



# World Directory of Minorities

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## Tukano

### Profile

Tukano are river-dwelling agriculturalists living on the Upper Rio Negro. They are known as Baniwa, Kuripako, Dow, Hupda, Nadöb, Yuhupde, Baré, Warekena, Arapaso, Bará, Barasana, Desana, Karapanã, Kubeo, Makuna, Mirity-tapuya, Pira-tapuya, Siriano, Tariana, Tukano, Tuyuca, and Wanana.

### Historical context

A number of government proposals regarding demarcation of their land resulted in a 75 per cent reduction of the 'indigenous areas' proposed by the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI). Land close to the Colombian border, on which Tukano carried out small-scale, environmentally sound gold mining operations, was recognized by FUNAI as belonging to Tukano but was wanted for strategic defence purposes by the military. This led to harassment and accusations of illegal dealing in gold and drugs.

### Current issues

The FOIRN (Federation of the Indigenous Organizations of the Upper Rio Negro) has undertaken several health, education and development projects in the region. They coordinate the DSEI (Special Indigenous Medical District) of the Rio Negro and have hired 200 health workers, of whom 90 per cent are of indigenous origin. Many of these projects have been undertaken with support from the Instituto Socioambiental.

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