

Brazil: Trial of US Nun's Murderer Changes Venue Due to Fear of Threats

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Amair Feijoli Cunha (Tato), one of the defendants accused of participating in the murder of Missionary Dorothy Stang, will be tried in Belém.

The decision to move the trial to the state capital was made by the members of the Criminal Chambers of the Justice Court of the State in the court session on March 3.

They concurred with Judge Raimunda do Carmo Gomes Noronha, reporting judge for the change of venue from Pacajá to Belém for the trial of the land trader involved in the death of the missionary.

The change of venue was requested by the prosecutor Lauro Freitas Junior with the support of the prosecutor Sávio Brabo, who is the coordinator of the Group for the Repression of Criminal Organizations (Geproc).

When submitting the appeal to the members of the Criminal Chamber, the judge emphasized the arguments for the Public Ministry regarding the possible problems with impartiality of the jury due to the threats they could receive from relatives of the defendants.

She cited the absence of structure in the town (Pacajá), the constant interruptions from the electricity in the city, the economic power of the defendants, the possible danger of individuals who could threaten the witnesses and those connected to the missionary.

According to the prosecution, five people participated in the murder, which occurred on February 12 of last year in Anapu, jurisdiction of Pacajá. Accused of committing the murder, Raifran das Neves Sales and Clodoaldo Carlos Batista were the first to sit in the defendant's chair.

Raifran received 27 years in prison. He asked for a new trial, as the Brazilian Penal Legislation allows. Clodoaldo, who was sentenced to 17 years, is appealing to have a reduced sentence under the allegation of minimal participation in the crime, saying that he only stayed at Raifran's side when he shot the gun.

The legal documents say that both of them sought shelter on the property of Vitalmiro Bastos Moura, where they received food and financial help.

The ranchers, Vitalmiro Bastos Moura (Bida) and Regivaldo Pereira Galvão (Taradão), are accused by the representative of the Public Ministry of ordering and promising payment to those who committed the homicide.

Judge Cláudio Montalvão das Neves, Minister of the Second Penal Branch of the capital, predicts that the popular trial of Tato will occur in the second half of April.

He explained that as soon as sentence is published (with the decision of the appeals court judges) the process will be sent to the Secretariat of the Second Branch.

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