

In Ten Years Brazil Frees 17,000 Slave Workers

Contributed by Newsroom
Tuesday, 14 June 2005

Brazil's Ministry of Labor's Special Mobile Inspection Group (Grupo Especial de Fiscalização Móvel do Ministério do Trabalho e Emprego) is commemorating ten years of activities.

That service has liberated 16,707 workers from slave labor during that period.

During the Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva administration, which took office in January 2003, a total of 10,614 workers have been freed from slave labor situations.

Lula established stricter control of the problem by setting up a National Plan to Eradicate Slave Labor (Plano Nacional para Erradicação do Trabalho Escravo) and a nationwide register of transgressors of slave labor legislation which ensures that they will be punished.

The Ministry's secretary of Inspection, Ruth Vilela, says the success of the plan has been possible because it receives assistance from government agencies and NGOs that have consolidated a support network.

The Mobile Group now has seven units consisting of Labor inspectors and lawyers, and Federal Police agents. In special cases agents from the Land Reform Institute (Incra) or the Environmental Protection Institute (Ibama), as well as federal prosecutors, may join a group.

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