

# **BRASIL - Blind justice in Tocantins: Historic dwellers of Gleba Taua can be driven from their land**

CPT Araguaia Tocantins

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Araguaína, November 9th, 2015.

The Pastoral Land Commission ([CPT](#)) is issuing this note to express indignation at the scandalous judgments repeatedly by the judge of Goiatins County (TO), Dr. Bezerra Luatom Adelino de Lima, against the peasant families of Taua Land in Barra do Ouro (TO).

In conformity with its mission of fraternal presence to the rural communities fighting for the respect of their historical rights, the CPT alert to the irreversible impact that these decisions may cause to the workers.

Emblematic is the case of Mrs. Ieda Rocha dos Santos, a resident of Taua for over 45 years Ieda has gone through a first dump on April 3, 2015, by order of this court in favorable decision to grileiro Emilio Binotto, from Santa Catarina state and businessman in the transport sector and soybean planters.

After removing their belongings before the completion of the action, Ieda and his family had resettled in an area within the plot, not containing any title on behalf of any owner; that is, an area the Federal Government without any particular owner.

Taking into account geodetic references performed by an agronomist proved that Ieda was no longer in the same area which had just been dumped. Still, without any request for technical expertise, Judge Luatom issued new eviction order against her - on August 12, 2015 - alledging that Mrs. Ieda had remained in the same area.

Until this day, Mrs. Ieda, her husband and eight children are living in the city, in a makeshift shack. The abundance of cassava, pumpkin, rice, beans and other foods from her family farming no longer exists. She also lost her raising of pigs and chickens at the time of the truck loaded his things.

Most emblematic case is still Dona Raimunda Pereira dos Santos, a traditional resident of Gleba Taua. The 73-year-old housewife Raimunda lives in those lands since 1952. She is the main community leader. Her eviction is scheduled for the 12th of November [\[1\]](#): a repossession sentence was issued by the same judge Luatom Bezerra, in order to withdraw this woman from the land where she lived most of her life.

It is strange this decision of reintegration have as documentary basis, among other questionable documents, a mere declaration of a INCRA-Araguaína server informing the existence of a process of regularization of the areas in dispute and saying it is on federal public lands. This decision provokes revolt : besides being unfair to extrapolate the area owner in possession of Raimunda, as pointed out in the 2nd Battalion of the Military Police of Araguaína report: about 40 other families of squatters are thus enrolled for removal from where they live.

We hear the anguished question of Raimunda owner: "I'm always sure-footed. I never froze, I was never afraid. My companions, my community and Jesus are giving me more strength to win the victory of the earth. I live here with my sons and daughters. They already have family created here too. To what place

we go if they take us out of here? "

## **A systematic destruction of the Cerrado**

The Glebe Taua has been the constant target of deforestation carried out by businessman Emilio Santa Catarina Binotto, which grilou this area to plant soybeans, corn and raise cattle. In May 2015, at least five tractors with correntões were responsible for bringing down the entire Cerrado they met ahead.

At the time, sojeiro intended to deforest an area equivalent to 800 football fields, but this estimate has already been surpassed. The total area cleared since the arrival of Binotto can reach 11 thousand hectares. Accompanied by the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT) of Araguaína (TO), about 20 traditional families (living for over 50 years in this plot) and other 66 families who came to occupy the land in the last decade, are getting stranded and trapped given the brutal force of deforestation and violence imposed by this soy-planter and landgrabber. Mr Binotto, also owns one of the largest business groups in the transport sector in the state of Santa Catarina.

Rivers, streams and springs are disappearing due to silting caused by the ravages of nature. Let us listen again Raimunda Pereira dos Santos: "Before I walked through those lands and knew exactly where grew grotto water, each way into the homes of friends families. Today, with this deforestation, I do not recognize anything, I do not know walking around. "

In many cases, the rampant cutting of trees comes to border on the homes of families, leaving the unsuitable location to develop any kind of family farming. "This practice also serves as a way to pressure families to Send them away, because it is noted that the grileiro deforested but not planted anything. But the worst comes later, when soybeans or corn are planted in the vicinity and are dumped the different types of pesticides, "says the CPT officer, Pedro Ribeiro.

## **A systematic attempt to evict peasants**

So, like so many other cases, the causes of the current conflict in the plot Taua refer to the collection of an area of 17,700 hectares by the former Executive Group of the Araguaia Tocantins Lands (GETAT) in May 1984 in absentia of populations that lived and worked there.

As a result, hundreds of peasants had their traditional way of life changed dramatically. This vast area of the Union, from 1992, is now coveted by speculators from southern Brazil. Considering that this land was "ownerless", they initiated deportation proceedings of traditional inhabitants, the fencing of fields and illegal deforestation. All this violence was registered with the Federal Public Ministry (2007).

As of 2009, there were new attempts to evict the peasants, with the advent of the "Program Terra Legal". A part of the plot was divided into fourteen "nominees" that initiated processes to regularize these lands with the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA). They are at the highest administrative level; 9 of them have already received an unfavorable opinion to the squatters. In this context there were several episodes of shacks burning, poisoning rivers, illegal use of police force in support of farmers, deforestation, gunmen in obvious attempt to evict the families. In parallel, there has been intense and irregular land titling Union by the Tocantins Land Institute (Itertins).

Despite the many public hearings held, with the participation, among others, of: Federal Public Ministry, INCRA, MDA, Naturatins, Ibama, Itertins, Regional Agrarian and National Agrarian Ombudsman, there has been no concrete progress in resolving the impasse.

In the words of the lawyer Silvano Rezende, "state officials simply allow numerous titled areas and hinterland areas of occupation are seized upon by outsiders, a genuine land reconcentration".

According to the National Supply Company (Conab), Tocantins produced 2.335 million tons of soybeans in the 2014/2015 crop. Tauá plot lies in the major soy production area of the state.

For the CPT, it is unacceptable – based on human values and gospel as well – that the cost to pay for this dubious record might be the barbaric expulsion of the people who live there, work and produce life, a priceless value.

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## Footnotes

[1] For video testimonies of the eviction, see [BRASIL - Despejo da Gleba Tauá \(TO\) foi suspenso e agentes da CPT e posseiros foram detidos \(videos\)](#).