



MST protests for environmental justice on World Environment Day

By Lays Furtado. Source: MST's Website

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Militants from the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) marked World Environment Day on June 5, with mobilizations across all major regions of the country. The goal was to denounce the environmental crimes committed by the agroindustry and to present Popular Land Reform as a solution to the crises affecting humanity and the environment.

MST's actions on World Environment Day took place in 18 states: São Paulo, Mato Grosso, Goiás, Mato Grosso do Sul, Paraíba, Ceará, Pará, Tocantins, Paraná, Minas Gerais, Pernambuco, Bahia, Alagoas, Rondônia, Roraima, Espírito Santo, Sergipe, and Rio Grande do Norte. These actions are part of the 16th National Youth Journey of the Landless and the National Journey in Defense of Nature and Its Peoples, which began on May 31 and ran until June 7, highlighting the primary environmental destructors in the country and



proposing solutions from the perspective of the peoples of the countryside, waters, and forests.

Throughout this week, the mobilizations have taken the form of reflections and collective actions, starting with grassroots assemblies where environmental issues were discussed in camps, settlements, and other common spaces, which was the starting of the Journey. And continue with a schedule of debates, mobilizations, and denunciations, also marking World Environment Day.

As part of these actions, this date is considered crucial in a context of worsening environmental crisis in the country, which exposes the inequalities faced by urban and rural communities affected by extreme weather events driven by exploitation and capitalism's contradictions.

Under the slogan "Popular Land Reform: for Nature and the Peoples to Confront the Environmental Crisis!", organized by the MST's Youth Collective, the National Tree Planting Plan, and the Healthy Food Production program. The Journeys aim to advance concrete and meaningful actions that contribute to regional and global environmental agendas, especially as Brazil prepares to host the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém (Pará).

Among the various activities of the Journeys, thousands of Landless Workers participated in demonstrations and protests, tree planting marathons, people's juries, and lambe-lambe posters against the crimes of the agroindustry, dialogues with public agencies, workshops, and other educational and community activities.

Fernanda Farias, from the MST National Youth Collective's coordination, emphasizes the importance of the Journey and its significance for youth, understanding that this group plays an important role in leading struggles related to environmental issues, both in the present and with a view toward the future. She highlights that it is a key point of intersection that brings together youth from the countryside and the cities.

"Today, in MST, we assert that Popular Land Reform can serve both rural and urban communities as a tool to combat the environmental crisis. It emphasizes the production of common goods, caring for nature through agroecology, and fostering new human relationships. We see Land Reform as a political project to rethink environmental issues from the place where we live" declares Fernanda.

No to the Devastation Bill



Photo: Agatha Azevedo

The coordinator also highlights the youth's concern regarding one of the biggest environmental setbacks we face today at the national level: the potential passage of the Bill, known as the “PL of Devastation,” which eases environmental licensing rules in Brazil and permits projects to automatically receive approval without prior environmental assessments.

“MST understands that this Bill aims to make it easier for the main perpetrators of environmental crimes in Brazil, which are agribusiness and large mining companies, to undertake large projects that cause environmental degradation and exacerbate crises. This ‘PL of Devastation’ neglects the state’s responsibility to uphold protections for peasants, indigenous peoples, and traditional communities,” denounces Farias, based on reflections from the entire Movement and the Landless Youth Collective.

Based on discussions and criticisms regarding the threats posed to the environmental crisis, the São Paulo Youth Collective organized direct action in the capital. The city woke up with banners, posters, and stickers in the neighborhoods of Liberdade and Limão, denouncing parliamentarians who support the “PL of Devastation,” such as Arthur Lira, Tereza Cristina, Pedro Lupion, Ricardo Sales, among others. These legislators represent the Ruralist Bloc and the interests of agribusiness, and are driving the approval of the “PL of Destruction.”



Beyond the Southeast region, there was mobilization in denouncing the “PL of Devastation” in the Central-West region of the country. In the capitals of Mato Grosso, Goiás, and Mato Grosso do Sul, Landless Youth mobilized with the distribution of stickers and posters pointing to agribusiness as responsible for promoting this Bill, as well as denouncing the sector responsible for causing diseases and environmental crimes—due to the use of pesticides, water contamination, destruction of the Cerrado, and expulsion of traditional communities.

In the Northeast, on Thursday, June 5th, MST militants from the state of Paraíba carried out various collective actions, including the Youth Assembly and the People’s Tribunal, to denounce the crimes of agribusiness. In Fortaleza, Ceará, militants from MST Youth and the Solidarity Hands Collective of the state distributed stickers and posters highlighting “Popular Agrarian Reform in Defense of Nature and Facing the Environmental Crisis,” condemning agribusiness crimes and emphasizing the urgent need to debate the agricultural model in Brazil.

“Soy and mineral barges will not pass! No to the explosion of Pedral do Lourenção!”

On June 5th, MST, together with other popular movements and traditional communities, gathered at Pontal do Cabelo Seco, in Marabá/PA, on the banks of the Tocantins and Itacaiúnas rivers, to protest against the proposal to blast Pedral do Lourenção, part of the Araguaia-Tocantins Waterway project. The mobilization denounced the measure, which is being legally advanced, as a grave crime against nature, humanity, and especially against the lives of the 23 communities living along the banks of the Tocantins River in the vicinity of Pedral do Lourenção.

The Landless Youth of Pará was also present in the mobilization, in the Tauiry community, in the municipality of Itupiranga (PA), gathering 300 young people in a Solidarity Act supporting the riverine communities of the Itacaiúnas River, which also borders the Pedral do Lourenção.

Organizers also demanded the annulment of the “PL of Devastation,” and denounced that hundreds of families will be affected by the mega-project of the Araguaia-Tocantins Waterway—particularly women and children, who are always the most impacted by mega projects and the harmful effects of climate change. Besides the communities, scholars, through analyses and reports, oppose the blasting due to its social and environmental impacts.

The Tocantins-Araguaia Waterway project is budgeted at over R\$500 million, funded by the federal government through the Ministry of Ports and Airports and the National Agency for Waterway Transportation (ANTAQ). The communities were not consulted, as required by Convention No. 169 of the International Labour Organization (ILO), also



known as the Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. During the event, a letter to society was launched, signed by the protesting organizations:

“Who benefits from this project? Who will the Tocantins-Araguaia Waterway serve? We saw the clear joy of the state governor, Helder Barbalho, with the Installation License (LI), repeating the old and misleading discourse of the Military Dictatorship about ‘Development, job creation, progress, etc.’ for the region; when in fact he celebrates what this means for the profits of entrepreneurs and explorers of natural resources—such as forests, rocks, rivers, soil, and subsoil—benefiting large agribusiness and mining companies,” quotes a part of the letter.

The letter was read during the Popular Act Against the Destruction of Pedral do Lourenção, in Marabá-PA; and is signed by MST; the Rainbow Women’s Justice Association; the Popular Ombudsperson for Violence Against Women; the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT); the Zé Claudio and Maria Institute (IZM); the Marabá Feminist Articulation; the Center for Studies, Research, and Union and Popular Advisory (CEPASP); the Women’s Group of Cabelo Seco, Raízes de Marabá; Sindunifesspa; and ANDES Regional North 2.

Cooperate in planting trees, healthy food, and waters

On World Environment Day, Thursday (the 5th), MST activists in Tocantins concluded the “State Seminar Cultivating Agroecology: Bioinputs as Living Soil” at the Olga Benário settlement in Taboão (TO). The event, which began on Wednesday (the 4th), featured collective discussions on topics such as agroecology, bioinputs, and cooperation. The program included important debates and an analysis of current challenges, aiming to develop new forms of agricultural cooperation and strengthen rural communities. The event is part of the Journey in Defense of Nature and Its Peoples and included a collective and symbolic act of planting native trees; this gesture reinforces the commitment of the Landless Workers Movement (MST) to plant 100 million trees over ten years. The seminar was organized by MST and CICLOS, with support from the Climateworks Foundation.

In Paraná, World Environment Day was marked by activities of the 3rd State Journey of Nature, which is also part of the MST’s National Journey in Defense of Nature and Its Peoples. The activities started in the morning with a Political Act and a Mystic to support the reforestation effort on a 7-hectare area of the Legal Reserve of the Community Heirs of the Land 1st of May, located in Rio Bonito do Iguaçu (PR). After planting native seedlings, the Landless families gathered for a communal lunch.



In Minas Gerais, landless student groups from Elizabeth Teixeira School, an annex of Professor Geralda Eugênia da Silva State School, held a week of alternating studies at the Zequinha Nunes and Pátria Livre settlements, located in São Joaquim de Bicas (MG). During the week, a pedagogical experience was carried out involving work with the land and agroecology, culminating this Friday (the 6th). Other educational activities related to environmental issues also took place at Carlos Henrique Ribeiro dos Santos State School in Goianá (MG). The activities aimed to promote environmental discussion within the framework of school education and practice, and are part of the Youth Journeys, and in Defense of Nature and Its Peoples.

In Espírito Santo, the MST Youth occupied the streets of Vitória last Friday (the 6th) and Saturday (the 7th) with poster campaigns and lambe-lambe posters to denounce crimes committed by agribusiness. Also in São Paulo state, the MST Youth Collective of the Pontal do Paranapanema region carried out tree planting during the National Youth Journey on Saturday (the 7th), in the CDHU neighborhood of Sandovalina. This activity is part of the MST Youth's ongoing efforts related to environmental issues and the 16th National Youth Journey and the National Journey in Defense of Nature and Its Peoples.

In Caruaru, in the Pernambuco Agreste, MST militants gathered on Thursday (the 5th) for the public hearing "Water in the Agreste: Challenges and Solutions for the Sustainable Management of Water Resources," held at the City's Chamber of Deputies. The movement emphasized the importance of "planting water," especially in semi-arid areas where there are both green and dry zones, and called for public policies to support families and food production in the region. Challenges include access to water harvesting technologies, such as cisterns to store rainwater, which should also be installed in homes and rural communities' plots.

In Paraíba, besides the actions of denunciation against agribusiness organized by youth, the date was marked by various activities across different settlements and camps in the state, including seedling donations and planting of fruit and native trees. There was also a hands-on activity involving the handling of seedlings from the Pepe Mujica Nursery at the Elizabeth and João Pedro Teixeira Training Center in Lagoa-Seca (PB). This activity involved Youth and Adult Education (EJA) students and Community Health Agents.

In Ceará, on Thursday (the 5th), MST Youth carried out an action of preparing and planting native seedlings in the Adahil Barreto area, located in Cocó Park, Fortaleza (CE). The area recovery involved planting species such as cumaru, mororó, and pau-branco, native to the Caatinga, which play a vital role in maintaining biodiversity and ecological balance in our region.

Also on World Environment Day, Ceará's landless militants, in partnership with the Rural School Maria Nazaré, located in the Maceió settlement in Itapipoca (CE), carried out a



seedling donation in the Jacaré community, also within the Maceió settlement. During the activity, besides distributing seedlings, an important dialogue was promoted with the community about the urgency of producing healthy food without the use of pesticides and the need to denounce environmental crimes committed by agribusiness, hydro-mining, and other extractive industries, which threaten life, land, and territories.

The MST Youth of Ceará was also in the state capital promoting the dissemination of banners and posters announcing the Youth Journeys and in Defense of Nature and Its Peoples. Additionally, the MST met with the Brazil Popular Movement, Mãos Solidárias, and Levante Popular da Juventude for a discussion with the mayor of Fortaleza, focusing on the importance of public policies to advance youth and adult literacy, strengthen municipal participation in the Food Acquisition Program (PAA), and encourage actions for youth in the region's peripheries.

On the morning of Thursday, June 5th, the Youth Assembly took place in the extreme south of Bahia, in the municipality of Prado, gathering young militants actively participating in the National Journeys. The meeting was hosted at the Egídio Brunetto Popular School, in the Jacy Rocha settlement.

In Bahia, in the municipality of Lafaiete Coutinho, various collective activities also took place at the Terra Nova settlement, including a seedling and native plant planting campaign, as well as vegetation planting around watercourses. A total of 120 seedlings were planted, including species like Inga, Santa Bárbara, Jackfruit, Mango, Aroeira, and Açaí, demonstrating the diversity of crops and the need to expand food production and tree planting in the territory.

In Porto Seguro, in the southernmost region of Bahia, environmental-themed educational activities occurred, such as a lecture with students and educators at the Caminhos da Esperança School, located in the Milton Santos settlement. Following this, 110 native and fruit tree seedlings were planted in the school's agroforestry system.

In Ituberá, in the rural area of Bahia, activities by MST militants took place at the Municipal School Mariângela Silva de Santana, focusing on environmental issues affecting the Karim community. The "Project Land, Territory, and Identity" was discussed. Students from Karim, Morro Alto farm, and km 22 presented research findings on "Water access and use in the Karim community" to children in early childhood and elementary school. The children also shared their knowledge about environmental care, and high school students deepened discussions on work, income generation, water, environment, and pesticides.

In Alagoas, MST militants participated in the National Journeys across various camps and settlements of the Agrarian Reform. In União dos Palmares (AL), families from the MST's Che Guevara settlement carried out a collective planting campaign in partnership



with the Environmental Secretariat. Seedlings were planted in several squares throughout the municipality. Additionally, planting activities were held at the Luciano Alves and Santa Maria settlements in Teotônio Vilela (AL), reaffirming the landless movement's commitment to environmental preservation and the construction of sustainable territories.

The MST in Alagoas also organized environmental care campaigns, including tree maintenance and the construction of a collective vegetable garden at the Eldorado do Carajás settlement in Junqueiro. Farming families from the Marciana Serafim settlement in São Sebastião conducted a collective planting session, reaffirming their commitment to defending nature and popular agrarian reform. At the Marielle Franco settlement in Atalaia, MST militants carried out tree planting and seed sowing activities at the Izac Jackson Nursery.

In Sergipe, a demonstration was held to celebrate World Environment Day last Saturday (the 7th), in the northern region of the state, as part of activities for the Journey for Nature and Peoples. During the event, fruit tree seedlings were planted, and a grassroots assembly was convened to strengthen the land struggle, emphasizing the importance of family and peasant agriculture and agrarian reform.

In Rio Grande do Norte, MST landless workers mobilized in the camps and settlements across the state, planting native seedlings in the eight brigades involved in the movement. This action is part of the National Journey in Defense of Nature and Its Peoples and the 16th National Youth Journey of the MST, which has been mobilizing the entire country.

Additionally, on World Environment Day, the MST was also present at the El Panal Commune in Caracas, Venezuela, in collaboration with the Fuerza Patriótica Alexis Vive Movement and students from the Pluriversidade Pátria Grande. During this event, five fruit trees were planted, symbolizing the cultivation of awareness and hope amid an unprecedented climate crisis.

Agribusiness is Violence and Environmental Crime

The municipality of Ariquemes, in Rondônia, woke up on Thursday (5), World Environment Day, with a message from the Landless Youth Collective of the state, denouncing agribusiness as a model that causes environmental degradation and social inequalities resulting from land and income concentration, as well as the poisoning of soil, waters, and both rural and urban populations through the extensive use of pesticides.



Photo: MST Communication

The Landless Youth left their message in front of the multinational company Cargill's unit, with the phrase "Agro is devastation!". The symbolic protest in Ariquemes denounced the multinational, one of the largest in the world, which operates directly in the purchase, transportation, and export of grains in the Amazon, and is frequently associated with allegations of deforestation, land grabbing, and socio-environmental violations.

The Landless Youth denounce that despite moving billions in exports, the agribusiness model that predominates in Brazil is not a synonym for progress, but for destruction.



“Agriculture is devastating because it concentrates land, expels peoples and traditional communities, and advances over biomes, destroying entire ecosystems to make way for monocultures and pastures. It is responsible for about 70% of deforestation in the Amazon and over 80% in the Cerrado, two of Brazil’s main biomes vital for the planet’s climate balance,” denounce the Landless Youth of Rondônia.

In Roraima, MST activists marked World Environment Day with the Human Rights Caravan of Boa Vista, an event focused on issues facing rural peoples, water, and forests. The movement from the state participated in organizing the event, together with other organizations and communities, gathered at the Federal University of Roraima (UFRR), which hosted the gathering.

On Thursday (5th), the program centered on the theme of Indigenous peoples, featuring three roundtable discussions addressing impunity for violence in rural areas, sharing experiences with leaders, and the importance of body painting as a form of resistance. There was also the launch of the Conflict Notebook in the Countryside by CPT, presenting data on violence in rural areas at the national and state levels.

During the event, an exhibition of products from Family and Peasant Agriculture was held, with participation from producers supported by the MST’s production sector in Roraima. The cultural segment included performances by the Kruviana Band from UFRR, Afoxé Filhas e Filhos de Iemanjá, and Mike GuyBras, highlighting local culture.

The organization of the Caravan was led by the Xapiri YY Committee, an initiative of social movements, with support from various entities, including the Maranhão Society for Human Rights (SMDH), Roraima Pastoral Social, Indigenous Missionary Council (CIM), MST/RR, CPT/RR, MISEREOR, and Levante Popular da Juventude.

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