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BRAZIL ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS MURDERED

On the morning of 5 June, Bruno Pereira and Dom Phillips, environmental and Indigenous peoples' rights defenders, were disappeared in the Javari Valley, in the Brazilian Amazon. On 15 June, the Federal Police reported that one of the two people arrested on suspicion of involvement in their disappearances confessed to having murdered them, and that remains found in the forest had been forwarded to forensics. Authorities made stigmatizing statements against Bruno and Dom, issued contradictory information, and conducted a belated investigation without sufficient resources or transparency. We urge the General Prosecutor of the Republic to guarantee a prompt, thorough, impartial, and independent investigation into this case, and bring those suspected of criminal responsibility to justice.

The Brazilian State has a duty to ensure that the investigation of the circumstances that culminated in the disappearances and deaths of Bruno and Dom is conducted promptly, transparently and respecting human rights throughout the process.

Write to the General Prosecutor urging him to:

- guarantee a prompt, thorough, impartial, and independent investigation into the disappearances and deaths of Bruno Pereira and Dom Phillips, considering their human rights work ensuring that all suspects of criminal responsibility be brought to justice
- ensure that their families have access to truth and reparation, as well as the Indigenous peoples of the Javari Valley and Brazilian society

Write to:

Augusto Aras

General Prosecutor of the Republic

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Salutation: General Prosecutor of the Republic:

And Copy:

His Excellency Pedro Henrique Lopes Borio
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On the morning of 5 June, British journalist Dom Phillips, a contributor to The Guardian newspaper, and Brazilian Indigenous expert Bruno Pereira, a licensed public servant of the National Indian Foundation (Funai), were last seen before being considered missing on the route between the riverside community São Rafael and the city of Atalaia do Norte, in the state of Amazonas, in northern Brazil. The two traveled through the Javari Valley with the aim of visiting and interviewing an Indigenous surveillance team, organized to ensure the protection and environmental preservation of the reserve's lands.

The Javari Valley is located on the Amazon border with Peru and Colombia and has 8.5 million hectares of demarcated land, forming the second largest homologated Indigenous land in Brazil. The region is home to the largest concentration of Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation in the world, and its access is only possible through areas and river routes. Like other regions of the Brazilian Amazon, the Javari Valley is the scene of intense conflicts led by land invaders associated with mining and illegal logging. In addition, the area is also crossed by drug trafficking disputes, which benefit from poorly supervised borders to dominate drug trade flows between the countries of the triple border. The region has a history of violence and threats against Funai's civil servants, human rights defenders, and non-governmental organizations. In 2019, Maxciel Pereira dos Santos, Funai's server in Tabatinga, was shot dead. To this day the crime has not been solved.

The Brazilian Government, chaired by Jair Bolsonaro, is internationally recognized for its policies of dismantling environmental legislation and for its offensives against the rights of Indigenous and traditional populations. The Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB) updated the complaint made by the Articulation on 9 August 2021, which accuses Jair Bolsonaro of the commission of genocide and crimes against humanity for extermination, persecution, and other inhuman acts. These facts refer to the period from January to May 2022, including negligence in the searches for Bruno da Cunha Araújo Pereira and Dom Phillips and "barbarism" in the Yanomami territory.

The Brazilian State has an obligation to ensure that human rights defenders, journalists and public servants can carry out their work with freedom and security. Don Phillips and Bruno were recognized for their reports on the Amazon and their committed actions to indigenous peoples and territories.