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Dringende Bitte um Unterstützung für Fischer in Brasilien gegen Morddrohungen

Die Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung und das Brasilianische Institut für Alternative Politik im Südkegel (PACS) unterstützen lokale Organisationen und Fischerfamilien bei ihrem Widerstand gegen den Bau eines industriellen Komplexes durch Thyssen Krupp und die brasilianische Vale do Rio Doce in der Sepetiba Bucht in Rio de Janeiro. Wir haben die Präsentation dieses Falles vor dem Tribunal der Völker in Lima 2008 gefördert. Seither ist der Widerstand dieser Organisationen gewachsen. Als Reaktion darauf hat die Gewalt gegen sie derart zugenommen, dass ein Anführer der Fischer nun untertauchen musste. Aber auch seine Familie und die anderen Fischerfamilien brauchen Schutz vor den Milizen, die als „Sicherheitskräfte“ der Stahlunternehmen operieren.

Wir bitten Sie herzlich und dringend um Ihre Unterstützung. Setzen Sie sich bei den brasilianischen Autoritäten dafür ein, die Verbindung zwischen Milizen und dem Stahlunternehmen aufzuklären und zu unterbinden.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Helmuth Markov

Direktor des Zentrums für Internationalen Dialog und Zusammenarbeit Rosa-Luxemburg Stiftung

Vorsitzender der Handelskommission des Europaparlaments

Urgent call for support for fishermen in Brazil against death threats

The Rosa Luxemburg Foundation together with the Brazilian Institute for Alternative Policies in the South Cone (PACS) have been supporting the struggle of local organizations and fishermen associations against the installation of an industrial complex of Thyssen Krupp in the region of the Sepetiba Bay in Rio de Janeiro. We helped also the case presentation at the Permanent People's Tribunal in Lima 2008. Since then, the resistance of these local organizations became stronger, and as a reaction, violence has also increased. As a result on leader of the fishermen had to go underground. But his family and the other fisherfamilies need support against the Militias who operate as “security forces” of the steel companies.

We urgently request your support. Please pressure the Brazilian authorities to investigate and stop the connections between the Militias and the steel companies.

Sincerely yours

Helmuth Markov

Director of the Centre of International Dialogue and Cooperation, Rosa-Luxemburg Foundation

Chair of the Committee on International Trade of the European Parliament

Fisherman in Sepetiba Bay (RJ- Brazil) receives death threats

Since the beginning of the construction of the steel- and iron plant of Atlantic Steel Company (TKCSA), erected by the German Thyssen Krupp and Brazilian Vale do Rio Doce, in 2006, local traditional fishermen in Sepetiba Bay (West zone in Rio) have been involved in a struggle to resist it. The company's activities in Rio's West region are causing irreversible damages to the environment and are directly impacting the lives of people in this region who have always lived from fishing and are now unable to continue pursuing their source of income. In the context of a widened public scrutinization of crimes committed by the company, the struggle of traditional fishing families have become stronger and gained support in the last few years. Local organizations have continuously denounced violations of Brazilian environmental and labor legislation and of the rights of fishers as well as workers working at the building site. Since then, those local and fishermen organizations are assuming that the company's activities are being supported and covered by organized groups related to Militias.

One leader of the fishermen communities, who prefers to stay anonymous, has been receiving frequent death threats for over a year now by militia groups of this region. Nonetheless these threats have not stopped him from continuing defending the interests of the fishermen and denouncing violations and irregularities committed by TKCSA.

In the following, we will list the main threats made to our comrade:

In 2007, together with other fishermen, this leader organized a protest in front of the plant's main entrance. On this occasion, some men approached them, not wearing uniforms but explicitly showing guns and weapons, saying they were "security guards" hired by the company. These men were known in the region for belonging to Militias, and for being in charge of "calming down" protests through intimidation. These "security men" had (and still have) free access to the plant installations and they control the building site.

Residents who live in the surroundings of the construction plant say that they know about workers' deaths as a result of accidents and bad working conditions. They say that some have been murdered by Militia members inside the building site. Most workers are migrants from the poorer Northeast

side of Brazil. There are also workers brought in from China; a number of 600 Chinese workers have officially entered Brazil to work for TKCSA.

Last week, after three anonymous phone calls in the middle of the night in which he was told that his days were numbered, the worst death threat happened February 2nd, 2009. This fisher was walking down the street in which he lived, when a car was pulling up right next to him. He recognized the driver as one of the worst famous killers of that region. The killer looked into the fisher's face and signaled with his hands, saying that he was branded. The killer then sped up his car and was gone. From that moment on, the fisher realized that it was time to stop and stand off from the struggle. After having been threatened by a well known killer right in his face, it was clear that he had to go underground.

Today, he is in an unknown, but secure place. His concern was not only his own life, but also the lives of his parents, wife and children. He had to leave his home, his personal belongings and his life behind. Other struggling comrades might now be in danger too.

Facing the situation which has just been described, we are demanding that the Federal and State Attorney, Federal and State Government and the Brazilian Federal Police investigate the frequently denounced involvement of TKCSA with the Militia in the west zone of Rio de Janeiro.