

Press Release 79/2024 English

## **BRAZIL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FORCED DISAPPEARANCE OF 11 BLACK YOUTH FROM ACARI FAVELA IN RIO DE JANEIRO**

*San José, Costa Rica, December 4, 2024.* - In the Judgment notified today in the *Case of Leite de Souza et al. v. Brazil*, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (hereinafter "the Court") found the State of Brazil internationally responsible for the forced disappearance of 11 black youths, residents of Acari favela, on July 26, 1990, as well as for serious shortcomings in the investigations carried out regarding those facts and the murder of the next of kin who sought the investigation of the disappearances.

The official summary and the full text of the judgment can be accessed [here](#).

In the judgment the Court accepted the partial acknowledgment of responsibility made by Brazil, but considered that it is limited, since it refers to a specific part of the facts and alleged violations.

On the night of July 14, 1990, six uniformed military police officers, who were members of "Cavalos Corredores" (an extermination group that operated in Acari Favela, composed of policemen from the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Military Police of Rocha Miranda), broke into the house of Edmea da Silva Euzebio and held up Edson de Souza Costa, Moisés dos Santos Cruz and Viviane Rocha da Silva. They threatened to kill them and demanded a high amount of money.

On July 26, 1990, at around 23:00, a group of approximately eight masked men who were members of Cavalos Corredores broke into the house of Laudicena de Oliveira Nascimento, grandmother of one of the disappeared youths, who were at her house at the time. They identified themselves as police officers and demanded money. These officers abducted Wallace Souza do Nascimento, Hedio Nascimento, Luiz Henrique da Silva Euzebio, Viviane Rocha da Silva, Cristiane Leite de Souza, Moisés dos Santos Cruz, Edson de Souza Costa, Luiz Carlos Vasconcellos de Deus, Hoodson Silva de Oliveira, Rosana de Souza Santos and Antonio Carlos da Silva, all residents of Acari favela. To date the whereabouts of the 11 youths are unknown.

Criminal proceedings were initiated because of these facts, but on April 10, 2011, these were shelved due to the lack of "minimum evidence" and the application of the statute of limitations. The suit for material damages and pain and suffering, initiated by several next of kin against the state of Rio de Janeiro in July 2015 regarding the facts did not continue due to the application of the statute of limitations. In June 2022, the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio de Janeiro published Law No. 9,753, which set forth, among other aspects, that financial reparation will be granted for pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages to the next of kin of the 11 individuals who disappeared in the so-called "Massacre of Acari."

On January 15, 1993, Edmea da Silva Euzebio, leader of the group "Mães de Acari" (Mothers of Acari) and mother of Luiz Henrique da Silva Euzebio, and her niece Sheila da Conceição, were murdered at the Plaza 11 subway station, in Rio de Janeiro. The murder of Ms. Euzebio occurred shortly after she testified before a judicial authority on the involvement of policemen in the disappearance of the 11 youths.

The criminal proceedings on these murders ended with the acquittal of the four military policemen accused in April 2024.

Upon analyzing the case and the evidence in the file, the Court concluded that the 11 youths of Acari were subject to forced disappearance by state agents. Consequently, it declared Brazil responsible for the violation of the rights to juridical personality, to life, personal integrity and personal liberty, contained in Articles 3, 4, 5 and 7 of the American Convention, in relation to Article 1(1) thereof, and the violation of the obligation not to practice, permit, or tolerate the forced disappearance of persons, set forth in Article I(a) of the Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance of Persons, to the detriment of the victims of forced disappearance. In addition, it violated the rights of the child, established in Article 19 of the American Convention, to the detriment of those who were children at the time of their disappearance.

Moreover, the Court concluded that the State has not conducted a serious, objective and effective investigation aimed at determining the truth. The Court also noted that more than 34 years have passed since the forced disappearance of the 11 individuals, and in spite of the search efforts and the demand for justice of the victims' mothers, through the "Mothers of Acari" movement, the facts remain in total impunity, the whereabouts of their loved ones are unknown, and the possible perpetrators of this grave human rights violation are unknown. Therefore, the Court determined the international responsibility of the State for the violation of the rights contained in Articles 7(b) and f) of the Convention of Belem do Pará, Articles 8(1), 13, 19 and 25(1) of the American Convention, in relation to Articles 1(1) and 2 thereof, and Articles I(b) and III of the Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance of Persons.

The Court also concluded that the next of kin of the victims, particularly the "Mothers of Acari," were treated in a discriminatory manner in their search efforts and demands for justice. Lastly, the Court considered proven that the personal integrity of the next of kin of the disappeared victims was affected; therefore, it found the State responsible for the violation of Article 5(1) of the American Convention.

Based on these violations, the Court ordered several reparation measures, including: (i) to continue the investigation of the forced disappearance of the 11 youths of Acari; (ii) conduct a rigorous search for the whereabouts of the disappeared youths; (iii) hold a public act of acknowledgment of international responsibility; (iv) create a commemorative space in Acari neighborhood, Rio de Janeiro; and (v) conduct a study to contemplate the current diagnosis of the actions of militias and extermination groups in Rio de Janeiro.

---

The Court's composition for the issuing of this Judgment was as follows: Judge Nancy Hernández López, President (Costa Rica); Judge Humberto Antonio Sierra Porto (Colombia); Judge Eduardo Ferrer Mac-Gregor Poisot (México); Judge Ricardo C. Pérez Manrique (Uruguay); Judge Verónica Gómez (Argentina) and Judge Patricia Pérez Goldberg (Chile). Judge Rodrigo Mudrovitsch, of Brazilian nationality, did not participate in the hearing or deliberation of this order, in conformity with that set forth in Article 19(1) and 19(2) of the Rules of Procedure of the Court.

---



This press release was drafted by the Registrar's Office of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights; it is solely responsible for this document.

For more information on the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, please visit [www.corteidh.or.cr](http://www.corteidh.or.cr) or write to the Registrar, Pablo Saavedra Alessandri, at [corteidh@corteidh.or.cr](mailto:corteidh@corteidh.or.cr). To contact the press office please write to Dannel Pinilla, Director of Communications and Press, at [prensa@corteidh.or.cr](mailto:prensa@corteidh.or.cr).

You may subscribe to the Court's information services [here](#). If you wish to unsubscribe, please send an email to [comunicaciones@corteidh.or.cr](mailto:comunicaciones@corteidh.or.cr). You may also follow the Court's activities through: [Facebook](#), [X](#) (@CorteIDH for the account in Spanish, @IACourTHR for the account in English, and @CorteDirHumanos for the account in Portuguese), [Instagram](#), [Flickr](#), [Vimeo](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [SoundCloud](#).

