

Solidarity letter for social movements, organizations, and rights advocates who are victims of criminalization attempts by the company Belo Sun Mineração Ltda.

February 16, 2024

On October 17, 2023, the mining company Belo Sun Ltda., the Brazilian subsidiary of the Canadian company Belo Sun Mining Corp., filed a criminal lawsuit against more than 30 people, most of them small-scale farmers. These individuals are questioning the acquisition of land by the mining company within the Ressaca Settlement Project, in the municipality of Senador José Porfírio - Pará, and demanding that this land fulfill its agrarian and social function. These concerns are the basis of a lawsuit in federal court by the federal and local Public Defender's Offices.

The criminal complaint is a clear attempt to silence environmental and human rights defenders. This silencing is intensified by the presence of the company's armed security in the territory. It is also an attempt to criminalize organizations that monitor and denounce the destruction caused by large projects in the Volta Grande do Xingu. On November 15, a group of 25 local movements and organizations, mainly based in Altamira, Pará, issued [an open letter](#) condemning the criminalization of farmers, social movements, and civil society organizations promoted by the Canadian mining company Belo Sun. It is essential that the terms of this letter be strengthened and echoed nationally and internationally.

This is not the first time that Belo Sun Mineração Ltda. has intimidated civil society organizations and human rights defenders. In 2022, the company filed a lawsuit against a university professor who had exposed the risks that the Volta Grande Project would pose to the Xingu River and its people. In mid-2023, Belo Sun sent an extrajudicial notice to the National Coordination of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (Apib), attempting to silence the organization's complaints about the risks posed by the mining project in the Volta Grande do Xingu. This notice came shortly after the release of a [report](#) on Belo Sun by the legal team of the Apib and an [international advocacy action at the UN](#) in Geneva carried out by the Alliance for the Volta Grande do Xingu, a coalition of which Apib is a part. The action aimed to expose corporate abuses by Canadian companies in the Brazilian Amazon and in eight other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Regarding Belo Sun's activities in the Volta Grande do Xingu:

Belo Sun aims to establish a massive open pit gold mining project overlapping the PA Ressaca region, on the banks of the Xingu River, with the goal of operating the largest gold mine in Brazil. The so-called Volta Grande Project (PVG), if approved, would substantially and potentially irreversibly impact a territory already severely affected by the Belo Monte mega-dam, as well as affecting the lands and traditional ways of life of various indigenous peoples, rural settlements, and riverside communities in this region.

Several lawsuits have been filed documenting the irregularities committed by Belo Sun, including the absence of free, prior, and informed consultation and consent from the affected indigenous and

traditional communities; the illegal acquisition of plots within the PA Ressaca; the harassment and violation of the right to free movement and access to the territory of local communities; and the lack of competence of the State of Pará to issue the environmental license for the PVG. Its licensing has been suspended since 2017 by the decision of the Federal Regional Court of the 1st Region, and on September 11, 2023, it was transferred to the jurisdiction of Ibama, a federal agency.

Demands:

We, citizens, civil society organizations, and representatives of social movements who support this statement, condemn the criminalization promoted by Belo Sun Mineração Ltda. We express our solidarity with the victims of this process and emphasize our understanding that:

1. We join voices in denouncing that intimidation and criminalization of human rights defenders, activists, researchers, and leaders of social movements by Belo Sun are unacceptable.
2. The Land Reform Project (Projeto de Assentamento) Ressaca is an area designated for agrarian reform and local family farming located in a region already highly vulnerable from a socio-environmental perspective, making it incompatible with the installation of a large-scale open-pit gold mining project like Belo Sun's Volta Grande Project.
3. The public authorities must take necessary measures to empower the families, communities, and peoples of the Volta Grande do Xingu, ensuring their effective participation in governance and the protection of the territory.

LIST OF SIGNATORIES

BRAZIL:

1. Movimento Xingu Vivo Pará Sempre
2. Pró-Índio de São Paulo
3. Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil – APIB
4. Justiça Global
5. Fundação Montescola
6. Fórum da Amazônia Oriental (FAOR)
7. Sociedade dos Pequenos Agricultores de Ponte dos Carvalhos Cabo de Santo Agostinho-PE
8. Observatório de Protocolos Comunitários de Consulta e Consentimento Prévio, Livre e Informado
9. Instituto Políticas Alternativas para o Cone Sul - PACS
10. CIDHA/UFPA
11. Grupo de Estudos em Educação e Meio Ambiente do Rio de Janeiro (GEEMA)
12. Rede de ONGs da Mata Atlântica - RMA
13. Rede de Mulheres Ambientalistas da América Latina - Elo Brasil
14. Rede Mato-grossense de Educação Ambiental (REMTEA)
15. Alternativa Terrazul
16. Comitê de Energia Renovável do Semiárido-CERSA
17. Associação Profissional dos Sociólogos do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (APSERJ)

18. Associação de Agricultura Ecológica-AGE
19. Comunema Comissão
20. Observatório da Questão Agrária do Paraná
21. Instituto Iar da dona Cláudia
22. Observatório de Justiça Socioambiental Luciano Mendes de Almeida (OLMA)
23. Centro Palmares de Estudos e Assessoria por Direitos
24. Instituto Centro de Vida (ICV)
25. Associação de Moradores e Amigos e Porto das Flores MG
26. Rede Brasileira pela Integração dos Povos (REBRIP)
27. Grupo de estudos e pesquisas em educação e território
28. Fórum dos Atingidos pela Indústria do Petróleo e Petroquímica nas cercanias da Baía de Guanabara
29. Movimento de mulheres
30. Prelazia de Lábrea
31. Instituto Equit - Gênero, Economia e Cidadania Global
32. Observare Observatório de Educação Ambiental
33. Centro Palmares de Estudos e Assessoria por Direitos
34. CPT/Anapu
35. Instituto Transformance: Cultura & Educação
36. Fórum Bem Viver
37. Coletiva de Mulheres do Xingu
38. Movimento de Mulheres Trabalhadoras de Altamira Campo e Cidade.
39. Associação Quilombola do Baixo Caeté (Aquibac)
40. Associação Defesa Direitos Humanos e Meio Ambiente na Amazônia
41. Agenda 21 - Ilha de Paquetá
42. Iniciativa das Religiões Unidas (URI)
43. Movimento Tapajós Vivo
44. Quartzo Comunicação
45. Sociedade Civil Mamirauá (SCM)
46. Programa de Pós-graduação em Geografia (PPGG) da Universidade do Estado do Pará (UEPA)
47. Instituto Guaicuy
48. Sodemap Instituto
49. Sociedade, População e Natureza
50. Iedhma - Instituto de Estudos de Direitos Humanos e do Meio Ambiente
51. Articulação Carioca
52. Associação Amigos da Recicriação
53. Gambá
54. GT Infraestrutura e Justiça Socioambiental
55. Comitê da Bacia Hidrográfica do Rio Pindaré
56. Rede Cerrado
57. Núcleo de Assessoria às Comunidades Atingidas por Barragens (NACAB)

INTERNATIONAL

58. Earthworks
59. Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA)
60. Amazon Watch
61. International Rivers
62. Yes to Life No to Mining
63. Ekō
64. Malach Consulting
65. Pacific Asia Resource Center
66. Fair Mining Collaborative
67. Igapo Project
68. Native Village of Dot Lake, AK
69. Ethical Metalsmiths
70. Black Hills Clean Water
71. Alliance Great Basin Resource Watch
72. Coalition to Save the Menominee River
73. Mining Watch Romania
74. Decolonial Centre
75. No Business With Genocide
76. Direct Action Everywhere
77. Earth Thrive
78. Vivat internacional
79. Coal Action Network
80. EarthRights International
81. France Amérique Latine
82. Comité de solidarité avec les Indiens des Amériques (CSIA-Nitassinan)
83. Tierra y Libertad Para Arauco
84. Asamblea por los bosques y la vida Bolivia

CANADA

85. MiningWatch Canada
86. Centre international de solidarité ouvrière CISO / Centro internacional de solidaridad obrera (CISO)
87. Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability (CNCA)
88. Mining Injustice Solidarity Network
89. Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network (ARSN)
90. CoDevelopment Canada (CoDev)
91. Comité pour les droits humains en Amérique Latine (CDHAL)
92. Community Peacemaker Teams - Colombia
93. Journal des Alternatives - une plateforme altermondialiste
94. Réseau international pour l'innovation sociale et écologique (RISE)
95. David Suzuki Foundation

96. Groupe de recherche interdisciplinaire sur les territoires de l'extraction (GRITE)
97. Inter Pares
98. Mining Justice Alliance
99. Circle of Voices
100. Climate Justice Montreal
101. Green 13
102. Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN)
103. Climate Action Network - Réseau action climat Canada
104. Beyond Extraction