

Public Statement: Civil society organizations demand yet another massacre of environmental defenders in the Brazilian Amazon must not go unpunished.

The Pastoral Land Commission of the State of Pará (CPT-Pará) and the Pará Society for the Defense of Human Rights - SDDH, with the support of dozens of social movements and other civil society organizations, are raising their voices to publicly demand that yet another massacre in the Brazilian Amazon cannot go unpunished. On Sunday, January 9th, the bodies of José Gomes, known as Zé do Lago, his wife Márcia Nunes and their daughter Joane Nunes, were found dead on the family property in São Félix do Xingu (Pará). For over 20 years, the family had lived there, developing projects to preserve the forest and protect native fauna, including a project to repopulate turtles in aquatic environments where they had been overexploited. The family was widely known and respected for such environmental initiatives. The land where they lived is under the jurisdiction of the Pará State Land Institute - ITERPA and is located within the Triunfo do Xingú Environmental Protection Area (APA) that covers more than 1.5 million hectares.

According to a [public statement](#) released on January 13th by CPT-Pará, SDDH and partner organizations, "the municipality of São Félix do Xingu is known for serious land conflicts resulting from public land grabbing, illegal deforestation associated with extensive cattle ranching, invasions of indigenous lands and conservation areas, as well as the installation of illegal mining activities. These conflicts have resulted in the murder of individual leaders, group massacres and slave labor. **According to data collected by CPT-Pará, 62 rural workers and leaders were murdered in this municipality due to land tenure conflicts over the last four decades. None of those responsible for the crimes has been convicted, a 100% rate of impunity.** So far, there is no information available about whether this assassination is directly related to land conflicts. It is the responsibility of the Pará State Police to investigate and clarify the real motivations for this massacre. In the state of Pará alone, in the last four decades, CPT has recorded 29 massacres with 152 victims. In the same period, 75 leaders were murdered in the south and southeast of the state".

Two legal petitions have been filed by SDDH with regard to the case, demanding action from local authorities. An initial petition was filed with the Secretariat of Public Safety of the State of Pará (SEGUP) on January 10th, while a second petition was filed on January 13th with the Pará State Attorney General's Office.

See below English translation of the full statement.

PUBLIC STATEMENT

Another massacre in the countryside cannot go unpunished!

Last Sunday (1/9), the bodies of JOSÉ GOMES, known as Zé do Lago, 61 years old, his wife MARCIA NUNES LISBOA, 39 years old and their daughter JOANE NUNES LISBOA, 17 years old, were found on the family's property, located on the island of the

Mucura waterfall on the banks of the Xingu River, in the municipality of São Félix do Xingu, Pará State. All three had been shot to death. Civil Police at the scene collected 18 capsules of ammunition used in the crime. Given the type of weapon used, the number of shots fired, the fact that none of the family's belongings were taken, and the manner in which the killers surprised the victims - not allowing anyone to run and try to escape - indicates this was an execution, probably carried out by hired gunmen.

José Gomes' family had lived on the property for over 20 years, developing forest preservation initiatives and maintaining a native turtle-breeding project. They were widely known and recognized for their environmental work. The land they occupied is under the jurisdiction of the Pará State Land Institute – ITERPA, located within the Triunfo do Xingú Environmental Protection Area (APA) that covers more than 1.5 million hectares. In recent years, deforestation for timber exploitation and extensive cattle ranching has advanced uncontrollably within the reserve, getting closer and closer to the region where Zé do Lago's family had their property. So far, the Civil Police of Pará state, which is investigating the case, has not produced any results that indicate who the perpetrators were and the causes that motivated the crimes.

The municipality of São Félix do Xingu is known for serious land conflicts resulting from land grabbing on public lands, illegal deforestation aimed at extensive cattle ranching, invasions of indigenous lands and protected areas, as well as the installation of illegal mining. These conflicts have resulted in the assassinations of leaders, group massacres and slave labor. **According to data from the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), over the last four decades, 62 rural workers and leaders were murdered in the municipality in conflicts over land tenure. None of those responsible for the crimes has been convicted, representing a 100% rate of impunity.** So far, there is no information available about whether this assassination is directly related to land conflicts. It is the responsibility of the Pará State Police to investigate and clarify the real motivations for this massacre. In the state of Pará alone, in the last four decades, CPT has recorded 29 massacres with 152 victims.

In the same period, 75 leaders were murdered in the south and southeast of Pará state. One of them was trade unionist Ronair José de Lima, murdered in the municipality of São Félix do Xingu on August 4th 2016, whose perpetrators remain unpunished.

What concerns social movements and human rights organizations are the limitations of Pará's public security agencies in clarifying the responsibilities and causes of many assassinations that have occurred in the state's countryside. In May 2021, CPT and SDDH presented to the Secretariat of Public Safety of Pará State (SEGUP) a list of 09 peasant leaders assassinated between 2017 and 2021 in the south and southeast regions of the state where the crimes had not yet been clarified and those responsible identified and punished. The head of SEGUP requested 15 days to respond, but after eight months, no response was given. Among the related cases is that of Fernando dos Santos Araújo, assassinated on 01/26/2021 at a farm entitled Santa Lúcia, in the municipality of Pau D'Arco. He was one of the survivors and a key witness of the Pau D'Arco massacre, a

crime that took place on May 24, 2017. Almost a year after the assassination, the chief of police responsible for the investigation closed the case without clarifying the causes that motivated the crime.

In the same document, CPT and SDDH also presented a list of eight preventive arrest warrants for individuals responsible for ordering and carrying out assassinations in the countryside that became fugitives. During this period, only one warrant was carried out. Among the current fugitives are Marlon Lopes Pidde, a rancher who ordered the massacre of five peasants, a crime that took place on September 27th 1985, in the municipality of Marabá (Pará). In a jury hearing held on May 8th 2014, Marlon was sentenced to 130 years in prison, but he was never arrested to serve the sentence. Another case presented was that of José Rodrigues Moreira, a rancher who ordered the assassination of José Claudio and his wife Maria, traditional forest extractivists in the municipality of Nova Ipixuna (PA) - a crime that took place on May 24, 2011. Sentenced to sixty years in prison in a trial held on June 12th 2016, José Rodrigues was never arrested to serve his sentence.

The concern of our organizations is with the neglect of the Pará State's public security institutions in clarifying the authors and motivations of the crimes and arresting those responsible; this may become yet another case in which the true causes that motivated a crime are not clarified and those responsible remain unpunished.

The representatives of organizations that sign this Public Statement hope that this case will be quickly clarified, in terms of the dynamics of the facts related to this massacre and the motivation of those involved, with those responsible identified, arrested and duly judged in courts of law; guaranteeing the security and protection of family members and witnesses who can provide help with information to elucidate these crimes.

Belém (Pará), January 13, 2022.

Pastoral Land Commission – CPT Regional Pará
Pará Society for the Defense of Human Rights - SDDH

MOVEMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT THIS STATEMENT:

1. Prelazia do Alto Xingu-Tucumã / Catholic Prelature of Alto Xingu-Tucumã
2. Comissão de Direitos Humanos da OAB/PA / Brazilian Bar Association – Pará State - Human Rights Commission
3. Movimento Xingu Vivo para Sempre / Xingu Alive Forever Movement
4. Comitê Dorothy / Dorothy Stang Committee
5. Instituto José Cláudio e Maria / José Claudio and Maria Institute
6. Movimento de Mulheres Trabalhadoras de Altamira Campo e Cidade / Movement of Women Workers from the City and Countryside of Altamira
7. Comissão Justiça e Paz da Arquidiocese de Santarém / Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Santarém.

8. Coletivo de Mulheres Negras Maria Maria / Collective of Black Women Maria Maria
9. Comitê em Defesa das Crianças Altamirenses / Committee in Defense of Children of Altamira
10. Conselho Ribeirinho / Council of Riverbank Communities (Xingu)
11. GDA- Grupo de Defesa da Amazônia / Amazon Defense Group
12. Associação de Mulheres de Altamira e Região / Women's Association of the Altamira Region
13. Sindicato dos Trabalhadores (as) em Educação Pública no Estado do Pará - Regional Transamazônica e Xingu / Union of Workers in Public Education from the State of Pará - Transamazon and Xingu Region - SINTEPP
14. Centro de Formação do Negro e Negra da Transamazônica e Xingu / Afro-Brazilian Training Center for the Trans-Amazonian and Xingu region
15. Núcleos guardiões do Médio Xingu / Guardian Communities of the Middle Xingu
16. Fórum Mudanças Climáticas e Justiça Socioambiental/ Forum on Climate Change and Socio-Environmental Justice - FMCJS;
17. Instituto Madeira Vivo - IMV / Madeira Alive Institute - IMV;
18. Coletivo Indígena Mura de Porto Velho - COINMU / Mura Indigenous Collective of Porto Velho - COINMU
19. Comitê Binacional de Defesa da Vida Amazônica na bacia do rio Madeira - COMVIDA / Binational Committee for the Defense of Amazon Life in the Madeira River Basin;
20. Associação das Comunidades Montanha e Mangabal / Association of Montanha and Mangabal Communities (Tapajós River)
21. Projeto Saúde e Alegria / Health and Joy Project (Tapajós, Pará)
22. International Rivers
23. Coalizão para a Proteção Permanente de Rios do Brasil / Coalition for the Permanent Protection of Brazil's Rivers
24. Instituto Paulo Fonteles de Direitos Humanos / Paulo Fonteles Institute for Human Rights
25. Centro de Estudos e Defesa do Negro do Pará – CEDENPA / Center for the Study and Defense of Afro-Brazilians in the State of Pará
26. Movimento Nacional de Direitos Humanos – MNDH / National Human Rights Movement
27. Movimento de Mulheres do Campo e da Cidade – MMCC / Movement of Women from the City and Countryside
28. International Accountability Project
29. Instituto Maíra / Maira Institute
30. Associação Indígena do Povo Arara da Cachoeira Seca – KOWIT / Indigenous Association of the Arara People of Cachoeira Seca
31. Associação de Mulheres do Areia II / Areia II Women's Association
32. Marcha Mundial por Justiça Climática / World March for Climate Justice
33. Marcha Mundial do Clima / World Climate March
34. Instituto Transformance: Cultura & Educação / Transformance Institute: Culture & Education
35. Rede Brasileira de Arteducadores / Brazilian Network of Art Educators

36. Universidade Comunitária dos Rios / Community University of Rios
37. Projeto Rios de Encontro / Rivers of Encounter Project
38. Ecoa - Ecologia a Ação / Ecology and Action
39. Coletivo Tela Firme / Tela Firme Collective
40. Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais Agricultores e Agricultoras Familiares de Santarém / Union of Rural Workers and Family Farmers of Santarém
41. GT Infra - Infraestrutura e Justiça Socioambiental / Working Group on Infrastructure and Socio-environmental Justice
42. Movimento Tapajós Vivo / Tapajós Alive Movement
43. ECOE Brasil / ECOE Brazil
44. Sindicato dos Trabalhadores e das Trabalhadoras em Educação Pública do Pará - SINTEPP – sub-sede Altamira / Union of Workers in Public Education of Pará State - Altamira
45. Coordenação Nacional de Lutas - CONLUTAS / National Coordination of Popular Struggles
46. Articulação pela Convivência com Amazonia – ARCA / Articulation for Coexistence with the Amazon
47. Rede Nacional de Advogados e Advogadas Populares – RENAP / National Network of Popular Lawyers
48. Rede Eclesial Pan Amazônica- REPAM Brasil / Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network
49. Universidade Federal do Sul e Sudeste do Pará - Instituto de Estudo do Xingu Federal University of the South and Southeast of Pará - Xingu Study Institute
50. Diocese de Xingu – Altamira / Catholic Diocese of the Xingu – Altamira
51. Comitê REPAM Xingu / REPAM Xingu Committee
52. Greenpeace
53. FAOR - Fórum da Amazônia Oriental FAOR – Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Amazon
54. Amazon Watch
55. Conselho Indigenista Missionário Regional Norte 2 (Pará e Amapá) / North Regional Missionary Indigenous Council 2 (Pará and Amapá)
56. CSP Conlutas
57. Instituto Idade Mídia Comunicação para a Cidadania / Age Media Communication Institute for Citizenship
58. Prevenção Para a Amazônia / Prevention for the Amazon
59. Coletivo de Mulheres do Xingu / Collective of Women from the Xingu

Original document in Portuguese:

<https://www.cptnacional.org.br/publicacoes-2/destaque/5902-nota-publica-mais-um-mass-acre-no-campo-nao-pode-ficar-impune>