



HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE STATE OF MARANHÃO – 2023

The state of Maranhão has one of the **highest number of agrarian conflicts in Brazil**. These violations range from **invasion and land grabbing to religious racism and murder**. According to a report by the Pastoral Land Commission (Comissão Pastoral da Terra: CPT, 2023), between 2020 and June 2022, **14 leaders were killed** and more than **30 thousand families remain under threat** in quilombola territories and traditional Maranhão communities.

In 2021, the state **topped the ranking for the number of people killed in conflicts in the countryside in Brazil**. That year, **all of the killings of quilombolas in the countryside took place in Maranhão**. In 2022, Maranhão and Rondônia ranked first for this kind of killing in Brazil, with seven cases per state. The victims were quilombolas, rural workers and indigenous people, with a total of 178 killings over the year.

In 2022, the advance of **agribusiness** was the main cause of **increased violence in Maranhão**. Illegal deforestation, land grabbing, mining and religious racism against members of African-origin religions, among other violations, are aspects of this history of violence. To give readers an idea, **a total of 34 of the 43 deaths** in agrarian conflicts in Brazil, or **70% of cases**, occur in the states of the **Legal Amazon**.

The Report of Violence against Indigenous Peoples in Brazil points out that, between 2009 and 2022, 42 indigenous people were killed in the state of Maranhão, of whom **32 were Guajajaras, 4 Kaapor, 3 Timbiras, 1 Kanela Apanyekrã, 1 Kanela Ramkokamekrã and 1 Gamela**. This is without mentioning the high number of suicides and the constant harassment by agribusiness.

Another important aspect is religious racism, which has constantly affected the lives and celebrations of members of the African-origin worship houses in Maranhão. Data from the Ministry of Women, the Family and Human Rights (Ministério da Mulher, da Família e dos Direitos Humanos: MMFDH), demonstrates that in 2021 alone there were **586 denunciations of religious racism**, equivalent to **an increase of approximately 141%** compared to 2020, when 243 cases were recorded.

Violence against women has increased in both the countryside and the city, and this includes countless conflicts, leaving women in more acute social and economic vulnerability. In the first half of 2023, the Maranhão courts granted **9,322 urgent protective measures** to female victims of domestic and family violence. By June 2023, **20 cases of femicide** had been recorded.

The survey below is the result of a listening exercise undertaken in 2023 by the Ecumenical Mission in Defence of Rights held in Maranhão with grassroots movements from across the state and by consulting the Report on Conflicts in the Countryside, drafted and updated by the CPT, which is a reference document in the struggle for human rights in Brazil and around the world.

Given the severe and incessant violations of the rights of traditional quilombola, indigenous, and African-origin worship communities, among other peoples in Maranhão, CESE and its organizational partners have perceived the need to **denounce and draw the attention** of both **national and international** authorities to this state.

AGRARIAN CONFLICTS, RELIGIOUS, ENVIRONMENTAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

AÇAILÂNDIA

Form of Violation: Religious Racism

Affected group: Members of African-origin religions

Specific violations: Reports that members of African-origin religions have suffered religious prejudice, attacks by people from other religions (neo-Pentecostals) and physical threats.

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism (conflict with a paper and pulp company and a fight over land)

Affected group: Workers living in settlements

Specific violations: Workers from the Sudelândia 50 Bis settlement in rural Açailândia have experienced violence practiced by the police and security officers hired by the Suzano Papel e Celulose company. This occurred on 06 June, when the community tried to negotiate with the Suzano company for the right to collect the crops left on the São Bento ranch, since they had filed a document requesting access to the fields, but hadn't received a response. During this negotiation a conflict broke out and the police and the company's security officers fired shots with rubber bullets and used firearms, wounding 2 people, 1 seriously. The Citizenship Network of Açailândia demonstrated their support for the community and published a repudiation in which they demanded measures from the competent authorities to guarantee the safety and protection of the community, and to investigate the event and punish those responsible.

 **CARUTAPERA**

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism (land grabbing)

Affected group: Traditional communities – family farming

Specific violations: of the communities that make up the Movement of the Union of Communities in Struggle (Movimento da União das Comunidades em Luta: UCL), whose members are residents in the Municipalities of Boa Vista do Gurupi, Junco do Maranhão and Carutapera experiencing conflict situations. The issue affects approximately 350 families who are spread around 40 communities in the region, including Vilela, Murujá, Ouricuri, Pimenta, Glória and Manaus da Beira. The main cause of this violence is land grabs. Since 2018, five people have been killed in the Gurupi region because of these conflicts. The communities have come together and held demonstrations to draw attention to the problem, as a response to the neglect and violence that have occurred in the region, but the threats have continued. This has been going on since 2009, when a businessman took possession of their lands and the families received death threats. The families have been seeking to regularize their lands at the Maranhão Institute for Colonization and Land (Instituto de Colonização e Terras do Maranhão: ITERMA) and the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária: INCRA). Between September and October a public hearing will take place with the communities and public state and federal bodies, in order to progress the registration of the families' lands.

 **CODÓ**

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts

Affected group: Quilombolas

Specific violations: Traditional Peoples, Members of African-origin religions, the environment, neo-Pentecostal attacks, physical threats, violence, Institutional Racism (legislative), criminal judicialization (local master plan), access to justice, soya, eucalyptus

São Benedito dos Colocados – serious threats made to leaders because of the struggle for land regularization.

Mata Virgem/Três Irmãos - lack of land titles

Santa Maria dos Moreiras - lack of land titles and conflict with State Deputy Cesar Pires

Cipoal dos Pretos - Lack of land titles



SÃO JOÃO DO SOTER

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism (agribusiness)

Affected group: Quilombola Communities (Bom Descanso and Jacarezinho)

Specific violations: Residents of the quilombola community of Bom Descanso have suffered constant threats from people connected to agribusiness companies in the region. These companies invade their territory with tractors, chains and armed men.

Bom Descanso is a centuries-old community neighbouring the Jacarezinho quilombo. In 2022, a resident (Edvaldo Pereira Rocha) was killed because of a land conflict, and threats against the community intensified in April this year. During this time, invaders have begun to deforest the territory and fence off the land.

A rural worker informed us that the threats prejudice the fields of dozens of families who live in the territory today, planting manioc, maize, rice and maxixe, as well as collecting babassu coconuts. The situation has been reported to the Secretary of Human Rights and Grassroots Participation (Secretaria dos Direitos Humanos e Participação Popular: SEDIHPOP), the State Commission for the Prevention of Violence in the Countryside and the City (Comissão Estadual de Prevenção à Violência no Campo e na Cidade: COECV) and the Agrarian Justice Prosecutor. The case is being monitored by the CPT and the Agrarian Public Defender. SEDIHPOP monitors it through COECV and the deputy secretary of Traditional Peoples and Communities, and the necessary steps are being taken. On 8 August, the Maranhão Court of Justice granted the right to possession in favour of the Family Farmers Association of the quilombolas from the village of Bom Descanso, against José Roxo, Lourival and Fredson Reis, according to information from Mr. Francisco Chagas, a quilombola leader.

Another community living in an atmosphere of tension is the Jacarezinho quilombola community, due to a land conflict with the Estrela Verde Group which claims it acquired the land through auction and presented environment licensing documents for deforestation granted by the municipality. The area has been certified as a quilombo remnant by the Palmares Cultural Foundation (Fundação Cultural Palmares). Eleven people from the territory have received death threats and have entered the state government's Human Rights Defenders' Protection Programme. There was a fire in the area, which was probably an attack on the community. The community's residents are still suffering from the death of leader Edivaldo Pereira Rocha, killed on 29 April 2022 by gunmen in a land conflict involving the community and agribusiness companies. The crime remains unpunished and violence in the region persists. Approximately 97 families live there, cultivating the land and extracting vegetables such as bacuri and babassu. An application to regularize the land has been made to INCRA.



Form of Violation: Religious Racism/ Institutional Racism

Affected group: Members of African-origin religions

Specific violations: Various threats and violations of the rights of members of African-origin religions in São Luís. On 23 July 2023, the image of the orixa Iemanjá, located on Olho D'Água Beach, was attacked and its face destroyed. This is the third time such an attack has occurred, and religious leaders from African-origin religions and other social organizations have joined forces to demand an immediate response from the public authorities. Various measures have been taken: a crime report was filed at the police station to combat racial and agrarian crimes, and crimes of intolerance in Maranhão. The people, communities and leaders of African-origin religions came together in the square where the Iemanjá statue is located to repudiate the racist attack on the image. Representation has also been made to Attorney General Eduardo Nicolau and ombudswoman Sandra Elouf, requesting that measures be taken to investigate the damage to the Iemanjá statue and the manifestations of racism and religious intolerance on the internet referring to this case. Maranhão's Public Prosecutor's Office has stated that the institution will monitor the investigation of both the vandalism of the statue and the manifestations of racism. As well as these measures, the groups are demanding the creation of a unit at the Public Prosecutor's Office specialized in investigating and combatting racial and hate crimes, and crimes of religious intolerance, as well as improvements to the state apparatus – in relation to both its security and justice systems, aimed at combatting Religious Racism. The government of Maranhão has formed a commission with SEDIHPOP, the Public Security Department of Maranhão (Secretaria de Segurança Pública do Maranhão: SSP-MA), the State Department of the Maranhão Government, the State Department of Maranhão Infrastructure, the State Agency of Urban Mobility and Public Services (Agência Estadual de Mobilidade Urbana e Serviços Públicos: MOB) and the State Department of Racial Equality (Secretaria de Estado de Igualdade Racial: SEIR) to tackle this case of Religious Racism. The State Government has committed to repairing the image and to increasing security in the location, including installing a video-monitoring system.

Other rights violations in São Luís neighbourhoods:

CAJUEIRO - EGITO WORSHIP HOUSE – conflicts with the WPR Gestão de Portos LTDA company, which, supported by the State Government, is going to install a private gate in the area, expelling families from the community.

APEADOURO – the case of Clinger, the leader of the Nossa Senhora Santana Worship House in the Apeadouro neighbourhood, who suffered Religious Racism/Intolerance from neighbours and the State itself (the public security authorities), preventing the house from holding celebrations. After registering this with the court system, the department of public security stopped embargoing worship house activities.

ANJO DA GUARDA – The Mina Dom Miguel Worship House in the Anjo da Guarda neighbourhood, led by Spiritual Leader Lindomar Saraiva Barros, has been the object of ongoing stoning, plundering and destruction of the sacred territory. He has also been assaulted. Crime reports were filed but no solutions have been reached so far.

VILA NOVA – Spiritual Leader João Gualberto da Cruz Sousa, known as Joãozinho da Vila Nova, is the leader of the Mina Mamãe Oxum e Pai Oxalá Worship House in the Vila Nova neighbourhood, in the Itaqui-Bacanga area. His Worship House has been the victim of attacks by evangelicals who organized a provocative flash service in front of it. The house was attacked by State Deputy Mica Damasceno and evangelicals in the media and is facing legal attacks. There have also been attacks on the house of Spiritual Leader Dilma. In the case of Joãozinho, in July 2021, he was the victim of an attack by another neo-Pentecostal group - he was preparing to hold a live streaming event when his house was nearly invaded by neo-Pentecostal practitioners.

SÃ VIANA – Attack on Spiritual Leader Jorge’s Worship House, which was broken up; Jorge was assaulted.

TAJAÇOABA – Invasion of the Worship House of Spiritual Leader Angela.

CRUZEIRO DO ANIL – In 2022, the Fanti Ashanti Worship House was attacked by evangelicals with insults and gestures of “exorcism” directed at the spiritual leaders who were preparing for a celebration dedicated to Ogum.



Form of Violation: Environmental Racism

Affected group: Indigenous People

Specific violations: Through the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (Secretaria de Estado do Meio Ambiente e Recursos Naturais: SEMA), the state has relaxed environmental exploration licences for businesses to explore on Traditional Peoples’ lands, leading to various conflicts between communities and these businesses. To guarantee their territory, the Tremembé People demonstrated for the demarcation of the Kaura Indigenous Land in the municipality of Raposo. The demonstration was aimed at drawing the public’s and the authorities’ attention to common agendas related to the rights of traditional peoples and communities in Maranhão. The demonstration took place in front of the SEMA building.



SÃO JOSÉ DE RIBAMAR

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism

Affected group: Indigenous People

Specific violations: There has been violence in the territory of the Tremembé do Engenho Peoples by those who say they own the land. They drove tractors into the areas and removed vegetation, and armed men threatened the indigenous people. In August 2022, the National Foundation of Indigenous Peoples (Fundação Nacional dos Povos Indígenas: FUNAI) published a decree to set up a Working Group to demarcate the territory of the Tremembé do Engenho Peoples. The decree, published on 18 August, took into account the decision of Federal Judge Lino Osvaldo Serra Sousa Segundo, from the 6th Federal Civil Court of the Judicial Section of Maranhão (Seção Judiciária do Maranhão: SJMA), granted on 17 September 2021, which guarantees the identification, delimitation and demarcation of the territory claimed by the Tremembé do Engenho indigenous community. In March 2023, FUNAI began work to identify and delimit the indigenous land, which should deter all types of invasion.

Form of Violation: Religious Racism and sexual violence

Affected group: Members of African-origin religions

Specific violations: Paula, a Spiritual Leader, was a victim of Religious Racism and sexual harassment



FERNANDO FALCÃO

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism

Affected group: Indigenous People

Specific violations: Mēmōrtumre/Canela Indigenous Land and Apànjêhkra Indigenous Land, in the municipality of Fernando Falcão, conflicts affecting both territories.

MEMŌRTUMRE/CANELA Indigenous Land – non-indigenous hunters enter the land, creating a very tense situation every year, particularly in the dry season. They take away the young animals, kill animals, set fires in the forest and threaten to kill any indigenous people who try to prevent them. In June this year, a murder was almost committed in the Escalvado and Bacabal do Marcial villages, they took the leader José Lino Canela and were going to kill him, he was only saved because a non-indigenous person appeared and defended him. Also the purchase of land within the Memōrtumre Territory is under review, the non-indigenous put up fences and signs saying that it has been owned for a long time, which isn't true.

Ramkokamekra/Canela Indigenous Land, 125 thousand hectares have been approved and 100 thousand more are under review, totalling 225 thousand hectares. In the new case, the new name of the Indigenous Land is Memōrtumre/Canela of the Escalvado village in the municipality of Fernando Falcão. Within this Indigenous Land there are two recognized villages, the Escalvado village and the old village.

Apànjêhkra/Canela Indigenous Land, the expansion process has been cancelled by the Supreme Court and the legal case is now with the courts. There are two recognized villages there, Porquinhos and Bacuri, which experience conflicts about increased soya crops on large ranches. The territory is under review.

All these indigenous lands are affected by MATOPIBA development, given that all the municipalities in Maranhão's Cerrado are in MATOPIBA.

OTHER INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Alto Turiaçu Indigenous Land – Peoples - Awa Guajá, Ka'apor and Tembê – Deforestation, invasions by miners, ranchers, the planting of marijuana crops, livestock farming, invasions by loggers

Alto Turiaçu Indigenous Land - Zé Doca, Araguanã, Centro Novo - the planting of marijuana crops, livestock farming, invasions by loggers

Araribóia Indigenous Land – Deforestation, threats, killings.

Araribóia Indigenous Land– Amarante - 24/02/23 - 1 indigenous person shot, 05/09/22 - 2 indigenous people killed, illegal logging invasion, charcoal burning, inspection in June

Araribóia Indigenous Land – Jenipapo Village - Bom Jesus das Selvas.

Awa Indigenous Land - São João do Caru – invasions by loggers

Caru Indigenous Land - Bom Jardim – commercial ventures

Pindaré Indigenous Land – Deforestation

Taquaritiua Indigenous Land - Akroa Gamella People – Removal of the right to land and the denial of fundamental cultural rights

Governador Indigenous Land – Invasions by loggers

Ka'apor – Territorial Protection/Criminalization and killings

[Link to the report on Violence against the Indigenous People of Brazil – data from 2022 \(https://cimi.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/relatorio-violencia-povos-indigenas-2022-cimi.pdf\) \(in Portuguese\)](https://cimi.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/relatorio-violencia-povos-indigenas-2022-cimi.pdf)



Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflict (land grabbing)

Affected group: Family farmers and traditional communities

Specific violations: An agribusiness company has threatened the residents of the PA Veredão Settlement. About 55 families live there; the communities have been in the territory for more than 50 years. The conflict began after the company arrived; since 2022 it has claimed it owns the land. The company destroyed the workers crops with tractors. An application was made to INCRA's Agrarian Conflicts sector, but with no success. The community tried to prevent their crops being destroyed but the company threatened them with expulsion as a consequence. In addition, other communities have suffered threats from land grabbers, as is the case in the Buriti dos Bois, Guarimã and Sangue communities. These land grabbers, called "gaúchos", invade protected land to deforest the vegetation and expel the families; a total of 200 families have been affected by these attacks. Pequi, murici, and bacuri plants and fields of manioc, grown for subsistence, have been destroyed by tractors. The Federation of Agricultural Workers in the State of Maranhão (Federação dos Trabalhadores e Trabalhadoras na Agricultura do Estado do Maranhão: FETAEMA) has filed a crime report, monitored the situation and offered legal support to the victims from the communities. The invaders have been identified and legal measures have been taken to denounce the crimes.



URBANO SANTOS

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism (pulp and paper company)

Affected group: Family Farmers and Extractivists

Specific violations: More than 80 families live from extractivism and family farming in the Jussaral community, which has been in this land for more than 100 years. For more than 30 years, they have been threatened by the Suzano Papel e Celulose company. This conflict began when the company claimed that it owned the land in which the Jussaral community is located. Recently, another company, from Rio Grande do Sul, arrived in the region asserting that it was in possession of the territory. A community leader tried to file a report at the Urbano Santos police station but was informed that this case is not a matter of conflict and that the Urbano Santos police station does not file reports of this nature. One of the main impacts of the pulp and paper company is the planting of eucalyptus trees, which causes the streams to dry up, so that the community is losing its water supply. Moreover, the water is contaminated, due to the use of pesticides on the plantations. This lack of water is becoming more and more serious. The community is demanding legal action from INCRA, ITERMA and other municipal, state and federal bodies.



CAXIAS

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism (ranchers)

Affected group: Family Farmers

Specific violations: The Barra da Tereza community, the former Sabiá Ranch in the rural part of Caxias, has recently received threats (July 2023) because of a conflict that has been going on for ten years. In June, four military police officers from Maranhão were arrested for making death threats and intimidating the residents in the region. Despite these arrests, the atmosphere in the community remains tense. The residents live in an area of approximately 40 hectares in the 2nd district of Caxias on the banks of the Parnaíba River, where about 100 rural workers live off the land. They have been in possession of the land for more than 50 years, but the ranchers continue to claim that they are the land owners. The community has denounced the ranchers' actions at the Maranhão Public Defender's and Public Prosecutor's Offices. However, the issue involving possession of the land has not yet been resolved. The community has called on INCRA, the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office and other authorities to take the necessary measures to promote peace in the Barra da Tereza region.



ANAJUTUBA

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism

Affected group: Quilombolas

Specific violations: the defence of the human rights of 27 quilombos in Anajatuba. We fight for basic human rights, free territory, high quality quilombola education, the health of the black population, leisure, income generation, drinking water, high quality access – there is a territory with 13 isolated communities. We have received death threats and today, as a leader, I am afraid, because the land grabbers have not been punished. A female quilombola leader has been in hiding outside the state for two years, leaving her family behind without any support or protection. The trial for attempted murder never went ahead.



ALTO ALEGRE

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism (ranchers)

Affected group: Quilombolas (Marmorana/Boa Hora III)

Specific violations: The community in the Marmorana/Boa Hora III quilombola territory in the municipality of Alto Alegre, home to more than thirty families, has made serious denunciations against the owner of the Exata Magazine shop. Among several problems, they are being prevented from working and are unable to access the land where they plant their crops. The territory has been certified by the Palmares Cultural Foundation and was invaded a year ago, since then it has suffered violent attacks. Houses have been burnt, crops destroyed, reserves deforested, a well blocked up and dams fenced in. The quilombolas say that armed men and drones have been used to intimidate them.

In the case of the burnt houses, one of the residents was six months' pregnant. They have also reported cases of threats where firearms were pointed at residents' heads. The case is at the federal courts and a number of social organizations have addressed the subject, which has received attention outside Maranhão. According to information provided, the rancher is preventing the quilombolas from cultivating their lands, which makes it impossible for the communities to survive, since they support themselves from farming.

Violence against the quilombolas in the Marmorana/Boa Hora III community is the subject of international interest. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights requested a Hearing with the Ministry of External Affairs and invited FETAEMA. The meeting took place at the end of April 2023. FETAEMA asked the federal government to effect an urgent expropriation, to ensure the quilombola community's safety and the mental health of the families.

Since 2007, the territory has been recognized and certified as a quilombo remnant by the Palmares Cultural Foundation. Its land titling process, under case number: 54230.004084/2006-70, has been at INCRA since 2006, under Article 68 of the Temporary Constitutional Provisions Act (Ato das Disposições Constitucionais Transitórias: ADCT) and Decree no. 4887/2003.



BARREIRINHAS

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism

Affected group: Traditional communities

Specific violations: Communities in the Lençóis National Park affected by wind energy enterprises, without prior, free and informed consent.



BAIXADA MARANHENSE

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism (agribusiness and electricity companies)

Affected group: Quilombolas

Specific violations: The community of São Francisco dos Campos faces conflicts with the AGROMAX company, which has occupied the region to plant irrigated rice. The community receives support from the Quilombola Movement of Maranhão (Movimento Quilombola do Maranhão: MOQUIBOM), which is monitoring the situation in the region. The company has been using pesticides, which have contaminated the São Francisco lake (a perennial lake) and the Turi River, which supplies the entire region, including several quilombola communities. Some of the affected municipalities are: Santa Helena, Turilândia, Serrano do Maranhão, Turiçu, Governador Nunes Freire, Santa Luzia do Paruá and Pinheiro. The affected villages are Pau Pombo, Janaubeira and Brasília (Serrano do Maranhão), as well as the São Francisco dos Campos community.

Various communities depend on the São Francisco lake and the Turi River to survive and support themselves. Many species of fish and wild animals are disappearing. The affected communities drafted a letter and delivered it to SEMA; they are waiting for a response. Other communities have also been affected by the EDP Energias do Brasil (ENBR3) company, which invaded the lowland fields during the fish migratory season, while it constructed the Miranda 2 São Luís 2 – c3 transmission line, causing serious damage to the fishing and food security of the Monge Belo, Sítio do Meio Quilombola Territory and around the area of the Beira de Campo do Papagaio village.

On 20 June 2023, a group of 437 quilombola and fishing families from Beira de Campo, represented by their lawyers and supported by representative bodies from the Union of Rural Quilombola Communities of Itapecuru-Mirim (União das Comunidades Rurais Quilombolas de Itapecuru-Mirim: UNICQUITA) and the National Coordination for the Coalition of Black Rural Quilombola Communities (Coordenação Nacional de Articulação de Quilombos: CONAQ), presented a report against EDP Energias do Brasil, stating that the company operates in total discord with the environment and the traditional survival practices of the affected communities.



PARNARAMA

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism (agribusiness)

Affected group: Quilombolas

Specific violations: The community of Cocalinho has been contaminated by the pesticide spraying of soya crops a few meters from their homes. The problem was reported at a hearing held on 1 June, in the Chamber of Deputies in Brasília (Federal District). For 17 years, the community of Cocalinho has been affected by the aerial spraying of pesticides; this began with the Suzano company and continued with the arrival of the soya producers. The community is affected by health problems such as vomiting, blisters all over the body, respiratory problems, skin cancer, dizziness and dark urine. All of this is attributed to pesticides. Further, the dams have dried by, the babassu palms are being chopped down and the cemetery was violated by a tractor driving through it. Moreover, in order to leave their houses, the quilombolas have to walk through the soya fields and are often affected by poisons from planes.

Form of Violation: Religious Racism and homophobia

Affected group: Members of African-origin religions

Specific violations: The home of Spiritual Leader Micael in Parnarama was attacked with a homemade bomb and his worship house was the target of homophobic graffiti.



ALCÂNTARA

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts, Environmental Racism, Institutional Racism

Affected group: Quilombolas

Specific violations: On 29 March 2023, the Vista Alegre quilombola land was repossessed, involving a violent attack by Military Police connected to the Alcântara Base, which left adults, old people and children wounded. According to reports, several buildings were demolished. The Military Police used rubber bullets, gas bombs and even threw a bomb into one of the resident's houses. The quilombolas have lived in the territory for more than three centuries, and for decades have been threatened and attacked by the Alcântara Launch Centre (Centro de Lançamento de Alcântara: CLA), a billion-dollar project that involved the compulsory removal of more than 300 families during the 1980s. The area was recognized as a quilombo by the Palmares Cultural Foundation in 2004 and by INCRA in 2008, however the territory's land titling process has been stalled for 15 years.

With the installation of rocket launches, there were countless cases of rights violations against the Alcântara quilombola communities. In April this year, Brazil was judged by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to have violated the communities' rights in the crimes that occurred during the construction of the Rocket Launch Centre in the 1980s. At the trial, Brazil admitted that it had violated the rights of the communities and apologized, but the situation remains extremely uncertain and has not brought about real change.



MATÕES

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts

Affected group: Quilombolas

Specific violations: In the Tanque de Rodagem/São João quilombola community a businessman from Piauí invaded the home of a 68-year-old woman threatening her and saying that she had to leave the place for good or ill. Since the second half of last year, violence against the community has only increased. Armed men make threats, tractors have been driven in to ravage and destroy the fields. They also blocked the work of the University for the International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony (Universidade da Integração Internacional da Lusofonia Afro-Brasileira: UNILAB) and the Federal Universities of Maranhão and Piauí, during their anthropological study of the area, which is essential to INCRA land titling. There is a land titling case at INCRA, but this has dragged on without any solutions.



PENALVA

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts

Affected group: Babassu Coconut Breakers

Specific violations: A babassu coconut breaker and her son died in the Boa Esperança community after a palm tree fell on them as they were gathering coconuts. The accident happened because of heavy machinery which was illegally felling palm trees in the area. The case continues without due investigation or punishment. The investigations undertaken by the civil police from Penalva and Viana only occurred because of pressure from the MIQCB and other social organizations. At the beginning of 2022, the inquiry concluded. It stated that the deaths were due to the felling of the babassu coconut palms. However, only two people have been charged - the tractor driver who was pulling down the coconut trees and the owner of the tractor. The rancher who ordered the felling of the palm trees was not charged. Trees are pulled down every day and a number threats have been made to the coconut breakers. The ranchers fence off areas and the coconut breakers are prevented from gathering coconuts. The Free Babassu Law has never been approved in Maranhão, since it is always rejected by the Legislative Assembly, claiming that the coconut breakers' way of life violates the traditional right to absolute property. The Free Babassu Law would impose restrictions on the felling of palm trees, guaranteeing the coconut breakers and their families the right to free access and community use of the babassu palms, even on private property.



SÃO BERNARDO

Municipality: SÃO BERNARDO

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflict (Rancher)

Affected group: Babassu Coconut Breakers

Specific violations: the community of São Miguel has experienced violence from a rancher who has pulled down the palm trees that are the families' main source of sustenance. The rancher pulled down approximately 100 babassu palms, prejudicing the community. As well as a crime against the families, this is also an environmental crime, since the palms are protected by Law no. 4734 of 18 June 1986, which prohibits cutting them down. The residents were surprised by the rancher's criminal act; he says he is the owner of the land, without ever having proved this supposed possession. Since January 2022, he's been deforesting the region without an environmental licence. A hearing was held between the community and the rancher in an attempt to reach an agreement but ended with no resolution. The rancher has acted violently and threatened the community. The Municipal Secretary of the Environment has visited the community, but no other public bodies have pronounced on this case.



ITAPECURU MIRIM

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism

Affected group: Quilombolas

Specific violations: The Santa Rosa dos Pretos community is a quilombola territory composed of 20 quilombos with more than 800 families; it has fought to defend its territory for many years. In recent decades, it has experienced the impact of large enterprises: railways; energy lines; the BR 135 highway; and ranchers invading from outside. Because of this, the headwaters of the streams have dried up and the old Grande Simauma stream has been contaminated by concrete from the Carajás Railway; a large area of fields has been damaged by energy lines, which has directly impacted on the food security within the quilombola territory, because they still practice Roça de Toco subsistence farming in the quilombos - an ancient, robust and permanent community economy.

Quilombola Territory of Monge Belo, Sítio do Meio – an environmental disaster threatens the traditional communities and ecosystems of Maranhão, evidencing the need to protect the quilombola and river-dweller areas of Beira de Campo in the Amazon against the polluting practices of the EDP Energias do Brasil S/A (ENBR3).

São Benedito Territory Quilombola

Buragi Territory - seven communities affected by fierce land conflicts – Mangal do Ipiranga - threatened by ranchers.

Mucambo Territory containing 5 communities – conflict with the Padre Josimo settlement - invasion of the Quilombola Territory

Monte Alegre Territory – invasion with 5 wells and a large waterhole left in the settlement, the quilombolas do not have access to water – they have been using the territory for more than 100 years.



TUTÓIA

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism

Affected group: Rural Communities

Specific violations: The Arpoador community is affected by a wind energy company while the São Francisco Community has problems with agribusiness.



PAÇO DO LUMIAR

Form of Violation: Religious Racism and damage to property

Affected group: Members of African-origin religions

Specific violations: Spiritual Leader Carlos, from the Kamafeu das Águas Worship House was the victim Religious Racism perpetrated by a neighbour who tried to invade his territory, threatening his physical and religious integrity.



GODOFREDO VIANA

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism

Affected group: Rural Communities

Specific violations: The Aurizona community - affected by the collapse of the Equinox gold mining dam.



BREJO

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism

Affected group: Quilombolas/ Rural Community

Specific violations: The Repartição community is blighted by open sewage running through the community, dumped by the Municipal Authorities.

In addition to this community, the Alto Bonito quilombo does not have land titles.



BALSAS

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism

Affected group: Quilombolas

Specific violations: The traditional communities of Travessia do Mirador (79 communities over 9 municipalities) have been in conflict for more than 40 years, in a struggle and resistance to remain on their land, and diverse communities in the south of the state, in the municipalities of Balsas, Riachão, São Raimundo das Mangabeiras, Benedito Leite and Pastos Bons. Threats of expulsion from their land, the interruption of their crops, being denied the right to land.



MATINHA

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts

Affected group: Quilombola

Specific violations: The symbolic case of the Sesmaria Quilombola Territory. Compliance with the expropriation decree for social interest no. 37.557/2022



PALMEIRANDIA

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts

Affected group: Quilombola

Specific violations: Cruzeiro - lack of land titles



PEDRO DO ROSÁRIO

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts

Affected group: Quilombola

Specific violations: Imbiral - lack of land titles and deforestation; Palmeirinha - lack of land titles.



PERIMIRIM

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts
Affected group: Quilombola
Specific violations: Pericumã - lack of land titles



PINHEIRO

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts
Affected group: Quilombola
Specific violations: Sudário - lack of land titles



PIRAPEMAS

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts
Affected group: Quilombola
Specific violations: Aldeia Velha - lack of land titles and deforestation



PRESIDENTE VARGAS

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts
Affected group: Quilombola
Specific violations: Sapucaial - lack of land titles; Lagoa Grande - lack of land titles



SANTA HELENA

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts
Affected group: Quilombola
Specific violations: Janaubeira/Benfica - lack of land titles; Pau Pombo - lack of land titles; Santa Luzia - lack of land titles; Vivo - lack of land titles; Armíndio - lack of land titles



SANTA INÊS

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts
Affected group: Quilombola
Specific violations: Onça - lack of land titles and deforestation



SÃO LUÍS GONZAGA

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts
Affected group: Quilombola
Specific violations: Promissão Velha - lack of land titles and deforestation



SÃO VICENTE DE FÉRRER

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts

Affected group: Quilombola

Specific violations: Charco - lack of land titles and deforestation



SERRANO DO MARANHÃO

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts

Affected group: Quilombola

Specific violations: Mariano dos Campos - lack of land titles and sand extraction; Açude - lack of land titles and deforestation; Vera Cruz - lack of land titles; Rosário - lack of land titles; Brasília - lack of land titles



TURIAÇU

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts

Affected group: Quilombola

Specific violations: São José dos Britos - lack of land titles



TURILÂNDIA

Form of Violation: Agrarian Conflicts

Affected group: Quilombola

Specific violations: Pindobal de Fama - lack of land titles and deforestation



VIANA

Form of Violation: Environmental Racism

Affected group: Babassu Coconut Breakers

Specific violations: In the Boa Esperança community, the women are prevented from picking coconuts.

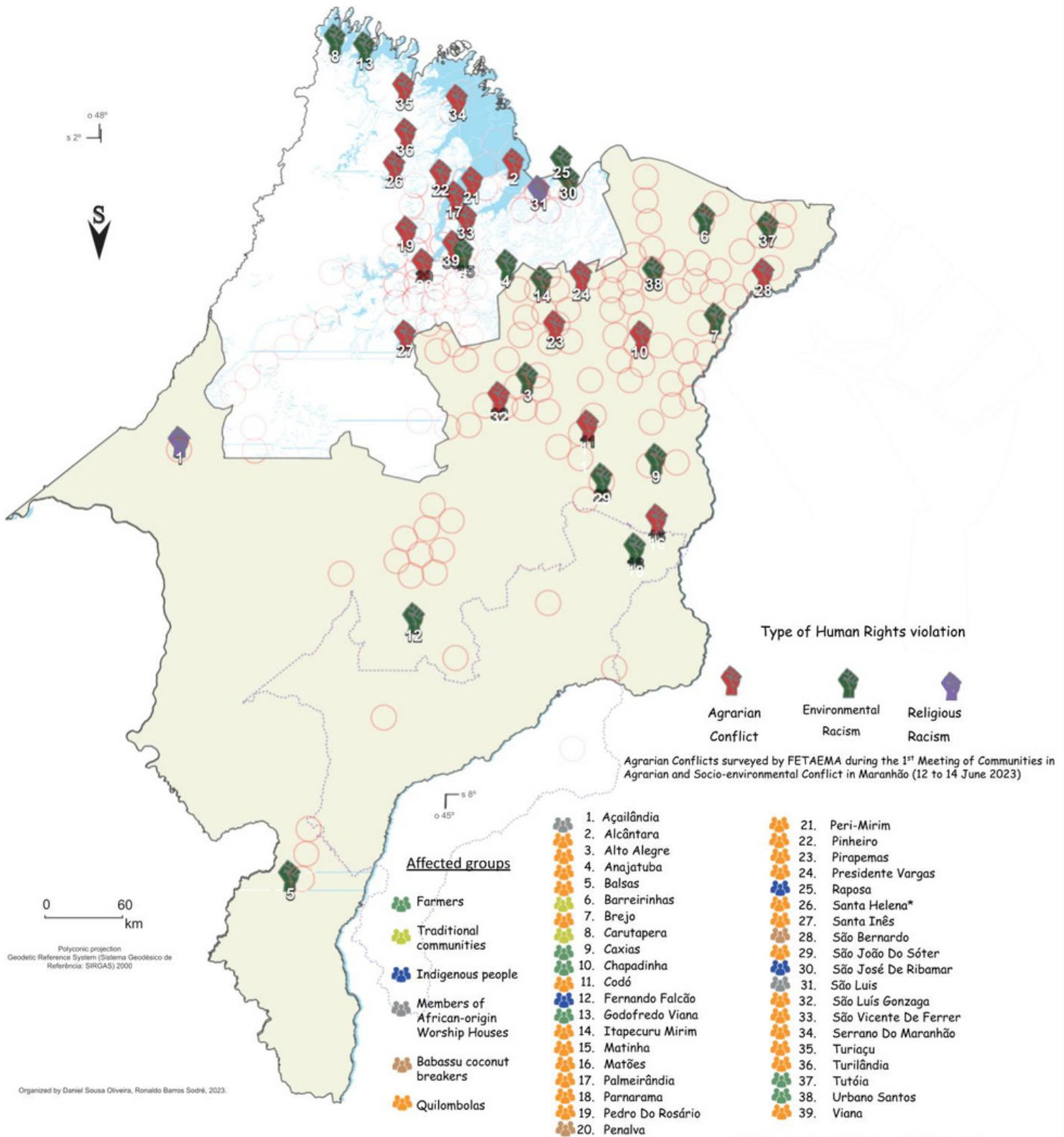
REFERENCES

MISSION REPORT: COLLECTIVE ACTION IN DEFENCE OF THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLES OF MARANHÃO AND THEIR TERRITORIES. 20 TO 25 JUNE 2022.

REPORT ON CONFLICTS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, BRAZIL 2022/DOM TOMÁS BALDUÍNO DOCUMENT CENTRE. GOIÂNIA CPT NACIONAL, 2023. 254p.

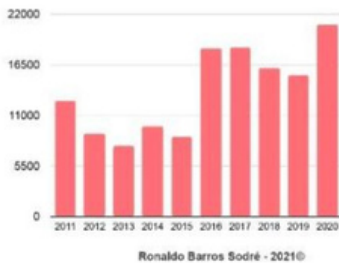
AGENCIA TAMBOR WEBSITE – [HTTPS://AGENCIATAMBOR.NET.BR/](https://agenciatambor.net.br/)

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE STATE OF MARANHÃO (2023)

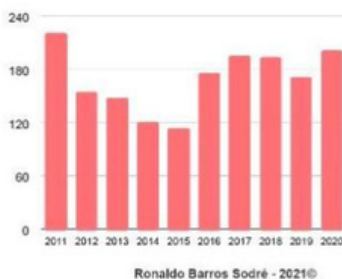


** In the municipality of Santa Helena, as well as Environmental Racism, a second case of agrarian conflict has been recorded.

Families in conflict about land in Maranhão (2015-2020)



Conflicts about land in Maranhão (2015-2020)



The region known as MATOPIBA includes parts of the states of Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí and Bahia, and was established in 2015 by ex-President Dilma Rousseff, through Decree no. 8447 of that year. These areas are the focus of public and private investment to expand agribusiness and other enterprises that directly impact on the lives of traditional peoples and communities.