

Brazil Ready to Resettle Farmers Living in Indian Reservation

Contributed by Priscilla Mazonetti
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Around 97% of the non-indigenous families that occupy parts of the Raposa Serra do Sol Indian reservation in Brazil have already been registered, and their socioeconomic characteristics surveyed, by the Brazilian National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA) and the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI).

This information was provided by the coordinator of the Administrative Committee for the Accompaniment of Federal Actions in Roraima, José Nagibe.

According to Nagibe, the federal government will remove these families from the area, resettle those who fit the profile of agrarian reform, and pay compensation to the others.

In an interview with the National Radio of the Amazon, he said that people who occupy plots of up to 100 hectares and opt for resettlement will receive areas equal in size to the ones they presently occupy. Those whose plots exceed this amount will receive up to 500 hectares.

Moreover, he informed, those who opt for resettlement will receive a letter from the president of the INCRA to make it easier for them to obtain bank loans.

"They will also receive an allowance to help them build their homes and buy basic equipment."

The allowance will amount to US\$ 2,334 (5,000 reais) for home construction and US\$ 1,120 (2.400 reais) for the purchase of the material needed to start production.

Commenting on the existence of contradictory information on the removal process, Nagibe said that the population should remain unperturbed, because the steps will be taken in a "slow and gradual" manner.

Beginning this week, the families summoned on a list published in the local press should direct themselves to INCRA headquarters in Boa Vista to receive clarifications on the resettlement process and schedule compensation payments.

Data from the General Department of External Matters of the FUNAI indicate that around 240 families remain in the area and that 52 have already been removed since the regularization process got underway.

The Raposa Serra do Sol Reserve was homologated as an Indian territory on April 15, 2005. The area, which is located in the eastern part of Roraima, covers over 1.7 million hectares and is home to around 15,000 Indians from the Macuxi, Taurepang, Wapixana, and Ingarikó ethnic groups.

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