

Brazilian Indigenous and community leaders protest in front of the EU Council to denounce the impact of expansion of the agro-industry on local communities



May 12th 2022, Brussels - Today, Valéria Pereira Santos, representative of the Pastoral Land Commission and Jabson Nagelo da Silva from the Indigenous Council of Roraima shared testimonies about the land grabbing and violence Brazilian local and Indigenous communities are facing due to soy cultivation.

For Valeria Pereira Santos, *“The soy that Europe imports from Brazil is stained with blood. Its production is causing the ecocide of the Cerrado and cultural genocide of traditional peoples and communities.”*

Jabson Nagelo da Silva adds: *“The expansion on the agro-industry leads to an escalation of violence directed against traditional communities and indigenous peoples. Buy soy from Brazil and you agree with deforestation, land grabbing, violence, murder and persecution of indigenous peoples.”*

EU imports of key commodities have been linked to the loss of an estimated 3.5 million hectares of tropical forests between 2005 and 2017. Soy and cattle alone represented more than 400,000 hectares.¹

To curb this deforestation, the European Commission announced, in November 2021, a proposal for a new regulation. This is potentially a good step for the protection of forests, but not for Indigenous and local communities: the proposal offers no guarantee for the respect of land rights and Indigenous peoples rights. In the meantime, the EU keeps promoting the use of forest-destroying soy oil in biofuels through its Renewable Energy Directive.

But those regulations are now being discussed by the EU Council and Parliament, an opportunity to remediate it.

Valeria Pereira Santos and Jabson Nagelo da Silva's testimonies must alert those two institutions: the EU has to cut its ties with the consumption of commodities linked to deforestation and human rights violations. Along with the CSOs present today, Canopée, Fern, Mighty Earth, Rainforest Foundation Norway, and ROBIN WOOD, they ask for the inclusion of the respect of land and Indigenous people's rights in the EU regulation on deforestation, and the immediate phase out of soy from biofuels.

Notes to Editors:

- 1) Valeria Pereira Santos and Jabson Nagelo da Silva will participate in a panel discussion on this subject in the European Parliament hosted by MEP María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos and MEP Martin Häusling, together with Transport & Environment and the Rainforest Foundation Norway. You can join this event virtually via this [link](#), or, if accredited, by going to room Spinelli 5E1. The event will start at 14:00.
- 2) The Environmental Committee of the European Parliament will vote on amendments to the Renewable Energy Directive (RED II) next week, on May 16th & 17th.

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