

## **Petition text**

Justice for Vergel!

Madam President of the Federative Republic of Brazil Dilma Rousseff,  
Mr. Governor of the State of Maranhão, Dr. Flavio Dino,  
Mr. President of the National Justice Council, Minister Ricardo Lewandowski

On December 24th, Christmas Eve, we were informed about the death of the human rights defender Antonio Izídio Pereira da Silva, known as Leis, resident in the community of Vergel 31 miles far from the city Codó in Maranhão.

Antonio Izídio was found dead near his house. Missing since Sunday, he was the last survival of a conflict involving the lands of Vergel, rich in timber wood. This conflict had already made six (6) victims before him. Only one of the cases was inquired and converted into criminal trial, however it has been going unsolved for five years. The murders of Vergel peasants were never actually punished.

Antonio Izídio was the seventh victim of a series of injustices that finds its roots in the 1980s. At that time the lands of Vergel, with two thousand hectares were illegally allocated in an inventory process that dragged to our days since October 24, 1984.

Because of the conflict, the community of Vergel was emptied and today only the family of Antonio Izídio remain there. At the request of the Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT), the Program for human right defenders, related to the former Secretariat of Human Rights, held by the Presidency, realized an interview with Antonio Izídio. Following this interview he was disconnected from the protection program. According to them there was a lack of causal connection between its acting in the promotion and defense of human rights and the reported threats. As the Public Minister of Maranhão reported by email - he saw no latent animosity in Vergel

Despite constant threats, Antonio Izídio was the last heir that continued to fight for his right to live and work in his land.

December 19, 2015, Antonio Izídio had a long talk with the local priest, Father José Weisensteiner, and he told him about illegal logging of timber wood in the lands of Vergel, he expressed his desire to bring the case to authorities on Monday, December 21.

The body of Antonio Izídio was found in an advanced state of decomposition on December 24, 2015, buried in a shallow grave, wrapped in a hammock and plastic bags.

Five days after the discovery of his body, no police investigation has been established and the local authorities have heard no one. Given these facts, we require, in respect for the truth and in defense of justice:

- The establishment of an inquire to exhume the body of Antonio Izídio Pereira da Silva and investigate the causes of his death immediately - important evidences may be lost due to the conditions in which the body was buried.
- In case his assassination is actually proven take all the measures to find and punish the guilty

- Assure that the inventory on the lands of Vergel, ongoing in the 3rd Chamber of the Municipality of Codó, number 003/1984, finally reaches an end that the death of all the victims of this conflict doesn't turn out in vain.

Best regards