

## **Interview with Joaquin Piñero, from MST, on the Assassination of Two Comrades in Parana**

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Last Thursday April 7, in the afternoon, families from the Rural Landless Worker's Movement that were organized in the camp Don Tomás Baudino in the Quedas do Iguaçu municipality, central region of the state of Parana, were victims of an ambush by the military police and private security forces of the logging company Araupel. To inform us about what happened, we are in communication with Joaquin Piñero, leader of the central direction of the Landless Workers' Movement. Hello, Joaquin, How are you? Hello, I, as well as all comrades from the MST, am extremely indignant due to the murder of two of our comrades from Parana. I'll provide some context so that everyone can understand what's going on in Parana: Last year, the MST occupied an unproductive territory, which the logging company Araupel claimed ownership of., This was because the Federal government, through INCRA (National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform) which is the main entity responsible for the Agrarian Reform in Brazil, sued this company for being in an illegal area, which means that this area is under a legal dispute. Therefore, we, the MST, occupied the land last year.

Last week, there was a meeting with local authorities of the state of Paraná. The meeting was between the government's Security Secretary, the Chief Commander of the local police, deputies and representatives from Araupe. The meeting was allegedly convened to discuss safety issues from this region. It's important to explain to those that are not from Brazil that those who control the police in the States are the governors, and therefore, in this case, it's the governor of Paraná, member of the Social Democrat Party, the PSDB, an historic enemy of the MST and of all left forces in Brazil. So, actually, he was in that meeting planning the attack to our camp. And this action left two of our companions death and more than six companions wounded, two were detained and then they were released, but this has created a climate of terror in the region. This is because this is an action commanded by the local police, allied with the logging company in the region. That is why we are so concerned and now we are analysing our next steps regarding what has happened.

Who were the victims of this ambush carried out by the military police and the private security forces that respond to Araupel?

The fatal victims were comrade Leomar Bhorbak, 25, who left behind his girlfriend who is 9 months pregnant, and comrade Vilmar Bordim, married, father of three children.

**What is the movement's position? What are the next steps you are thinking of taking in response to this tragic news?**

Firstly, we must put this situation in the context of the national situation. It's important to say that coincidentally, on April 20, years ago, there was a slaughter in Dorado do Carajá in the state of Pará, it was also an action led by the state government of Pará, which also belonged to the same party PSDB, and also in alliance with landowners in the region. Twenty of our MST comrades were killed in the slaughter. And what is even worse, is that the crimes committed against the struggle for land, are protected by impunity, because so far none of those responsible for this slaughter were sentenced, they are free on the streets. This situation of impunity is also a reality that we want to communicate to the international society.

Another thing I wanted to add is that this month we are also organizing a day of struggle and mobilization throughout the country, calling for justice, claiming that these crimes should not go unpunished and therefore there will be a lot of fight this month and this will involve several states of our country. And there are more crimes like the one in Parana, recently there was a crime in the state of Paraíba and another one in Bahia. There's a persecution of social sectors by right-wing, racist, reactionary, pro-coup sectors, which generates insecurity among our country's social activists.

The MST will continue the struggle. Tomorrow we will do a national event in the city of Quedas do Iguaçu, where the funeral of our colleagues will take place and therefore we will be there, mobilized. We will continue denouncing this crime. We are already in contact with the federal government to send a force of the Federal Police so that they can investigate this crime, so that the case can be handled in the federal level. If it remains in the hands of the state government, with its murderous police, we know that it's not going to move forward and, as always, these murderers and the masterminds will go unpunished.