

Brazilians Who Use Slave Labor Will Have Land Expropriated

Contributed by Irene Lôbo
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For the first time in the Brazil's history, workers rescued from slave labor conditions will be able to count on government financial help to sustain themselves as rural producers.

The new credit line is called Land for Freedom and is one of the measures included in the Plan for the Eradication of Slave Labor, launched yesterday by the Brazilian Ministry of Agrarian Development (Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário, MDA) and the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária, Incra).

The plan is based on three main lines of action: the prevention and suppression of slave labor and the insertion of workers who were at one time victims of this type of labor regime.

In the area of prevention, the government intends to expropriate rural properties where slave labor is discovered and use the land for agrarian reform.

Credit lines, which are part of the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming (Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar, Pronaf), will be offered .

In the opinion of the Special Secretary for Human Rights, Nilmário Miranda, preventive actions will be the government's priority.

"What is missing is precisely the social incorporation and inclusion of these individuals. This is the major challenge," the Minister says.

In the sphere of suppression, the State, in partnership with the Ministry of Labor, will intensify its verification of land registers and the social function of rural properties that are on the government's black list of companies and individuals that employ slave labor.

These rural properties - where there are indications that the social function of labor has been violated by the exploitation of slave labor - will be expropriated and used for agrarian reform.

Individuals or legal entities involved in the exploitation of this kind of labor will also be prohibited from participation in MDA and Incra bidding processes and denied access to Pronaf funds.

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