



The Pastoral Land Commission – National Secretariat
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PRESS RELEASE

35th edition of CPT's annual publication reveals the largest number of conflicts in the field, of occurrences of conflicts over land, of invasions of territories and of murders in conflicts over water ever recorded

Since the beginning of the year 2020, we have followed the tragic global health crisis, with a high degree of cruelty in the case of Brazil, due to the political project in progress here.

General data on conflicts in the field show that the number of occurrences went from 1,903 in 2019 to 2,054 in 2020, an increase of 8%. **This is the largest number of conflicts in the field recorded by the CPT since 1985.** The number of people involved in these conflicts increased from 898,635 in 2019 to 914,144 in 2020, an increase of almost 2%.

The CPT also documented and systematized 1,576 occurrences of land conflicts in 2020, the highest number since 1985, when the report began to be published, 25% higher than 2019 and 57.6% greater than 2018. These conflicts involved 171,625 families. The data are even more frightening when analyzing only the numbers referring to indigenous peoples in Brazil in this type of conflict: 656 occurrences (41.6% of the total), with 96,931 families (56.5% of total).

The highest numbers of land conflicts were recorded in 2020, followed by 2019, that is, in the two years of Jair Bolsonaro's government. In third place is 2016, the year of the coup that removed Dilma Rousseff from the presidency and instituted Michel Temer. This disastrous political situation in recent years has increased violence in the countryside.

It is important to highlight that the CPT systematizes "occurrences", that is, documented violence at a specific historical moment: what is perceived is that many conflicts persist over time, in some cases for years, or even for decades, especially when they involve traditional populations.

In the case of families whose territories were invaded, there was an increase of 102.85% from 2019 to 2020. **81,225 families had their lands and territories invaded in 2020. It is the largest number of this type of violence ever recorded by the CPT.** 58,327 of these families are indigenous, that is, 71.8%.

Conflicts over Water: record murders

In 2020, the number of conflicts over water decreased by about 30% compared to the previous year. This is largely due to two events of great magnitude and with a strong conflictual character that took place in 2019: the oil spill on the Brazilian coast, especially in the Northeast Region, and the disaster caused by the rupture of the B1 dam of the mining company Vale SA, in Brumadinho (MG).

However, four murders were recorded in this type of conflict, and this was the highest number of deaths in water conflicts ever recorded by the CPT, since it started to record this type of conflict, separately from "land conflicts", in 2002. The four murders took place in what became known as the Rio Abacaxis Massacre. In August 2020, Josimar Moraes Lopes, Munduruku indigenous, and 3 riverines were murdered in the region of the Abacaxis River. There were also the murders of two military police officers and possibly a drug dealer. CPT Amazonas agents reported that this is a complex situation, involving peasants and indigenous peoples, on one side, illegal fishermen and police on the other, and a third group formed by drug traffickers. According to the Federal Public Ministry (MPF), since 2007, indigenous people have denounced the occurrence of conflicts in the region, caused by sport fishing tourism, irregular mining, drug trafficking and the use of firearms. In this context, local communities are threatened.

Labor Conflicts: pandemic heightened the vulnerability of male and female workers

In 2020, 96 occurrences of labor conflicts were registered, a number almost 7% higher than in 2019, when 90 were registered. **It is the highest number in the last six years.** In 2020 these conflicts involved 25% more workers in the complaint than in the previous year. There were 1,104, compared to 883 in 2019. Every year, since 2015, the number of poor people rises and, contradictorily, the number of people benefited by the *Bolsa Família* program or other social assistance program falls. This reality worsened with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Thiago Muniz, labor prosecutor, analyzes in a text published in the report, that “from 2016, however, everything got worse. The parliamentary coup is a very clear milestone, a real watershed in the fight against contemporary slave labor: since then, inequality has increased, settlements have decreased, authoritarianism have reborn, socio-labor protection has evaporated and the coping policies have gradually corroded.” We add to all this, the pandemic reality of lack of assistance to workers and poor people, both in the cities and in the countryside, increasing the vulnerability of these people who, due to lack of prospects, end up being enticed to this criminal practice.

Murders, attempts and invasions: violence against indigenous people and their territories

In 2020, among the 18 murders recorded by the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), in the context of rural conflicts, **seven were indigenous, 39% of the victims.** Among the 35 people who suffered attempted murder or homicide, **12 were indigenous, 34% of the victims.** With regard to death threats, among the 159 people threatened, **25 are indigenous, 16% of the victims.**

These data reveal, according to the analysis present in the CPT publication done by the legal coordinator of the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB) and the Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB), Eloy Terena, that indigenous leaders are at the mercy of a violence engendered from a governmental stance that encourages invasions and the exploration of territories. There are at least 246 indigenous lands (TI) still pending approval. In 2020, as Eloy Terena points out, almost 800 km² of forest were cut down in the first three months, an increase of 51% compared to the same period in 2019. One third of the devastation occurred on public lands, the preferred target of land grabbers. It should be noted that, in addition to the structural problems caused by the non-demarcation of indigenous lands and the lack of protection in those already demarcated, indigenous peoples and communities are plagued by the advance of the COVID-19 pandemic in all regions of the country.

CPT records measure the seriousness of the attack against the original territories, especially from 2019. **It is noted that some types of violence, such as “invasion”, have suffered an exponential growth.** In 2020, of the 81,225 families victims of invasions, 58,327 were indigenous, 71.8%. In 2019, this percentage was 66.5% (26,621) and in 2018, 50.1% (14,757). If only considering the increase in the number of impacted indigenous families, between 2018 and 2020, the percentage is 295%. With regard to land grabbing, 2020 is also superlative, with 7,252 indigenous families out of a total of 19,489 (37.2%), in deep contrast to two years ago, when indigenous people totaled 1,381 out of 15,037 families, 9.2%.

COVID-19 advances over the Brazilian countryside

If the management of the pandemic was bad in urban areas, which have minimal infrastructure of services for maintaining health and life, in the countryside the situation worsened even more, with an impact on the dynamics of socio-territorial conflicts. **In 2020, 316 occurrences related to COVID-19 were registered, involving 79,038 families. In addition to the cases of conflicts over land in the year, we have 1,892 occurrences and 250,663 families in conflicts over land and in a situation of COVID in Brazil.** When looking at the data of historical occurrences of conflicts and the data with the inclusion of events related to COVID-19, we observe that the greatest increase in conflicts occurred in the regions, states and municipalities already impacted by conflicts in the field. However, there is an increasing number of occurrences in the states of Amazonas, Roraima, Acre, Pará, Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul. This situation is also expressed in the number of families in conflicts and cases of COVID-19. **The impact proved to be especially destructive in traditional communities, such as indigenous and quilombolas.** According to the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (Apib), by April 15, 2021, 52,406 indigenous people from 163 different peoples had been infected by the new coronavirus, with 1,038 deaths. If in the general context, the deaths caused by COVID-19 were intensified by the Bolsonaro government, among the original peoples it acquired a much broader and more cruel meaning.

The pandemic also exponentiated the situation of abandonment of *quilombola* populations and revealed the complete absence of public policies designed to protect them in the face of the serious health crisis. **According to the National Coordination of Articulation of Black Rural Quilombola Communities (Conaq), on November 24, 2020, there were 4,646 confirmed cases, with 169 deaths.** Pará was the most impacted state, with 79 deaths, that is, 29.3% of the total.

Sanitary barriers

As a measure of resistance and protection, traditional communities and territories have implemented sanitary barriers, in an attempt to prevent the entry of the virus and contamination of families. In view of the lack of a national plan to contain the contamination by Covid-19, or of specific measures to protect the peoples of the countryside, of the waters and of the forests, this action was necessary to guarantee the health and safety in the rural areas. **In 2020, 234 traditional communities and territories created sanitary barriers. Indigenous peoples were the ones who most created the barriers. 184 indigenous territories carried out this protection measure.** The Midwest was the region

that most performed sanitary barriers in 86 areas, covering 18,782 families. It was almost a third of the total barriers. The North region comes next, with 69 barriers that protected 27,760 families.

Women in the countryside: employers' violence in the countryside is white and misogynistic

In the last ten years (2011-2020), the CPT recorded 77 attempts and 37 murders of women in land and socio-environmental conflicts. They were mostly landless rural workers, *quilombolas* and the majority pertaining original ethnicities. These episodes were mainly concentrated in the North of the country, with 24 murders and 40 attempts. Next came the Northeast and Midwest regions, with 5 murders each and, in the case of attempts, there were 26 in the Northeast and 6 in the Midwest. In the Southeast/South, 2/1 murders and 3/2 attempts were recorded, respectively. In addition to the consummate murders and attempts, the CPT also recorded a very wide range of violence against women: assaults, death threats, arrests, rapes, bodily injuries, humiliation, intimidation and arrests.

In ten years, 446 women were threatened with death, with the largest contingent of threatened women among squatters (90), *quilombolas* (60) and landless workers (49). There were 37 rapes in a decade, the main victims being *quilombola* women and original ethnicities. Thirty of these rapes were committed against children and adolescents from the Kalunga *quilombola* community, in the state of Goiás. Those involved in these rapes were farmers, land grabbers, members of the municipal legislature, and businessmen. Ninety-eight women have been arrested in the past ten years in the context of conflicts in the field, in the waters and in the forests. Arrests were determined, above all, for landless women (66 of the total), which suggests the permanence of punitive mechanisms in the treatment of struggles for agrarian reform and territorial rights in Brazil. In the violence practiced against women in contexts of socio-environmental and land conflicts, a factor that deserves attention is the occurrence of rape. Sexual violence against women has historically been a form of employer control. For the law professor at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) and popular legal advisor Tatiana Emilia Dias Gomes, considering that the victims in the last decade were women of the original ethnicities and *quilombola* children and adolescents, the persistence of the myth of racial democracy constitutes an element for the analysis. This is because such myth contributed to the belief that miscegenation resulted from cordial contacts between the three races, hiding the fact that black women and of original ethnicities endured the sexual consequences of this process on their bodies and that there were no egalitarian possibilities of existence for the three races.

The fight against lgbtphobia in the countryside

Brazil is the country that leads in the number of murders related to LGBTphobia in the world. LGBTphobic violence is not very removed from peasant organizations and rural life. On August 19, 2019, Aline da Silva, a trans activist from the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST), was beheaded by two strangers when leaving a party in the municipality of Arcoverde, in Pernambuco. On June 5, 2020, Safira Nunes, a militant woman from the Movement of Small Farmers (MPA), suffered transphobic aggression in the municipality of Cedro, also in Pernambuco. Earlier this year, on January 26, 2021, in the municipality of Pau D'Arco, in the State of Pará, Fernando dos Santos Araújo, a landless gay man, was savagely executed. He was a witness and one of the survivors of the Pau D'Arco massacre, which killed ten landless people on May 24, 2017. In these situations of LGBTphobic violence, the repression and criminalization of e rural workers, the hunger and poverty due to the lack of Agrarian Reform, the invisibility and prejudice within the peasant communities, all converge and reproduce the violence associated with of the *latifundio* (large rural properties).

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