



A vida por um fio!

CAMPANHA DE AUTOPROTEÇÃO DAS
COMUNIDADES E LIDERANÇAS AMEAÇADAS

PRESS RELEASE

Life by a thread

Ecclesial communities and civil society launch self-protection campaign for communities and their threatened leaders

The ***Self-Protection Campaign for Communities and Their Threatened Leaders: Life by a Thread*** will be launched next **Thursday, June 18**, through a virtual platform. The campaign was conceived under the proposal of strengthening articulations, consolidating ongoing processes; giving wide visibility to the seriousness and intensification of violence against those who defend socioenvironmental rights; reaching communities exposed to situations of risk and threats in the most comprehensive way possible - so that they can organize and protect themselves and their members -; preserving ancestral memory and resistance struggles. This initiative is organized by a series of civil society organizations and the Catholic Church.

Participate in the campaign: Conferência dos Bispos do Brasil (CNBB); Dom José Valdeci Santos Mendes, president of Comissão Episcopal Pastoral para Ação Sociotransformadora da CNBB; Antônio Carlos Bigonha, Deputy General Attorney of the Republic; Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT); Conselho Indigenista Missionário (Cimi); Rede Eclesial Pan-Amazônica (REPAM-Brasil); Centro Popular de Formação da Juventude - Vida e Juventude; Sociedade Maranhense de Direitos Humanos (SMDH); Movimento Nacional dos Direitos Humanos (MNDH); and Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura.

Scheduled to be released in March, the campaign was postponed because of the new coronavirus advance. Travel was suspended and the training seminar for campaign multipliers in the territories was transferred to a virtual platform. Currently, more than 100 community leaders participate, which will multiply in the territories the actions of "Life by a thread". The launch of the campaign takes place exactly 5 years after the publication of the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, by Pope Francis, which deals with the care for the common home, the territory and the people who inhabit it.

CAMPAIGN

The ***Self-Protection Campaign for Communities and Their Threatened Leaders: Life by a Thread*** was created based on a dialogue promoted by REPAM-Brasil, the Special Episcopal Commission for the Amazon and the Commission for Social Pastoral of CNBB with entities that work to protect leaders and communities threatened by their actions and militancy in the defense of Human Rights, nature and their coveted territories. In August 2019, in Belém (PA), during the Meeting of Brazilian bishops in preparation for the Synod, the Campaign was unanimously approved by the bishops who were present at the meeting.

This is the first action after the Synod for the Amazon, which took place in Rome, in October 2019, under the theme "The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology". The reality of the communities and their threatened leaders was one

of the requests that appeared in the multiple consultations held in the region, as expressed in the Synod's Final Document: "It is scandalous that leaders and even communities are criminalized, simply because they claim their own rights" (DF, 69).

According to data from the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), from 1985 to 2019, 1,973 people were murdered in the Brazilian rural areas, with only 122 cases were tried, with an insignificant number of convicts, that is, 35 people responsible for the crimes and 106 executors.

More visible is the presence of women in conflicts in the rural areas, since they are also, almost always, the ones who support the resistance of their families and communities in the threatened territories. An important observation is that violence in the rural areas is selective, directly affecting the leaders of movements and communities, with the clear aim of stopping the fight for rights to land, territory, water and rights. Self-protection by non-violent mechanisms is, however, one of the strategies that works with the independence and autonomy of leaders and organizations, being built with the active participation of the people involved.

The Campaign has national coverage and prioritizes, in its first stage, the situation of the Amazon, conflicts and the violation of rights in the countryside and in the forest. In addition to the entities already mentioned above, the following organizations participated from the first meetings: Observatório Socioambiental Luciano Mendes de Almeida (Olma); Pastoral Carcerária Nacional; oCentro Popular de Formação da Juventude - Vida e Juventude; Comissão Pastoral dos Pescadores (CPP); Instituto Agostin Castejon (IAC); Centro Nacional de Fé e Política Dom Helder Câmara (Cefep); Cáritas Brasileira; Comissão Brasileira Justiça e Paz (CBJP); and Conferência dos Religiosos do Brasil (CRB Nacional).

CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

The Campaign is organized into three axes:

- 1.** Promote and strengthen non-violent mechanisms for the defense and self-protection of communities and their leaders who are threatened and / or criminalized for asserting their right to life and territory, and the rights of Mother Earth;
- 2.** Denounce, at national and international levels, the spread of the culture of hatred, threats and impunity in contexts of socio-environmental conflicts, as well as the recent policies to dismantle the rights acquired by peoples and communities, and setbacks in Human Rights;
- 3.** Defend and promote effective public policies to protect communities and leaders threatened by their struggle to defend Human Rights, their traditional Territories and the rights of Mother Nature.

Activity: Launch of the *Self-Protection Campaign for Communities and Their Threatened Leaders: Life by a Thread* Date: June 18, 2020

Time: 4pm (GMT/UTC - 03:00 hour)

Location: Youtube

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