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Rio de Janeiro, August 5, 2008.

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Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders

Mr. Philip ALSTON
Special Rapporteur for Extrajudicial, Summary and Arbitrary Executions.

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**Ref.: Eli Dallemole – The murder of a leader of the Landless Workers Social Movement
(Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, MST) in Paraná state in the South of Brazil**

Dear Special Rapporteurs,

The Landless Workers Social Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, MST), Pastoral Land Commission (Comissão Pastoral da Terra, CPT), Land of Rights (Terra de Direitos) and Global Justice (Justiça Global) are writing to give information about the assassination of Eli Dallemole, leader of the Landless Workers Social Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, MST) in Ortigueira in the state of Paraná, Brazil.

I – The murder of Eli Dallemole inside his own home

On March 30, 2008, the 42 year old leader of the Landless Workers Social Movement (MST), Eli Dallemole, was executed in his own home by two masked men at the Rural Worker Liberation Settlement (Assentamento Libertação Camponesa), in Ortigueira in the state of Paraná, Brazil.¹

Around 7:30pm, the militiamen invaded Dallemole's house and executed him in front of his wife and his three children. According to information from the Pastoral Land Commission (Comissão Pastoral da Terra, CPT), Eli had been receiving death threats for more than 2 years, and had even been shot at before in a previous assassination attempt.²

The threats against Eli Dallemole intensified after an attack from an armed militia group at the Terra Livre encampment at the Copramil ranch in Ortigueira on March 8. On this date, approximately 15 men armed with pistols terrorized the 35 families camped at this settlement and burnt all their belongings. Children were threatened and dragged; men and women were beaten. Many were not even able to escape with their own documents.

The landless families have already denounced the actions of this militia in the region for some time. According to information from the MST, this group of men is commanded by a man known as "Zézinho", and is financed by ranchers. "Zezinho" is one of the gunmen accused of murdering Eli Dallemole and is jailed, awaiting the judicial process.

Other episodes of recent violence

The assassination of Eli Dallemole is not isolated. The following episodes are proof of the context of the actions of militias in rural Paraná.

→ In January 2007, during a hearing of the Criminal Court in the Cascavel, in the state of Paraná, carried out with the final goal of clarifying and examining the aggressions committed against the workers of the Landless Workers Social Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, MST), the lawyer from the NGO Land of Rights (Terra de Direitos), Vinicius Gessolo de Oliveira, was verbally attacked and threatened by the President of the Western Rural Society, Alessandro Meneghel. This occurred after Meneghel had threatened, during the same hearing, the leaders of the MST Valmir Mota de Oliveira (Keno) and Celia Aparecida Lourenço and even committed the crime of racism against them. Months after, Keno was murdered by gunmen from the NF security company, that worked for the Western Rural Society of Paraná, of which Meneghel is president.

→ On October 21, 2007, around 1:30pm, at the encampment Via Campesina, located at the transgenic research site of Syngenta Seeds, in Santa Tereza do Oeste, was attacked by an armed militia, that in a completely illegal manner, fired shots at the rural workers. The attack occurred at lunchtime, under a

¹ "Attacks on Rural Workers Proliferate in Paraná", document presented by the Landless Workers Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, MST), by the Pastoral Land Commission (Comissão Pastoral da Terra) and by the Land of Rights (Terra de Direitos) in a public hearing about "Violence Against Rural Workers in Paraná State" carried out in the Chamber of Deputies' Commission in Participative Legislation, on 04/16/2008.

² Idem.

strong rain, making the defense of the workers entirely impossible. During the massacre, a militant was executed with a shot in the chest, Valmir Mota de Oliveira, known as Keno, 42 years old, leader of the Landless Workers Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais sem Terra, MST) and member of the Via Campesina. “Keno” had been threatened for more than 6 months by militias that were in Syngenta’s service. An inquiry had been opened to press charges against Syngenta and NF Security, but no action was taken by Brazilian authorities.³

→ Recently, in the early morning of May 8, 2008, a private militia attacked an encampment of the Landless Liberation Movement (Movimento de Libertação dos Sem Terra – MLST) with more than 150 families, located between the cities of Cascavel and Corbélia. The attack began at 4am, when heavily armed men invaded the encampment Primeiros Passos, with tractors and back-hoes, destroying the crops and structure of the encampment Primeiro Passos, including a school and a church. The militia also arrived in a truck that contained a grade of iron known as quebra-mato, utilized to destroy sheds, and a bulletproof car with small windows where shots could be fired. This vehicle is very similar to the bulletproofed vehicle used by the Military Police known as the “caveirão”.⁴

Even with the arrival of the police, the militia continued the attack. With the arrival of police reinforcement, 10 men were jailed. Among them was Luciano Gomes Resende, one of the security guards of the NF company, that also serves the Western Rural Society (Sociedade Rural do Oeste, SRO). Luciano also is accused in the attack against the MST encampment in the Syngenta Ranch, in October 2007 (mentioned above), where the worker Valmir Mota de Oliveira was murdered, and by the illegal eviction of the MLST encampment in the Gasparetto Ranch in April of last year.⁵ Despite the seriousness of the facts, the Police Inquiry was archived upon the request of the Public Prosecutor of Cascavel.

II – The actions of the rural militias in Paraná: a brief context and recent data on the violence

The associations organized by those in rural areas of Brazil have a historic presence in the state of Paraná, which is located in the Southern region of the country. The Rural Democratic Union (A União Democrática Ruralista, UDR), Western Rural Society (Sociedade Rural do Oeste, SRO), and the Agricultural Federation of the State of Paraná (Federação da Agricultura do Estado do Paraná, FAEP) are known for funding para-military groups under the facade of “security businesses,” to carry out the

³ The Landless Workers Social Movement (MST), Via Campesina, Land of Rights, and Global Justice denounced the murder of Valmir Mota de Oliveira to Hina Jilani, in her period as Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN on Human Rights Defenders through the Official Letter number 181/07 JG/RJ. These entities also sent a denouncement to Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur on Summary, Extrajudicial, and Arbitrary Executions, through the Official Letter number 180/07 JG/RJ, on October 23, 2007.

⁴ The bulletproof vehicle known as the “caveirão” or “big skull” is normally used in the police incursions into poor communities and favelas in Rio de Janeiro. With a capacity of up to 12 strongly armed policemen, the model of this vehicle allows the police agents in its interior to shoot firearms and injure residents of these communities without being identified. Because of the terror that they provoke upon entering the favelas, and because of their ostentatious images of skulls, this military vehicle was given the nickname “caveirão” or “big skull.”

⁵ “Terror in Western Paraná: Private Militia of the Rural Society and NF Attack Landless Workers Again,” Land of Rights (Terra de Direitos), March 8, 2008.

illegal evictions in ranches occupied by landless rural workers, under the false premise that the state government does not fulfill injunctions of reintegration of property rights.⁶

The ranchers' scheme to contract private militias constituted a notorious and widely denounced fact by the international and national press, turning the northwestern region of Paraná state into a lawless area, where impunity in relation to the ranchers rules on one side and, on the other, the criminalization of social movements.

Nothing is more illustrative of this than the declaration made in November 2006 by the president of the Western Rural Society, Alessandro Meneghel, to the *Folha Online*, affirming that the entity would contract militias to combat occupations:

“He said that upon each new reintegration of property rights that the Court determines and the government does not fulfill, the ranchers themselves will force the landless off the properties. **‘We are going to contract security people and we ourselves are going to carry out the reintegration.’**”⁷

Alessandro Meneghel created on April 25, 2007, together with a group of rural ranchers from the Western region of Paraná, the Movement of Rural Producers (Movimento dos Produtores Rurais, MPR), with the objective of funding private militias against the landless workers and promoting actions of illegal evictions in areas occupied by the workers. Its first action, according to Alessandro Meneghel himself, occurred on April 21, 2007, when a group of “security men” contracted by the rural entity that promoted the illegal eviction of the Gasparetto ranch, in Lindoeste, that was occupied by approximately 60 families from the Landless Liberation Movement (Movimento de Libertação dos Sem Terra, MLST), leaving various people wounded.⁸

The private militia was contracted by the MPR with money collected by a fund created by the referred to movement, especially to collect money to pay the gunmen, being that each member of the MPR (there are currently 300 members) have to contribute monthly amounts between 100 Brazilian Reais and 200 Brazilian Reais, depending on the size of the property.⁹ According to Alessandro Meneghel “it is a fund for when there is some invasion and we have to contract security or a lawyer, when it is necessary to defend the right of the property”.

Through Alessandro's declarations it is possible to affirm that the intention of large landowners is not to “contract security businesses to protect property,” but is to fund militias to promote illegal evictions and violence, characterizing grave violations to the rights of rural workers in access to land, food, work, and housing.

Violence Data in Rural Paraná in 2007

⁶ Denouncements Against the Formation and Actions of Private Militias in Paraná State. Public Hearing: Commission of Human Rights and Minorities- CDHM- Curitiba, October 18, 2007. MST, Land of Rights, and Pastoral Land Commission.

⁷ “MST Members and Ranchers Enter in Confrontation in Paraná,” *Folha online*, November 30, 2006. Information available at <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/brasil/ult96u87283.shtml>

⁸ *The State of Paraná, December 1, 2006.*

⁹ Denouncements Against the Formation and Actions of Private Militias in Paraná State. Public Hearing: Commission of Human Rights and Minorities- CDHM- Curitiba, October 18, 2007. MST, Land of Rights, and Pastoral Land Commission.

The facts from the Pastoral Land Commission, published in “Conflicts in Rural Brazil 2007,” show that Paraná continues to be among the Brazilian states with the most rural conflicts. There were 89 rural conflicts registered in 2007, involving 36,683 people.¹⁰ These numbers make Paraná **the 5th highest state in the quantity of rural conflicts**, behind the states of Pará, Maranhão, São Paulo e Tocantins.¹¹

In 2007, there were 73 registered cases of land conflicts (that is the register of occupations, encampments, and violence against the occupation and land titles). This fact places the state in **4th place in the number of land conflicts in the country** (behind PA, SP, MA). The state registers the greatest number of encampments, 10 in total, involving 597 families.

Furthermore, there was an alarming rise in the actions of armed militias that passed as a front for security businesses in Paraná. There were 1,188 families that were threatened, intimidated, and had violence committed against them by armed groups in service of the landowners, a growth of 35% in comparison with the data from 2006 (764 families). This data makes Paraná **the 2nd (only behind Pará) in the number of families that are victims of the paramilitary militia actions**.

The number of assassination attempts also grew in Paraná: there were 5 cases in 2007 and 3 in 2006. The death threats also increased with 18 workers threatened in 2007, while there was only 1 in 2006.

All of this data provides evidence of the actions of the militias in Paraná state, that have a focus on intimidating social movements that fight for agrarian reform and their leadership. Groups of armed men, often formed by ex-policemen and security guards, maintained by ranchers and transnational businesses, have spread fear and violence with impunity in Paraná in recent years.

III – Recommendations

In the face of all these mentioned facts in the present denouncement, we solicit the Special Rapporteurs to make the following recommendations to the competent Brazilian public authorities:¹²

- (a) The investigation and accountability of agents involved in the assassination of Eli Dallemole, along with the others that participated in the murders and illegal evictions mentioned in the present communication;
- (b) A serious, effective, and impartial investigation to examine the formation, training, and hiring of private militias in the state of Paraná and the removal of the participation of rural entities such as the MPR/SRO, UDR, and the Rural Union of Ponta Gross/FAEP;
- (c) An investigation of façade security businesses involved in these cases;
- (d) An investigation of the arms used by the militias;
- (e) An examination of the actions of the NF security company, contracted by Syngenta Seeds and by SRO;

¹⁰ Rural conflicts refer to the rise in the occurrences of conflicts for land, water, slave labor, super-exploitation, and worker disrespect. Os conflitos no campo referem-se à soma das ocorrências dos conflitos por terra, pela água, trabalho escravo, super-exploitation e desrespeito trabalhista.

¹¹ The data cited in this topic is found in the publication the Pastoral Land Commission “Conflicts in Rural Brazil 2007” Goiânia, April 2008.

¹² Report “Denouncements Against the Formation and Actions of Private Militias in Paraná State,” published by the MST, CPT, and Land of Rights.

- (f) An examination into the omissions made by authorities in the investigation of cases and holding those involved accountable;
- (g) The adoption of measures to guarantee the security of landless rural workers and prevent the violations of human rights described in this denouncement.

These are the facts that we have knowledge of for the time being. We thank you in advance for your attention paid to the present communication and we are available for greater clarification. Further information can be provided by Global Justice by phone at +55 21 2544 23 20; fax +55 21 2524 84 35; or through email at tamara@global.org.br.

Sincerely,

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