

Statement on the Assassination of Dilma Ferreira Silva, leader of Brazil's Movement of Dam-Affected Peoples (MAB)

In the face of the brutal crime committed on March 22nd against a coordinator of the Movement of Dam-Affected Peoples in Brazil, the undersigned human rights and environmental organizations call on Brazilian authorities and multilateral organizations to ensure that the country's obligations regarding the protection of human rights and environmental defenders are enforced.

With deep sadness and indignation, we received the news that Dilma Ferreira Silva, a regional coordinator of Brazil's Movement of Dam-Affected Peoples (MAB), together with her husband Claudionor Costa da Silva and Hilton Lopes, a friend of the family, were assassinated on Friday, March 22nd in the Amazonian state of Pará. The bodies of the three victims were found in her residence with signs of torture.

Dilma Ferreira Silva was a prominent activist and recognized leader who, for more than three decades, fought for the rights of the people affected by the Tucuruí mega-hydroelectric dam project on the Tocantins River of the Brazilian Amazon, built during the country's military dictatorship (1964-1985), provoking the displacement of an estimated 32,000 people, along with serious environmental damage. This is not the first case of a brutal murder perpetrated against a human rights defender in the region of the Tucuruí dam. In April 2009, Raimundo Nonato do Carmo, a union leader who fought on behalf of those whose lives were ruined by the Tucuruí dam was shot seven times by two men on a motorcycle as he walked out of a supermarket on the street in which he lived in the town of Tucuruí.

Dilma dedicated her life to promoting national policies that would effectively take into account the rights of dam-affected peoples, with due attention to gender issues that particularly affect the rights of women.

Dilma Ferreira lived in the rural settlement of Salvador Allende, where land titles were issued for family farmers by the federal government in 2012, as a result of a popular mobilization of the Movement of the Landless Workers (MST), with support from MAB. However, the area continued to be coveted by land grabbers (grileiros) that invade and seize control of public and community lands. One such example is Fernando Ferreira Rosa Filho (aka 'Fernandinho') arrested by the civil police force of the state of Pará as the principal suspect in the triple homicide of Dilma Ferreira, Claudionor Costa da Silva and Hilton Lopes.

The assassination of Dilma Ferreira Silva is evidence of the grave situation faced by human rights and environmental defenders in Brazil, a country that tops the global ranking in violence practiced against defenders, with one person murdered every six days in 2017.

The incoming administration of President Jair Bolsonaro has intensified recent attempts to undermine Brazil's progressive legislation on environmental protection and human rights - especially those of indigenous peoples, quilombolas (descendants of African slaves), family farmers and other traditional populations. Such attempts have often clashed with Brazil's progressive Federal Constitution, approved in 1988 during a period of redemocratization that followed military rule. Backsliding on public policies, together with public statements that incite violence in conflictive areas, are seriously increasing the risks faced by human rights and environmental defenders such as Dilma Ferreira Silva.

The undersigned human rights and environmental organizations express our solidarity with the family of Dilma and the Movement of Dam-Affected Peoples (MAB). Without a doubt, her assassination is a huge loss for the defense of the environment and human rights in the Amazon.

We stand with the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights in demanding a complete, independent and impartial investigation of the assassination of Dilma Ferreira Silva, as well as the exemplary punishment of those that carried out and ordered this horrendous crime.

Moreover, we call on Brazilian authorities to ensure that the country's domestic legislation and international obligations regarding the protection of human rights and environmental defenders are fully implemented, including preventative action to avoid further acts of violence.

Signed,

1. 350.org
2. Aborigen-Forum
3. AMAR - Associação de Defesa do Meio Ambiente de Araucária
4. Amazon Watch
5. APREC Ecossistemas Costeiros
6. Arctic Consult
7. Articulação Antinuclear Brasileira
8. Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente - AIDA
9. Associação Mineira de Defesa do Ambiente – Amda
10. Association green alternative Georgia
11. Association of Journalists-Environmentalists of the Russian Union of Journalists
12. BAI Indigenous Women's Network in the Philippines
13. Bank Information Center (BIC) USA
14. Biodiversity Conservation Center
15. Both ENDS
16. Bretton Woods Project

17. Buryat Regional Association for Baikal
18. Business & Human Rights Center
19. Center for International Environmental Law - CIEL
20. CIDSE - International family of Catholic social justice organizations
21. Coalition for Human Rights in Development
22. Coletivo de Mulheres do Xingu
23. Coletivo de Mulheres Negras de Altamira
24. Comisión Ecumenica de Derechos Humanos
25. Comité Ambiental en Defensa de la Vida
26. Conectas Direitos Humanos
27. Conseil Régional des Organisations Non Gouvernementales de Développement en RDC
28. Corporación SOS Ambiental
29. Crescente Fértil
30. Derecho Ambiente y Recursos Naturales - DAR
31. Derechos Humanos y Medio Ambiente - DHUMA
32. Derechos Humanos y Medio Ambiente de Puno - Perú
33. DKA Austria
34. ECOA - Ecologia e Ação
35. Ecological Center DRONT
36. Ecolur Information MGO
37. Environmental Investigation Agency
38. Fastenopfer Switzerland
39. Focsiv - Federation of Italian Christian NGOs
40. Fórum em Defesa de Altamira
41. Foundation Sami Heritage and Development
42. Frente por uma Nova Política Energética para o Brasil
43. Front Line Defenders
44. Fundação Avina
45. Fundação Grupo ESQUEL
46. Future for Everyone
47. Global Witness
48. Green Dubna
49. ONG Guajiru
50. In Difesa Di - per i Diritti Umani e chi li difende
51. Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-determination and Liberation (IPMSDL)
52. Instituto Igarapé
53. Instituto Terramar
54. Institutos Ethos
55. International Indigenous Fund for Development and Solidarity "Batani" dos EUA
56. International Land Coalition Secretariat
57. International Rivers
58. Katribu Kalipunan ng Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas (Katribu national alliance of indigenous peoples in the Philippines)

59. Kazan Federal University
60. Latin America Working Group
61. London Mining Network
62. Lumiere Synergie pour le Developpement
63. MAB - Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens
64. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
65. MISEREOR
66. Movimento Negro
67. Movimento Paulo Jackson - Ética, Justiça, Cidadania
68. Movimento Tapajós Vivo
69. Movimento Xingu Vivo para Sempre
70. O Movimento Nacional das Cidadãs Posithivas (MNCP)
71. Oyu Tolgoi Watch
72. Pax Christi - Comisión Solidaridad Un Mundo Alemania
73. Pax Christi Internacional
74. Pax Christi Toronto
75. Projeto Saúde e Alegria
76. Protection International
77. Public Interest law Center (PILC/CHAD)
78. Red de Comités Ambientales del Tolima
79. Red de Género y Medio Ambiente de México
80. REDE GTA
81. Resource Rights Africa da Uganda
82. Rivers without Boundaries International Coalition
83. Rivers without Boundaries - Mongolia
84. SAPÊ - Sociedade Agrensê de Proteção Ecológica
85. SCIAF - Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund
86. Serpaj Chile
87. Siberian Environmental Organization
88. Socio-ecological Union International
89. Tatarstan Organization of the All-Russian Society for the Conservation of Nature
90. Terra 1530
91. The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace/Caritas
92. The Society for Threatened Peoples International STPI - Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker-International, GfbV-International
93. Toxisphera - Associação de Saúde Ambiental
94. Tutela Legal Maria Julia Hernández
95. Uma Gota no Ocenô
96. Uniafro Brasil
97. Washington Office on Latin America - WOLA
98. WoMin African Alliance
99. World Wide Fund for Nature – WWF/Brasil