

For the urgent investigation into threats and assassination plans made against the Tupinambá people; for the guaranteed safety of the Tupinambá people; and for the immediate finalization of the ongoing process to demarcate the Tupinambá Indigenous Territory of Olivença (Bahia).

Open letter from researchers working with the Tupinambá people

February 13, 2019

At the end of January 2019, the Tupinambá people discovered and brought to light an intricate plan to eliminate indigenous leaders, designed by individuals and groups who oppose the demarcation of the Tupinambá Indigenous Territory of Olivença, in the south of Bahia. Seeking to assassinate Cacique Babau (Rosivaldo Ferreira da Silva) and some of his family members, including an adolescent girl, the plan would have been carried out with the participation of public power agents who had been participating in meetings organized to plan the attacks.

With a robust collection of evidence, including testimony and security camera images, the Tupinambá reported the plan in face-to-face meetings with officials from the state government of Bahia, the federal government, the Federal Public Ministry, international organizations, and human rights groups. The gravity of the case led to the [publication of a news report in the *Folha de São Paulo*](#) on February 10, 2019.

These events have taken place in a context influenced by, among other factors, recurring anti-indigenous declarations made by the president of the Republic, Jair Bolsonaro, and by the nomination of representatives from sectors who oppose indigenous rights to occupy specific positions that hold the authority to guarantee such rights. This scenario has been fertile ground for the invasion of indigenous lands, the assassination of leaders, and other grave crimes—as reported by the press and verified in the case of the Tupinambá.

The process to demarcate the Tupinambá Indigenous Territory of Olivença has already taken fifteen years. Every legal deadline established by Decree n° 1.775/1996 has been breached. As the [General Assistant Attorney of the Republic, Antônio Carlos Bigonha](#), declared recently in the Tupinambá case, “the delay in signing a declaratory ordinance of a process that has met all legal and constitutional requirements worsens the situation in the region.” Also according to the Bigonha, “the Minister of Justice, Sérgio Moro, could sign [that ordinance] immediately.”

As professors and researchers from different disciplines, with ties to universities in Brazil and abroad, that, over many decades, have developed academic research projects and produced other types of scholarly work alongside the Tupinambá people, we wish once more to take a public stand on this grave state of affairs and demand:

1. Urgent investigation into the threats and assassination plans made against the Tupinambá people, with all parties involved being held appropriately accountable;

2.Immediate adoption of effective protective measures for the Tupinambá people, especially Cacique Babau (Rosivaldo Ferreira da Silva), any other individual determined to be a likely target, and all those who suffer threats;

3.That the Minister of Justice sign immediately the declaratory ordinance to finalize the demarcation of the Tupinambá Indigenous Territory of Olivença.

The body of our scientific work, which is available to the general public, documents in detail the plunder inflicted on indigenous peoples and the violation of their constitutionally guaranteed rights, as well as their resistance through the constant renewal of ways of life, collective identities, and projects established through a particular relationship with their territory. Based on years of research, we affirm that the immediate finalization of the administrative process to demarcate the Tupinambá Indigenous Territory of Olivença is the only way to guarantee the rights of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, and to help to cease conflicts in the region.

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