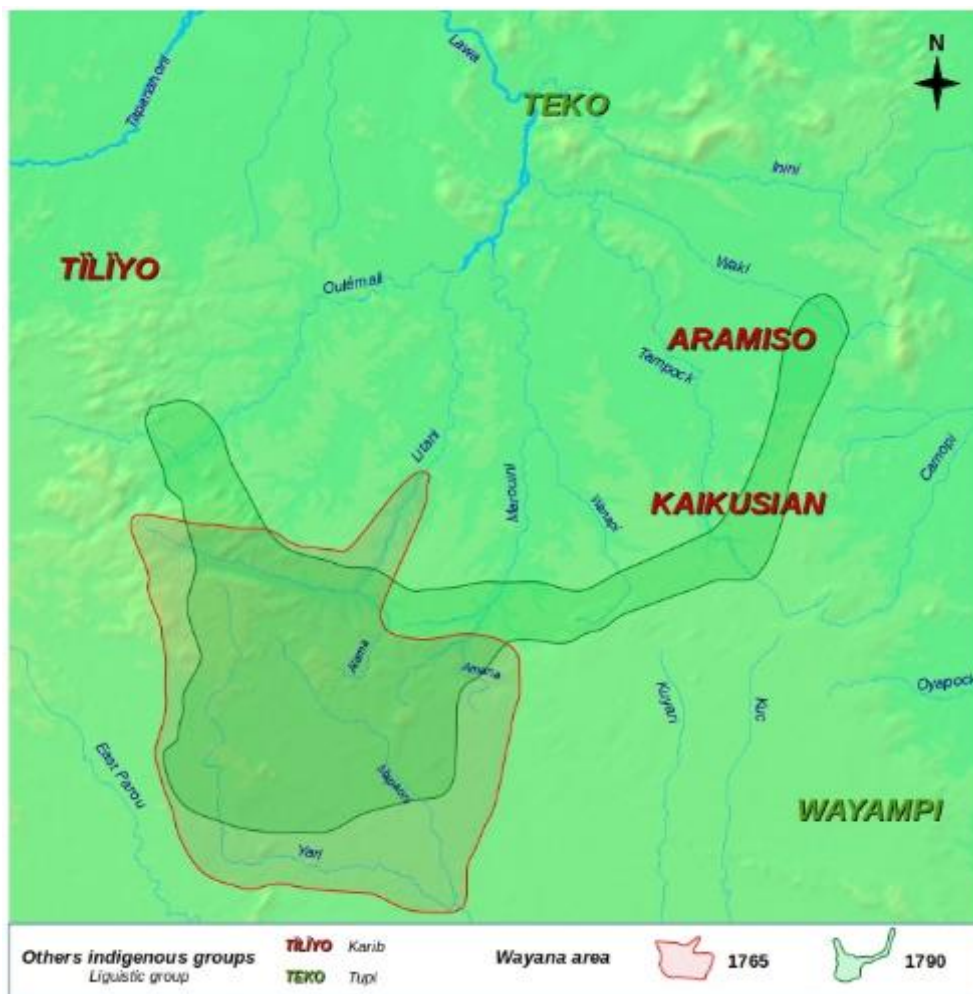
16 This name is a corruption of “roucou”, a red dye (Annatto) from the seeds of the achiote tree (*Bixa orellana*) used to paint the body, and “Kukuyana, who are one of the semi-nomadic groups who later formed the Wayana

17 These groups included the Kaliña (named Tayra by the Wayana) and the Wayãpi (of the Tupian language family).

upper-Litani and the Mapaoni, a tributary of the upper-Yari (Bellardie, 2011, Figure 10). Six Wayana villages stretched from west to east from Amana, a tributary of Marouini, to Kuyari, a tributary of the Yari in the Amazon basin (Bellardie, 2011). Each one of these villages may have counted about 80-100 people, and the inhabitants practiced agriculture on the upper part of the hills. Other groups, like the Aramiso and Kaikusian used the lower part (Hurault 1972).

Twenty years later, another French scientist, Leblond, visited the Wayana again, and found that the group had expanded considerably to the Waki River, a tributary of the Tampock River in Western French Guiana. Seventeen Wayana villages (mentioned as Upului and Kukuyana) were reported as far as the Oulémali, passing through the Tampock, the Marouini and the Litani (Bellardie 2011). This was the maximum expansion of this first migratory movement. The Wayana established contacts with traders of the lower-Oyapock to gain access to goods that had been exchanged with the French. By the end of the 18th century, the arrival of the Wayãpi on the Oyapock closed access to the east. Conflicts led to withdrawal of the Wayana to the area between the sources of Marouini and Litani (Grenand 1982).

Figure 9. First migrations of the Wayana (end 18<sup>th</sup> century)



#### 4.4 THE 19TH CENTURY; FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Indigenous Peoples seemed to have been forgotten by the French colonial authorities. With the creation of Saint Laurent du Maroni and establishment of the penal colony in the mouth of the Maroni, the Kali'na of the lower Maroni were relegated to a largely ignored and marginalized minority group. Nevertheless, available data suggest that the downward demographic trend stopped, and that from the mid-1800s onward, the Kalina population slightly recovered (Hurault 1972). Nevertheless, the Kali'na remained a fragile population, and vulnerable to new disease outbreaks. For example, when several groups of Kali'na were sent to the human zoos in Paris and Amsterdam (1882, 1883, 1892), three Kali'na died, and most others fell ill. This event remains vividly remembered in the Kali'na collective memory, as a source of trauma and defiance of whites (Collom & Tiouka, 2000).

At the same time, *bushinenge* occupation of the largest share of the Maroni and Lawa Rivers foreclosed options for the Wayana to migrate further north, despite the good relations they had with the Aluku. Relations were less friendly between the Aluku and the Teko, which motivated the latter to leave the Maroni River basin for the Oyapock area. The Teko also stayed on the upper-Approuague for a brief period during the 1850-60's, but the first gold rush in this area disturbed their way of life, and motivated them to leave the area (Bellardie 1994).

In the final quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, between 1877 and 1887-88, the explorers Crevaux and Coudreau met the Wayana again. This encounter resulted in the first detailed ethnological knowledge on the Wayana. At the time, the Wayana were estimated to number 1500 individuals.

## 5. 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY-PRESENT: INTEGRATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES INTO FRENCH GUIANA SOCIETY

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In early the twentieth century, the Indigenous population of the interior shrank considerably, as previously rather isolated groups fell victim to repetitive epidemics upon contact with those in search of gold, balata (rubber) and rosewood. In the 1930s, administrator Grébert counted barely 200 Wayana in southern French Guiana. In these years, approximately 40 Teko lived on the Tampock.

### 5.1 CREATION OF THE ININI TERRITORY AND THE *DÉPARTEMENT D'OUTRE-MER LA GUYANE*

In 1931, the French administration created the Inini territory<sup>18</sup>, *Figure 10. Inini territory*

covering the southern share of the country; in fact everything apart from a small coastal strip (Figure 10). Between 1930 and 1946, this area was administered separately, with the purpose to develop the interior separately from the coastal area around Cayenne. With the establishment of the Inini territory, land management in the interior of French Guiana was transferred to local authorities (Hidair and Ailincal, 2015). Meanwhile on the coast, municipalities were managed by a Creole elite, according to the rules of the colonial administration.



The inhabitants of the Inini territory, the “native” or “tribal” populations as they were named, obtained the status of a protectorate. They were not obliged to declare births nor subject to civil law, and they were not required to prove their nationality in order to travel in and between the territories of French Guiana, Dutch Guiana (now Suriname) and Brazil. They were governed by customary laws, in particular with regard to marriages, land occupation and use, and settlement of local disputes. They were only subject to penal law if a crime was committed (ibid.).

In 1946, French Guiana was formally established as an overseas department of France, or *Département d'Outre Mer (DOM)*. This political transition strengthened patriotism of the coastal inhabitants. Indigenous Peoples and *bushinenge* in the interior were presented as populations “to civilize”, and referred to as “savages” or “primitive” (Hidair and Ailincal, 2015). The first prefect of French Guiana - Vignon<sup>19</sup>- installed a prefectural commissioner for Indian affairs at Galibi (Kali'na). In addition, a Service for Primitive Populations (*Service des populations primitives*), later renamed the Service of the African and Indian populations (*Service des populations Africaines et Indiennes*), was established to institutionalize and systematized administrative practices in the Inini territory (Guyon, 2013).

In an integration campaign aimed at breaking Indigenous Peoples out of their “dangerous isolation”, the French Guiana administration encouraged, sometimes under pressure, Amerindian families to group into

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<sup>18</sup>

<sup>19</sup> In office from 1947 to 1955

large villages near towns. This concentration of settlement would facilitate the delivery of health and social services, allow Indigenous populations to participate in agricultural production, and "integrate into the Guianese community" (ibid).

## 5.2 1969: END OF THE ININI TERRITORY

With dissolution of the Inini Territory (1969), populations of the interior had to choose a nationality and an official place of residence. In 1964, the French administration initiated a campaign to register "declarations of birth" of Indigenous Peoples and *bushinenge*, and began to massively grant them national identity cards (Guyon, 2013). Little by little, Indigenous Peoples and *bushinenge* acquired the attributes of French citizenship and became subject to its obligations and rights, including the right to vote (Guyon, 2013, Mam-Lam-Fouck, 1992). While certain Indigenous groups, such as the Wayana, refused French citizenship, others accepted it or submitted to it (ibid.).

In the late 1960s and 1970s, contemporary anthropologists such as Hurauly and Jaulin strongly criticized the French assimilation policies vis-à-vis the Indigenous populations, which they labeled as "ethnocide". In 1969, a group of renown international anthropologists sent a protest letter against the francization of Indigenous Peoples to the Secretary of State for the Overseas Affairs (Guyon, 2013).

## 5.3 MID-1970s TO 1980s: RISE OF AN INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT

In the 1980s, criticism of the French assimilation policy became increasingly voiced by Indigenous Peoples themselves. As the first native inhabitants of French Guiana, they demanded recognition of their peoples, their territories, their cultures, and self-determination. The rise of an indigenous movement was both directly and indirectly an outcome of the assimilation policies it denounced. In the first place, francization policies motivated younger generations of Indigenous Peoples to pose new questions about their cultural roots and Indigenous identity, which led to self-organization (Collomb and Tiouka, 2000).

Secondly, formal education in Indigenous communities provided young Indigenous leaders with new resources to become politicized. Not coincidentally, the French Guiana Indigenous Movement originated in the coastal Kali'na village of Awala-Yalimapo, where the implementation of francization started earlier than in the far interior. The pioneers of this movement were among the first Indigenous individuals who completed secondary school and left for the city to attend vocational training (Guyon, 2013). In school, they acquired the language skills, literacy and familiarity with French institutions that allowed for the development of a strong activist vision. Their activism and discourse were further inspired and developed by contact with anthropologists and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) supportive of Indigenous Peoples rights. These encounters motivated thought about the disadvantaged position of Indigenous peoples in French Guiana, and led them to claim political, territorial and cultural rights.

The birth of French Guiana Indigenous movements was further motivated and strengthened by the simultaneous broader, regional and international, rise of Indigenous consciousness and organization; both in Latin America and in international organizations such as the United Nations (Guyon, 2013).



Already in the mid-1970s, the Mana Association of Amerindian Families began reflecting on issues of Indigenous identity, and subsequently, in 1981, young Indigenous leaders created the *Association des Amérindiens de Guyane Française* (Association of the Amerindians of French Guyana -AAGF) (Hidair and Ailincal, 2015). In December 1984, on the first gathering of the Indigenous Peoples of French Guiana, they demanded as "first inhabitants" that the French State recognizes the Indigenous Peoples of Guyana and their "sovereignty"<sup>20</sup>. In addition, and in line with international Indigenous Movements, the Indigenous Peoples of French Guiana postulated that the French State grants them collective ownership of the land they inhabit and use for agriculture, gathering and hunting.

Since the creation of the AAGF, the French Guiana administration became increasingly attentive to Indigenous requests and demands. Among others, the administration substituted pejorative terms such as "tribes" for the name "*Amérindiens*", as employed by the AAGF leadership. Representatives of the AAGF were also included in the *Comité de Coordination des Actions en Faveur des Amérindiens de la Guyane Française et des Populations du Maroni* (Coordinating Committee Actions for the Indigenous Peoples of French Guiana and Maroni populations).

#### 5.4 MID 1980s-PRESENT; CONTINUED STRENGTHENING OF THE INDIGENOUS IDENTITY AND RISE OF INDIGENOUS ACTIVISM

Since the 1980s, the Indigenous Movement of French Guiana has become increasingly larger, more influential, more diversified, and more international. The Indigenous movement in French Guiana has been strengthened by simultaneous worldwide movements calling for the inclusion of minority voices and acknowledgement of Indigenous and other native rights. Particularly since the Rio Summit of 1992, environmental discourse increasingly emphasizes the role of Indigenous Peoples in sustainable development. This conception is also permeating legal decision making in French Guiana.

In French Guiana, the rhetoric for indigenous rights could not have anchored without the political activism of the Kali'na. Indeed, already in 1981, with the creation of the AAGF, the Kali'na from the villages of Awala and Yalimapo pioneered strategies of claiming Indigenous collective rights. Soon after its establishment, the AAGF associated with Survival International, a global NGO working for the cause of the Native Peoples.

In 1992, the AAGF became the *Federation des Organisations Autochtones de Guyane* (FOAG), which subsequently affiliated with the Coordinated Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Watershed (COICA - *Coordinadora de Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica*); a regional network of Indigenous organizations. The Kali'na thus followed a political trajectory comparable to that of Indigenous Peoples of other Amazonian countries. Stepping forward as representatives of all Indigenous Peoples of French Guiana, they first tried to challenge the state directly. Then, faced with limited response and disappointing results, they brought their demands to the international stage.

An important Indigenous leader and activist in these early days of Indigenous self-organization and self-awareness was the Kali'na activist Felix Tiouka, who became the first chair of the FOAG<sup>21</sup>. In 1984, Tiouka

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20 In a speech by Indigenous leader Felix Tiouka

<sup>21</sup> Tiouka was chair of the AAGF from 1981 to 1986, and again from 1990 to 1992

addressed the government and the people of France in a speech at the first congress of the AAGF, explicitly presenting the AAGF as representative of the Emmerillons, Palikur, Wayip, Wayana, Arawak and Galibi (AAGF-EPWWAG). He expressed the Indigenous demands, in eloquent French - and clearly influenced by the international Indigenous movement, starting from the basis that<sup>22</sup>:

“For the future of our peoples, our culture and our children, we have a duty to do everything possible to obtain the recognition of our rights as first inhabitants [...]. We do not understand why your jurists and legislators only want to take into account in their arguments and decisions based on written laws of European origin, completely ignoring the principles of unwritten laws of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas [...] We also do not understand why the concept of private land ownership that is yours must take precedence over the notion of collective property that is ours.

[...] Despite all the difficulties that we have experienced[...] we have never given up our sovereignty and territories that our ancestors have occupied and exploited since time immemorial. We want to remain Native Americans and keep our language, our culture, our own institutions. [...] We believe that our rights as first inhabitants of a large part of the territory of French Guiana allow us to make this choice. We also believe that the members of the dominant society must accept this choice.”

A principle demand in this speech was the recognition of the Indigenous peoples as the first, culturally autonomous inhabitants of the Americas. The AAGF chair further demanded that France would recognize the Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination, inalienable land rights, and control over the exploitation of their lands and resources. Like in various other Latin American countries, including neighbouring Suriname<sup>23</sup>, Tiouka voiced Indigenous opposition against “any new resource development project in our territories by members of the dominant society and as long as our rights have not been recognized.”

In response to Kali'na allegations and actions, the French State established, in 1987, limited collective rights in the form of the above-mentioned ZDJC. In the meantime, the Kali'na aligned with the international sustainable development agenda, forming liaisons with international –governmental and non-governmental- organizations (Filoche, 2011). The results of this Indigenous activism are partly visible in Law No. 2000-1207 (13 Dec. 2000) for Overseas Territories (Départements d'Outre- Mer). In its article 33, this Law states that "... the State and local authorities encourage the respect, protection and maintenance of knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous and local communities based on their

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<sup>22</sup> For the complete speech, see: <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/edition/memoires-du-colonialisme/article/221115/amerindiens-de-guyane-felix-tiouka-president-de-lepwwag-sadresse-au-gouvern>

<sup>23</sup> In Suriname, the Kali'na and Lokono (Arawak) filed a case against the Suriname State with the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (2007). In 2016, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights made public its judgment in the case of the Kaliña and Lokono Peoples v. Suriname. The Court found Suriname responsible for multiple violations of the American Convention on Human Rights due to its failure to recognize and guarantee the legal personality and territorial rights of the Kaliña and Lokono, as well as active violations of those and other rights in connection with bauxite mining, grants of individual titles to non-indigenous persons and both the existence of and restrictions imposed in two nature reserves.

traditional ways of life, and which contribute to the conservation of the natural environment and the sustainable use of biological diversity".

An important step in formalizing the Indigenous voice in policy decision-making was the establishment of the *Conseil consultatif des populations amérindiennes et bushinenge* (Advisory Council of Indigenous and bushinenge populations), in 2007. The scope of the Advisory Council concerned any project or proposal of the government (Regional Council or the General Council) of French Guiana that might affect the natural environment, living conditions or culture of Indigenous and *bushinenge* populations (State projects are excluded).<sup>24</sup>. In 2018, this Council was replaced by the *Grand conseil coutumier des peuples amérindiens et bushinengué de Guyane* (Grand traditional council of Indigenous peoples and bushinenge of French Guiana- GCC) (see ¶15.5).

## 5.5 INDIGENOUS SELF ORGANIZATION

Initially (1990-2000), the Indigenous movement of French Guiana was predominantly a Kali'na affair, with minimal – if any – participation of the Indigenous groups in southern French Guiana. In their presentation to the outside world, Indigenous activists proclaimed Indigenous unity - symbolized by a flag representing all six Indigenous groups. In practice though, the Kali'na were dominant in number and voice. The Kali'na were most educated, and most familiar with French rules, regulations and language.

Figure 11. Flag of the Indigenous peoples of French Guiana



In more recent years, other Indigenous groups, such as the Wayana, have increasingly joined Indigenous interest groups and institutions, and are increasingly demanding a more equitable role for themselves in national indigenous organisations such as the FOAG<sup>25</sup>. Since 2012, formal celebration of International Day of Indigenous Peoples (August 9) by the *Collectivité Territoriale de Guyane*<sup>26</sup> (CTG), has been a unifying event. This symbolic day and related activities have allowed for sharing and streamlining of Indigenous (political) visions, although some Indigenous groups, including the *Jeunesse Autochtone de Guyane* (Indigenous Youth of French Guiana - JAG) and the *Organisation des Nations Autochtones de Guyane*

<sup>24</sup> Law n° 2007-224 of 21 February 2007. For more information, see the website of the Conseil consultatif: <https://www.ctguyane.fr/le-conseil-consultatif-des-populations-amerindiennes-et-bushinenge/>

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, discussion at the 6<sup>th</sup> congress of the FOAG: <https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/guyane/sixieme-congres-federation-organisations-autochtones-guyane-tourne-court-695602.html>

<sup>26</sup> Form of decentralized local (federal or provincial) government, applied in French Guiana and several other French overseas territories.

(Organisation of Indigenous Nations of French Guiana –ONAG) have boycotted the festivities and denounced the CTG for using International Indigenous Day for non-indigenous political purposes.

Increased bundling of the Indigenous groups is also visible in the more recently installed *Grand conseil coutumier des peuples amérindiens et bushinengué de Guyane* (Grand traditional council of Indigenous peoples and bushinenge of French Guiana- GCC), in which representatives of all six Indigenous peoples of French Guiana, including the Wayana, have taken seat. A recent visit to with the Wayana in French Guiana suggests that the Wayana take great pride in their position in the GCC<sup>27</sup>.

The *Grand conseil coutumier* was inaugurated in 2018<sup>28</sup>, as a representative body of the Indigenous peoples and bushinenge in French Guiana, replacing the *Conseil consultatif des populations amérindiennes et bushinenge*. Installation of the GCC was the logical outcome of two other laws that were passed in France; the 2016 Biodiversity law<sup>29</sup> and the 2017 Law on the position of French overseas territories<sup>30</sup>, both of which emphasized the importance of traditional knowledge in biodiversity conservation (CNRS Guyane, 2019). The aim of the GCC is to defend the legal, economic, social, cultural, educational and environmental interests of Indigenous and *bushinenge* (Aluku) communities in French Guiana. As such, the GCC is now the main consultative body for all subjects affecting and relating to Indigenous and *bushinenge* communities.

The GCC has adamantly spoken out, in national and regional media, against illegal small-scale gold mining<sup>31</sup> as well as against the Montagne d’Or industrial mining project<sup>32</sup>. The GCC proclaimed its “NON” against Montagne d’Or as a group, adopting the position of the majority of its members. Main considerations that fed into this position were that the Montagne d’Or project would dispossess Indigenous peoples of about 360000 ha of land, and expose them to potential (environmental) risks related to mining extraction (see ¶7.4 for more detail on Montagne d’or).

Apart from the *Grand conseil coutumier*, Indigenous people in French Guiana are organized in non-governmental organizations, of whom the main ones are listed below.

- ◆ **Federation des Organisations Autochtones de Guyane** (French Guiana Federation of Indigenous Organizations-FOAG), which replaced the AAGF in 1992. The FOAG also participates in the working group on Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations, and in COICA, which is one of the main

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<sup>27</sup> K. Delvoe, researcher for the Amazon Conservation Team, pers. com 31/10/2019

<sup>28</sup> Decree n° 2018-273 of 13 April 2018. URL: <https://www.informea.org/en/legislation/d%C3%A9cret-n%C2%B0-2018-273-du-13-avril-2018-relatif-au-grand-conseil-coutumier-des-populations>

<sup>29</sup> Law of August 2016 « pour la reconquête de la Biodiversité, de la Nature et des Paysages ».

<sup>30</sup> Loi de programmation relative à l’égalité réelle outre-mer (28 février 2017)

<sup>31</sup> As presented at the 7th plenary session of the GCC in Apatou, October 2019

<sup>32</sup> See plenary meeting of the Grand Conseil Coutumier des Peuples Amérindiens et Bushinengés, in Saint-Laurent du Maroni, 31 August 2018, and a News Item from January 19, 2019. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFoEVGuhXPU>).

Indigenous organizations in Latin America. President of the FOAG is Jean-Philippe Chambrier (Lokono), and general coordinator of the bureau of FOAG is Stéphane Appolinaire (Kali'na).

- ◆ ***L'Organisation des Nations Autochtones de Guyane*** (Organization of Indigenous Nations of French Guiana - ONAG) aims to defend the human rights and fundamental liberties of the Indigenous peoples of French Guiana. The ONAG is closely associated with the United Nations. Leaders of the organization include Milca Sommer-Simonet (President, Kali'na), Alexandre Sommer-Schaechtele (Vice-president, Kali'na) and Ileen Colom (Kali'nal).
- ◆ ***Jeunesse Autochtone de Guyane*** (Indigenous Youth of French Guiana - JAG) is an activist organization of –primarily- Kali'na and Lokono youth, who agitate against colonization and oppression of Indigenous peoples in French Guiana. Current spokespersons and leaders of the organization include Christophe Yanuwana Pierre (Kali'na, also vice-president of the GCC), Ludovic Pierre (Kali'na) and Céline Micholet Sabayo (Lokono/Mixed heritage).
- ◆ ***Collectif des Premières Nations*** (Collective of First Nations - CPN) is a more recently established Indigenous organisation (since 2016). Its primary aim is to legally defend the interests and well-being of the Indigenous populations of French Guiana. Subjects of interests include biodiversity, traditional knowledge, and bi-lingual education. A public spokesperson for the CPN has been Ruth Bidiou.
- ◆ ***Fédération Lokono de Guyane*** (Lokono Federation of French Guiana) specifically represents the interests of the Lokono people. Current president is Anne Marie Chambrier.
- ◆ ***Fédération Pahikweneh de Guyane*** (Pahikweneh Federation of French Guiana) specifically represents the interests of the Pahikweneh people. The current president (2019) is Claudette Kawakukyenh Labonté.

Looking at the ethnic affiliation of the leadership positions of these various organizations, it appears that most (or all) of the Indigenous NGOs at the level of the *Departement* continue to be dominated by coastal –primarily Kali'na. In addition to these regional organizations, the different Indigenous communities in French Guiana may have smaller, community based organizations (CBOs) and associations such as cultural groups, youth groups and women's groups.

Traditionally, there has been some rivalry between particularly the largest Indigenous organizations, FOAG and ONAG. Nevertheless, particularly in their struggle for land rights, the different organizations have joined forced vis-à-vis the French State and the *Collectivité Territoriale de Guyane*. Indeed, demarcation of, and legal right to Indigenous territory, is a core principle to all of these groups.

Despite a unified vision on the broader ideological themes, one notices differences between older and younger generations. For example, young Wayana are, generally, less in favor of the ZDUC than their elders. Young Wayana may be heard stating that they would like to be able to develop economic activities

on their customary lands in order to generate employment and depend less on social assistance. Some activities, such as ecotourism, are eligible for institutional funding, provided that the applicant has private ownership title to the land, which is not possible in the ZDUCs. For older Wayana, by contrast, the ZDUC provides some level of guarantee that they can continue to use the land, and that outsiders cannot expropriate it.

To date, none of the Indigenous groups or organizations has, as a group, supported gold mining – either small or large-scale.

## 6. RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND MAROONS ALONG THE MARONI RIVER

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In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, relationships between the *bushinenge* and the Kali'na were complicated. In the 1770s, the Kali'na captured and killed several *bushinenge*. Yet around 1780, when the Aluku entered the Maroni, they seemed to have taken blood-oaths or *chwéli* with the Kali'na and in 1782, the Dutch accused the Kali'na of giving weapons to the Aluku. Some years later (1789), a group of Kali'na complained to the French authorities that the Aluku had taken several Kali'na hostage after a deadly encounter into the forest. Again some decades later, during the 1830-40s, the Kali'na strongly rejected an attempt of Ndyuka *gaanman* Beyman to place the Kali'na under his domination, using the *chwéli*. Nevertheless, around 1850, the village of Bigiston was (and still is) a mixed-village on the right banks of the Maroni, about ten miles upstream Albina, where Ndjuka and Kali'na lived together (Collomb, 2000).

On the upper-Maroni, the situation was different. In 1793, when the Aluku arrived on the Marouini (upper Maroni), they encountered the Wayana who had settled in this region for many years already. Aluku oral histories recount that there were some initial frictions between the Aluku and the Wayana, but relationships rapidly changed as a result of Ndyuka repression of the Aluku. According to Wayana oral history accounts, the Wayana provided refuge to the Aluku; protecting them from Ndyuka attempts to eliminate the last surviving Aluku. For about 20 years, the Aluku were able to recuperate their group under the protection of the Wayana, sealing a friendship between these two peoples that continues until today. Both Aluku *gaanman* Awensai (1917-1937) and Aluku *gaanman* Tolinga (1965-1991) symbolized this alliance by marrying Wayana woman. Symbolizing this long term friendship and their special fondness of the Wayana, the Aluku refer to the Wayana in the Upper Maroni area as "Alukuyana".

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Aluku returned to the Lawa. Their settlement upstream from the community of Abattis Kottica positioned the Aluku as intermediaries between the Wayana, and the Lower Maroni and coastal area. Exchanges between the two groups allowed the Wayana to obtain manufactured products from the coast (iron tools, fabrics, pearls), while the Wayana supplied the Aluku with hammocks and hunting dogs.

With the establishment of the Inini Territory in 1930, French administration missions to the interior of the country required people who could provide logistics -especially navigation. Crews composed of Aluku and Wayana were allowed to cross into the Upper Maroni and its tributaries; each member bringing his own specific knowledge of the watercourses. In the 1950s, such missions supported border demarcation and mapping expeditions of the *Institut Géographique National* (IGN).

Due to their time spent living in close proximity of one another, the Aluku and Wayana have adopted different skills and material products from another. For example, the Wayana shared with the Aluku the knowledge of cultivating and processing bitter cassava for food, producing different other tubers (*napi*, *yam*), and growing banana trees. Conversely, the Aluku technique of manufacturing dugout canoes was transferred to the Wayana in the time that both groups had settled along the tributaries of the main river.

With access to canoes, the Wayana increasingly favored river transportation as a means to traverse the forest over walking through the forest.

At the same time, each group kept its own specificities. For example, the Wayana never took on rice cultivation, as the Aluku did. Also, each group has an own preferred way of turning processed cassava into food; the Wayana turn it into cassava bread while the Aluku produce quak (kwak) - roasted coarse flour. Also in Aluku rituals, the Indigenous influence is still noticeable, such as in the use of both cassava and rice during the *puubaka* – a ceremony to end a mourning period.



## 7. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND GOLD MINING IN FRENCH GUIANA

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### 7.1 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND ARTISANAL AND SMALL-SCALE GOLD MINING

During the first gold rush in French Guiana (1986-1930<sup>33</sup>), Indigenous Peoples were not at all involved in gold mining. There is no evidence that they either were miners, or provided logistic services to gold miners entering the Maroni region. Their distance from the mining activities probably (at least partly) explains their absence from this industry. Little is known about their attitudes towards mining at the time.

Since the start of the new gold rush, in the early 1990s, Indigenous Peoples in western French Guiana have been adamantly opposed to this activity. In this sense, they distinguish themselves from the local Aluku *bushinenge*, who have been actively involved in Artisanal and Small-scale gold mining (ASM) and the related service economy; as boatmen, land bosses, bar- and hotel owners, and merchants.

There is evidence that in neighboring Suriname, southern Indigenous Peoples (Wayana and Tiriyo) incidentally engage in ASM. In the early 2000s, for example, the *gaanman* of Anapaike owned a gold mining raft in the Litani River, along the border with French Guiana. This mining raft operated with Brazilian *garimpeiros* (gold miners), and the proceeds were partly used for community development, for example to buy fuel for the village generator<sup>34</sup> (Heemskerk, 2009). At the time, Anapaike traditional authorities also accepted payment from *garimpeiros* to work on community land behind the village. In the absence of national (Suriname) government support for the village, closing a deal with gold miners was a means to obtain basic community needs, such as electric light at night. Nowadays, also the Suriname Wayana village of Kumakapan, which was for a long time opposed to ASM, has been taken over by gold mining interests<sup>35</sup>. In addition to community efforts to earn ASM income, a small number of Suriname Wayana and Tiriyo individuals are working in mining teams in various Suriname mining areas.

In French Guiana, the situation is fundamentally different, in part because there is less economic need to get involved in ASM. French Indigenous families are eligible for French social welfare benefits (*allocations*), and the villages receive services such as electricity from the French government. There is no evidence of French Guiana Indigenous peoples being active as gold miners, nor of them renting out their customary lands to (foreign) gold miners. The only cases of direct Indigenous involvement in ASM have concerned rare incidences where individuals provided logistic support – e.g. boat transportation. As a community, however, French Guiana Indigenous Peoples have been adamantly opposed to ASM on and near their homelands.

Indeed, on the French banks of the Maroni River watershed (incl. Lawa, Litani), Indigenous Peoples (mainly Wayana and Teko) appear to merely have become victims of the gold mining induced environmental and health impacts. Already in 1994, the French *Réseau National de Santé Publique* (National Bureau of Public

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<sup>33</sup> Gold was first discovered in 1855, but mining activities reached a high in intensity and amount of gold produced in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

<sup>34</sup> In 2007, this mining raft was destroyed by the French gendarme as part of its fight against illegal gold mining.

<sup>35</sup> K. Delvoye, Researcher for the Amazon Conservation Team Suriname, pers. com. 31/10/19

Health – RNSP) demonstrated high mercury exposure in the Wayana community of the upper Maroni. It was found that more than half of the researched Wayana population had mercury levels that surpassed the WHO safe levels of 10 µg/g in hair, with an average value of 11.4 µg/g (Fréry et al. 1999). Since then, studies have demonstrated aggravation of the health situation, with recent estimates that 90 percent of Indigenous children on the upper Maroni have elevated mercury levels surpassing WHO safe standards (Helgoualch, 2017). The main source of human mercury contamination is gold-mining-induced mercury pollution of fish. In addition to mercury contamination, sedimentation of rivers and creeks makes the water unsuitable for drinking and causes health problems such as dermatological problems, infections, and polyarthritis. Deterioration of the water quality as a result of ASM has also affected the quantity and diversity of fish species in the rivers, thus affecting the primary protein source and nutritional health of local Indigenous peoples (Ouboter, 2015; [1ere.francetvinfo.fr/du-mercure-eau-poissons-consequence-orpaillage-guyane-676463.html](http://1ere.francetvinfo.fr/du-mercure-eau-poissons-consequence-orpaillage-guyane-676463.html)).

## 7.2 PARC AMAZONIEN AS A MEANS TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS FROM ASM

In 2006, the French state created the *Parc Amazonien de Guyane*, a huge protected area that covers the southern 41 percent of French Guiana. With some 20,300 km<sup>2</sup> for the core area -where full protection is enforced (Zone de Cœur de Parc - ZOC)- and 13,600 km<sup>2</sup> of secondary area -where limited use under strict conditions is permitted- the *Parc Amazonien* is the largest park in the European Union and one of the largest national parks in the world. The idea for a protected area in French Guiana was first conceived in 1992, in the aftermath of the 1992 Rio summit. Initially, the Indigenous peoples and *bushinenge* were concerned that the protected area's regulations and prohibitions would be incompatible with their traditional livelihood activities, particularly with regard to hunting and fishing. In 1998, the Twenké agreement led to the recognition of the rights of the Indigenous peoples and *bushinenge* living within the future park's boundaries. Particularly when eradication of illegal gold mining (ASM) became a priority of the *Parc Amazonien*, Indigenous communities became more favorable towards the idea of the Parc.

In October 2006, during the public consultations preceding creation of the Parc Amazonien, 285 Wayana signed a petition, listing their objections to the Parc, and submitted it to the investigating committee. In this petition, the Wayana provided the following reasons for their objections:

- “ - Our desire to benefit from the proximity of the heart of the Park, in order to protect our places of life and activity was not retained in this project;
- Nothing protects us against the many nuisances related to illegal gold mining; on the contrary, the project contains some provisions favorable to gold panning;
- The project does not guarantee our Communities against intrusions on our living and activity spaces.” (Ligue des Droits de L’Homme, 2007)<sup>36</sup>

In February 2007, the creation of the park was made effective by decree. The lands of the Wayanas and of the Tekos in Western French Guiana are located far from the core area, despite requests from these

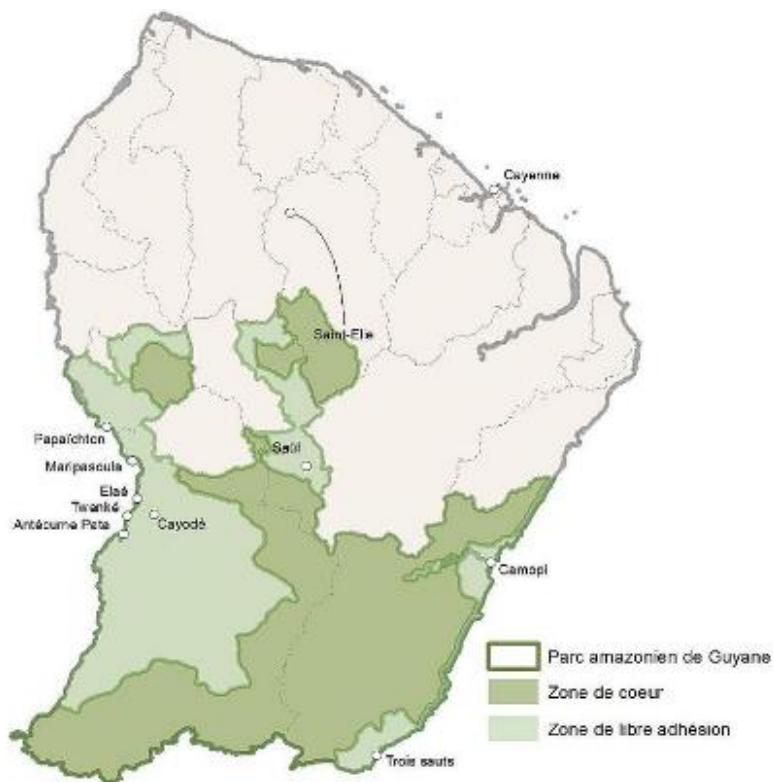
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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.ldh-france.org/13-mars-2007-Parc-amazonien-en/>

Indigenous groups, prior to park's effective creation, to become part of the core area as a means to better protect their communities against illegal ASM activities.

In March 2007, the French League of Human Rights (Ligue des Droits de L'Homme) protested against the French State's inefficiency in combatting illegal gold mining, insisting that the rights of the Indigenous peoples of the Upper Maroni River to health and safety had been violated. Particularly the Wayana and Teko protested against the fact that the requests of the Indigenous peoples of the Upper Maroni had not been taken into account, despite the favorable opinion of investigating commissioners<sup>37</sup>.

Figure 12. Core area (dark shaded) and secondary zone covered by the Parc Amazonien de Guyane



### 7.3 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LARGE-SCALE MINING IN FRENCH GUIANA

A significant number of national, international and multinational mining firms have obtained mining titles in French Guiana (Figure 13). Indigenous peoples in French Guiana have strongly spoken out against any form of gold mining in the *Département*, regardless of whether it is small or large-scale, and regardless of by whom. In (internet) news reporting, there is no evidence of any Indigenous leader, representative, or organization that supports large-scale mining, or is ambivalent towards this activity.

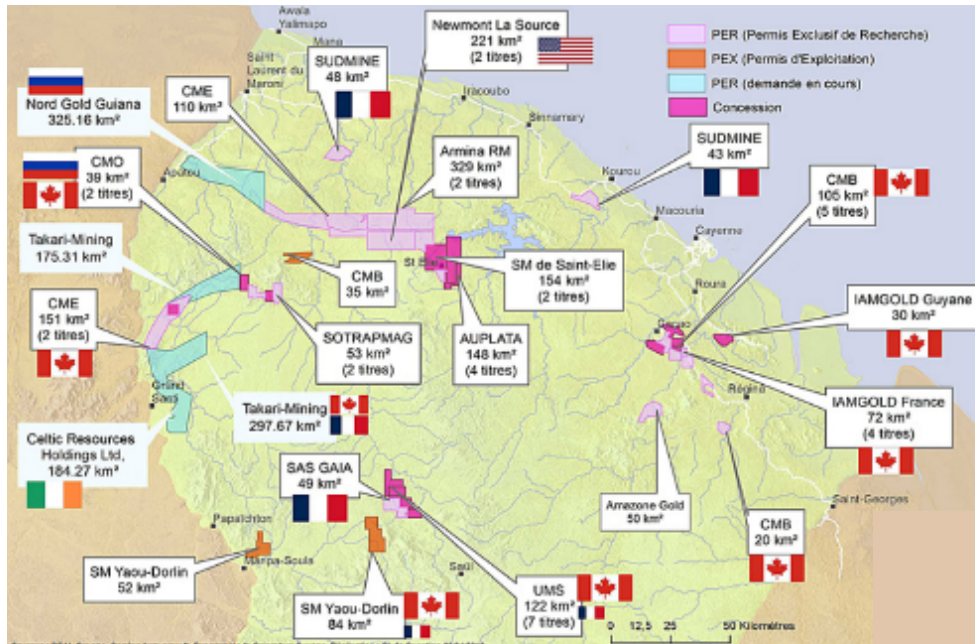
It is important to note that this aversion to large-scale, industrial mining does not only or specifically concern mining in or near Indigenous territories. As the first and original inhabitants of this region,

<sup>37</sup> Press release LDH at March 13, 2007. URL: <https://www.ldh-france.org/13-mars-2007-Parc-amazonien-en/>

Indigenous peoples speak out against, and make an effort to stop, the development of any one of these industrial mining proposals in the entire area of French Guiana.

In their struggle against large-scale, industrial mining, Indigenous peoples organizations have aligned with professional French environmental activists, human rights organizations (e.g. Ligue des Droits de L'Homme) and specific action groups, such as "Or de Question" and "Hurleurs de Guyane". In the case of Montagne d'Or, the combined efforts of these groups have been effective in obstructing development of this mine (see ¶ 7.4).

Figure 13. Mining titles in French Guiana



Source: Or de Question, 2019

## 7.4 MONTAGNE D'OR MINING PROJECT

In May 2019, the French government *Conseil de Défense Écologique* (Environmental Defense Council) ruled that in its present state, the Montagne d'Or Project" is incompatible with the requirements of environmental protection". With this statement, it was suggested that this Project, which has been awaiting government authorization for more than two years, could be abandoned. A description of the chain of events in the Montagne d'Or Project is relevant for understanding the political stance vis-à-vis large-scale mining projects in France (incl. French Guiana), and the role of Indigenous Peoples in shaping public opinion.

The Montagne d'Or Project is located 80 km south of Saint Laurent du Maroni, in Western French Guiana. The *Compagnie Minière Montagne d'Or* (CMO), a partnership between Canada-based Columbus Gold, and Russian mining multinational Nordgold, holds the concession rights for this Project. The Montagne d'Or Project has proven and probable reserves of 2.75 million ounces of gold and its 2017 bankable feasibility study (BFS) was positive.

From the start of this Project, the French administration has been capricious in its attitude towards the Montagne d'Or, largely in response to public opinion. In 2015, Emmanuel Macron, then Minister of

Economy, expressed his support for the development of a "responsible mine" at Montagne d'Or, announcing that the government would "do everything possible" to ensure that the Project would be realized. A few days later, the Minister of Environment, Ségolène Royal, insisted that these remarks merely reflected the opinion of the Minister of Economy, and that it would be necessary to verify the promised employment benefits and exploitation impacts. In a TV interview of October 2017, newly elected President Emmanuel Macron reiterated his support for the project, stating that a decision would be taken after a public debate in the first half of 2018. Around the same time, however, the new Minister of Environment, Nicolas Hulot, suggested that he did not favor the project but "it is the Elysee who will decide". In November 2017, Hulot publicly announced his opposition to the Montagne d'Or Project, stating that for him, the environmental impacts could not be offset by a "fairly small" economic benefit.

Between March and July 2018, a public debate took place about mining of Montagne d'Or, which sparked much interest and emotion in both French Guiana and mainland France. According to a report from the National Commission for Public Debate (CNDP), 1,500 people attended the meetings and thematic workshops<sup>38</sup>. This public debate divided French Guianese society with, on the one hand, Indigenous and *bushinenge*<sup>39</sup> populations opposing the project, and on the other hand national and regional economic and political leaders in favor of the Project.

French Guiana Indigenous populations stated their opposition to the project through their associations and customary leaders. Already in 2016, the *Conseil Consultatif des Populations Amérindiennes et Bushinengué* (Advisory Council of Indigenous and Bushinenge Populations), as well as the *Organisation des Nations Autochtones de Guyane* (ONAG), announced that they were opposed to an industrial mining project at the Montagne d'Or. The *Fédération des Autochtones de Guyane* (FOAG) refused "categorically the initiation of this project, which will cause massive destruction of the exceptional biodiversity of French Guiana". On the International Day of Indigenous Peoples, 9 August 2018, 13 of the 15 Indigenous leaders who were present expressed their opposition against the Montagne d'Or Project. On this day, the Advisory Council of Indigenous and *Bushinenge* Populations reiterated its "negative opinion on the project", and once again on 31 August at its Plenary Assembly meeting. Also the youth group *Jeunesse Autochtone de Guyane* (JAG) repeatedly expressed opposition to the Project. On 26 June 2018, a delegation from *Jeunesse Autochtone de Guyane*, invited to Paris by Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Yannick Jadot, participated in several demonstrations against the project.

In their opposition and protest against the mining Project, Indigenous Groups were supported by national and international environmental and human rights lobby groups, researchers, and NGOs. In May 2018, the international scientific community sent the President of France a statement noting their opposition to the project in order to prevent a "veritable human and environmental disaster."

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<sup>38</sup> The different positions in favor of, and opposed to, the Montagne d'Or Project of national, regional and local leaders and organizations are summarized on the GITPA (IWGIA) website:  
<http://gitpa.org/web/Prises%20de%20positions%20publiques%20sur%20le%20projet.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> The Aluku *bushinenge* voiced opposition by their representation in the GCC. It has been observed, however, that both *bushinenge* and Hmong have much less participated in the public debate than representatives of the Indigenous organizations. Hence their position vis-à-vis Montagne d'Or is less clear. See also:  
[https://www.ishr.ch/sites/default/files/documents/montagne\\_dor-article\\_le\\_monde\\_-\\_11.01.19.pdf](https://www.ishr.ch/sites/default/files/documents/montagne_dor-article_le_monde_-_11.01.19.pdf)

On 18 September 2018, François de Rugy, Minister of Ecological and Solidary Transition, stated that: “The public debate has shown that this project cannot be implemented as planned. We will need to reconsider it in one way or another” (IWGIA, 2019). On 16 November, *Compagnie Minière Montagne d’Or* submitted documentation in response to the concerns raised during the public debate. These concerns included the use of cyanide, the production of on-site energy, and the creation of a Fund for the Development and Diversification of the Economy of French Guiana.

In December 2018, the ONAG, with support from the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), filed a petition concerning the Project with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)<sup>40</sup>. In its petition, the ONAG brought forward that:

Montagne d’Or is a mining site situated on ancestral lands, close to sacred pre-Colombian relics with a risk of polluting hunting and fishing areas. [...] The public debate and the express visit of the Inter-Ministerial Commission on Gold Activity in October 2018 in no way represents a consultation process.

In the petition, the ONAG referred to Article 32 of the UNDRIP, which states, among others, that:

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources (UNDRIP, Art. 32.2).

On 14 December 2018, CERD sent an 'early warning'<sup>41</sup>, asking France to secure the consent of the indigenous communities affected by the 'Montagne d'Or' mining project or suspend it.

By the end of May, 2019, the French government announced abandonment the Montagne d’Or project in its present state. In response, the umbrella group *Or de Question* (Questionable Gold), which united 30 French Guianese organizations and 120 NGOs opposed to the project, celebrated the "burial" of the project on the *Place des Palmistes* in Cayenne. The various Project opponents remain on guard though, watching the promised reform of the mining code closely. Meanwhile tensions between supporters of economic development of the territory and opponents of all industrial mining projects have not ceased, and are likely to rise with newly proposed mining projects.

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<sup>40</sup> France has been a member of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination since 1971

<sup>41</sup> See the CERD letter at:

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/FRA/INT\\_CERD\\_ALE\\_FRA\\_8820\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/FRA/INT_CERD_ALE_FRA_8820_E.pdf)

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

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Prehistoric Indigenous hunter-gatherers may have entered the Maroni River area between 10,000 and 7,000 years ago. Indigenous peoples of the Koriabo culture inhabited the entire Maroni area, but it is unknown whether these early populations are the ancestors of any one of the Indigenous groups living in French Guiana today. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Europeans arrived in the Guianas, the Kali'na occupied the Maroni River from the river mouth to the confluence of the Litani and Oulémali. Their population may have numbered approximately 6,000 individuals at the time, and they dominated over other indigenous groups. **Considering their proven historic presence along the entire stretch of the Maroni River, the Kali'na are the only currently living Indigenous group that can claim to have occupied, 400 years ago, the general area around L'Espérance.** Soon after conquest, the Kali'na were decimated in numbers, lost their dominant position in the region, and withdrew to the upper Maroni area. Meanwhile the Wayana, living to the far south, did not migrate further north because this area was occupied by *bushinenge*.

Present-day French Guiana hosts six main indigenous groups: Kali'na (Carib), Palikur (Païkwené, Pahikweneh), Lokono (Arowak), Wayãpi (Wayampi), Teko (Emérillons), and Wayana. Only the Kali'na, the Wayana, and one Teko community are situated in western French Guiana. **It is extremely unlikely that either the Wayana and Teko, 140 km to the South, or the Kali'na and Lokono, more than 100 km to the north of the Espérance mining property, currently use this area for traditional livelihood activities and/or ceremonial purposes.**

With its emphasis on equality and indivisibility, the French constitution and legal system provide little room to recognize either the Indigenous individual or Indigenous communities as distinct legal entities. Nevertheless, **international and internal pressure have motivated the French state to acknowledge the status of indigenous peoples as the first inhabitants of this overseas territory.** Indigenous communities now have exclusive rights to communal lands (ZDUC), are subject to special regulations concerning land use in the *Parc Amazonien*, are consulted in decision-making that may affect their user areas, and are considered as groups whose traditional culture and knowledge must be protected.

In the 1960s and '70s, Indigenous people were increasingly integrated into French society. Coastal Indigenous groups accepted French nationality, entered the French educational system, and were subject to related obligations and rights, such as the right to vote and access to welfare benefits. Highland Indigenous groups, such as the Wayana, initially refused French nationality. **Assimilation policies gave rise to an Indigenous movement, motivated by the international Indigenous movement, and led by young, French educated Kali'na who agitated against francization.**

Since the 1980s, Indigenous peoples have gained influence in socio-political and environmental decision-making in French Guiana by self-organizing into different non-governmental and governmental organizations. The largest and most outspoken indigenous organisations in French Guiana are the *Federation des Organisations Autochtones de Guyane*, the *Organisation des Nations Autochtones de Guyane*, and the *Jeunesse Autochtone de Guyane*. Even though coastal indigenous groups –mostly the Kali'na- still tend to dominate these groups, southern Indigenous peoples are gaining increasing representation. Despite small differences and some rivalry, **all Indigenous interest groups actively protested both illegal small-scale mining and large-scale industrial mining development in French Guiana.**



**All French Guiana Indigenous ethnic groups and all Indigenous organizations adamantly and actively oppose mining activities in French Guiana. This includes, on the national political level, the *Grand Conseil Coutumier* (GCC -Grand Customary Council), which represents Indigenous peoples and *bushinenge* in any project or proposal that might affect their natural environment, living conditions or culture. With this stance, French Guiana Indigenous peoples differentiate themselves from the *bushinenge*, who were instrumental in providing logistic support (mostly boat transportation) for gold mining activity during the first gold rush (~1910-1930), and are both directly and indirectly involved in the present gold rush as gold miners, equipment owners, land bosses, and providers of auxiliary services (since ~1992). Their position also differs from that of Suriname highland Indigenous groups (Wayana, Tiriyo) who have, motivated by financial need, rented land to ASM miners and been engaged in mining activities themselves.**

In their opposition to large-scale mining, French Guiana Indigenous Peoples proudly and convincingly present themselves as the first, native inhabitants of the territory, and keepers of traditional knowledge and environmental management systems that have allowed for century-long protection of the natural environment. **Indigenous Peoples in French Guiana do not protest against one specific mining project that directly affects one specific Indigenous ethnic group, but rather as the unified Indigenous peoples of French Guiana, who are the environmental stewards of the entire territory of la Guyane. Having adopted the rhetoric of the international Indigenous rights movement, and with both financial and physical support from regional, national and international environmental and human rights organizations (incl. UN, COICA, Or de Question, Hurlleurs de Guyane), Indigenous activism has been extremely successful in influencing French decision-making about industrial mining in French Guiana.**



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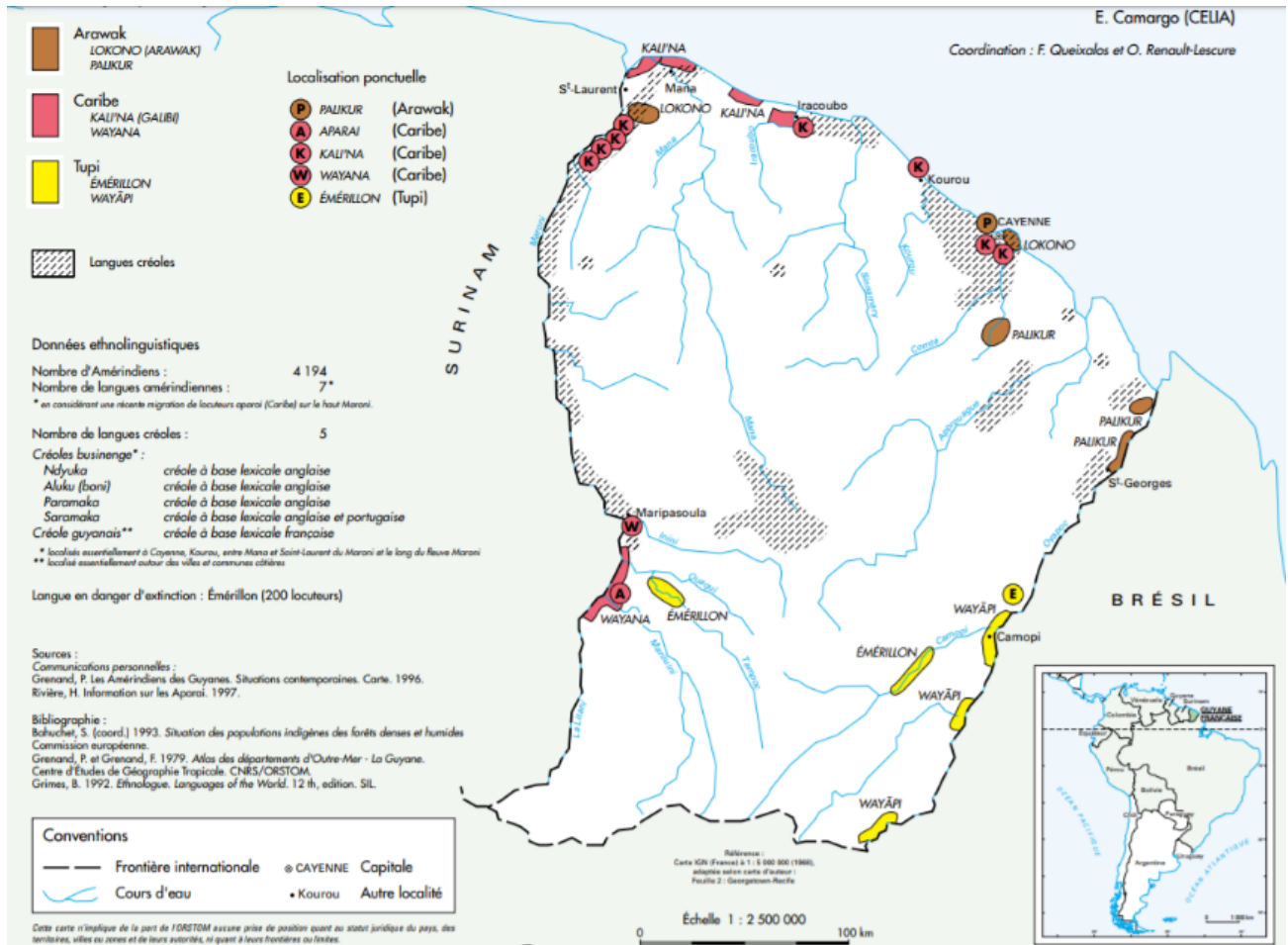
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# ANNEX 1. LINGUISTIC MAP OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN FRENCH GUIANA



Source: Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD). Langues amérindiennes de Guyane française. Scale of 1:2 500 000. Date of publication: 1998.