

CVRD and Alcan Accused of Violating Human Rights in Brazil

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A Brazilian NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) has denounced the construction cooperative of a hydro-electric basin in Candonga, in the Minas Gerais State, for the violation of rights of the people that inhabited the zone.

These people, according to the aid workers, were forced to evacuate under "strong psychological pressures and threats".

The news was referred by the Folha newspaper, specifying that the hydro-electric basin, in operation since September and situated in the municipalities of Rio Doce and Santa Cruz do Escalvado, cost 170-million reais (US\$ 57 million) and has a power of 140 megawatts.

Based on a denouncement filed by the NGO, Global Justice Centre in collaboration with the CPT (Comissão Pastoral da Terra-Pastoral Land Commission) and a local civic movement called MAB — the cooperative utilized "methods of strong physiological pressure" in negotiating with the around 600 people that lived along the banks of the Rio Doce and were then forced to move.

Always based on the report — sent to the UN special rapporteur on adequate housing, the Indian architect Miloon Kothari — some leaders of the local civic movement were corrupted with the promise of favors and the more tenacious activists were instead subjected to serious threats.

The document, based on interviews with magistrates, police officers, State workers and residents, also reports that last May, to 'convince' the last 14 families left in São Sebastião do Soberbo, the military police intervened with strong intimidation, insulting them and destroying objects in their homes.

The residents of Rio Doce and Santa Cruz do Escalvado were transferred to an area constructed by the cooperative, built by the 'Vale do Rio Doce' and 'Alcan' enterprises, but the NGO denounces that the new homes are deficient, the land infertile and water not potable.

Various citizens were also left without means of subsistence and for the moment no indemnification is foreseen for them.

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