

Interview with Carlo Zacquini
2 February 2013

Those who I knew – and I've known many Yanomami during all the years when I visited lots of communities – are not like that [violent]. There are always tensions, as there are tensions in each family and each place, but for me this is not war. War is another thing. I know war. I've known it since I was a child.

There are fights, I think they always existed, they exist in all societies, and sometimes someone dies, but it's so rare. Fights became much more serious when the gold miners came into the area and the Indians acquired firearms... But this also was not a general thing, it is not a constant thing – Yanomami 'wars' hardly cause any harm. The harm from a 'war' is far less than the harm caused by flu.

I saw in the case of the Yanomami that when the State came along with its actions saying they were for the security of the border, violence against the Yanomami was really great, although not through gunfire, but through people linked to the state like, for example, the gold miners. Before, life for the Yanomami was very peaceful, much more so, then afterwards the problems multiplied enormously in an unacceptable way I'd say.