



*Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations Office and other International
Organizations in Geneva
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Geneva -, Switzerland*

Surya Deva

Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises

John Knox

Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment

Agnes Callamard

Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

David Kaye

Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

Baskut Tuncak

Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes

Michel Forst

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

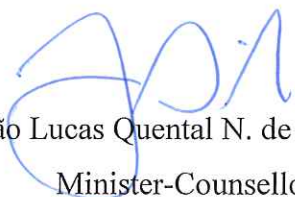
Geneva, 23 March, 2018

Dear Ms. Deva, Mr. Knox, Ms. Callamard, Mr. Kaye, Mr. Tuncak and Mr. Forst,

I refer to the joint communication AL BRA 10/2017, dated 20 November 2017, regarding the alleged threats and acts of intimidation perpetrated against human rights defenders in the context of the expansion of the mining project under responsibility of the company Anglo American Minério de Ferro do Brasil S.A., in Minas Gerais (“Projeto Minas-Rio”).

On behalf of the Brazilian Government, I attach the following comments.

Please accept the assurances of its highest consideration.



João Lucas Quental N. de Almeida
Minister-Counsellor

Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations Office in Geneva

REFERENCE:
AL BRA 10/2017

23 March 2017

The General Coordination of Protection of Human Rights Defenders of the Ministry of Human Rights informed that, in December 2017, the National Programme to Protect Human Rights Defenders (PPDDH) was responsible for the protection of 342 persons. The Programme covers all Brazilian territory. Specific protection teams undertake activities in the States of Ceará, Maranhão, Minas Gerais and Pernambuco, and a Federal team is responsible for the Programme implementation in the remaining States. Most cases are related to indigenous peoples, the right to land, traditional afrodescendent communities (“quilombolas”) and environmental protection.

According to the Programme’s methodology, to be included in the initiative, some requirements must be fulfilled, such as: the individual has to confirm his/her will to be protected, he/she must represent a certain group and be recognized as a representative of the group and a connection between the threat suffered and the activities undertaken by the applicant as human rights defender must be demonstrated.

Specifically about the cases mentioned in the joint communication, the government of the State of Minas Gerais, through the Coordinator of the Program of Protection of Human Rights Defenders of Minas Gerais (PPDDH-MG), informed that, on December 6, 2017, a technical team of PPDDH-MG went to the municipality of Ipatinga to follow up the case of Mr. Elias de Souza and his family, and, despite several attempts to convince him otherwise, the defender decided to return to the town Conceição de Mato Dentro, which resulted in his disengagement from the Programme. The mining project Minas-Rio is centered around the town of Conceição de Mato Dentro.

The State Government also informed that the Secretariat of Social Assistance of Conceição do Mato Dentro is assessing the situation of Mr. Lúcio Pimenta, in order to respond to his demands related to housing and to fulfill his basic needs regarding access to food and water.

The State Government also informed the voluntary transference of the couple Vanessa and Reginaldo Rosa from Conceição do Mato Dentro to the metropolitan area of Belo Horizonte due to the voting of a license related to the expansion of project Minas-Rio.

Regarding the issue of business and human rights, which is critical in the context of the joint communication, the Ministry of Human Rights has taken steps, since 2014, to disseminate the UN guiding principles and to promote a national debate on the drafting of a National Plan of Action on business and human rights.

The strategic plan of the Ministry of Human Rights for 2017-2018 encompasses the goal to undertake basic assessment about the issue of 'business and human rights' with a view to draft a National Plan on the matter. The inclusion this goal in the strategic plan of the Ministry guarantees its continuity beyond the present administration, as well as facilitates the follow up by public management control and monitoring mechanisms.

Additional information regarding the scope of this joint communication may be provided by the Brazilian government in the future.