

## **Statement on the killing of Bruno Pereira and Dominic Phillips**

The Union of Indigenous Peoples of Vale do Javari (UNIVAJA), an Indigenous movement representing the peoples who inhabit the Vale do Javari Indigenous Land – Marubo, Matis, Matsés, Kanamari, Korubo, Tsohom-dyapa and isolated Indigenous People – come to the public to speak out about the murders of Brazilian Indigenist Bruno Pereira and British journalist Dominic Phillips. We stand in solidarity with the families of our partners, Bruno and Dom, expressing our sorrow and deep sadness for their loss. For us, the Indigenous Peoples of Vale do Javari, they are an irreplaceable loss.

Today, on 15 June 2022, after 11 days of searches, we got the news that the bodies of Pereira and Phillips, our partners and defenders of Human Rights, were found by the authorities involved in the searches. In the face of this news, UNIVAJA wish to highlight two aspects:

### **1) Our thanks go to the EVU, to the 8th Battalion of the Military Police in Tabatinga, and to the national and international media:**

UNIVAJA has actively participated in the searches since Sunday 5 June 2022 through the Surveillance Team of UNIVAJA (EVU). We were the first to cross the Itaquai River after Pereira and Phillips went missing. Since then, the only authority that has been by our side as partners in the searches was the military police of the 8th Battalion in Tabatinga (AM). It was us, Indigenous People through the EVU, who found the area that later became the target of investigations by other authorities such as the Federal Police, the Army, the Navy, the Fire Department, etc. It was UNIVAJA's surveillance team that first entered the forest in search of Pereira and Phillips to try to provide answers to their families. It was UNIVAJA's surveillance team, the EVU, that indicated to authorities the perimeter to be thoroughly investigated by state agencies during the searches. For this, we had the collaboration and constant protection of the military police of the 8th Battalion in Tabatinga (AM) – the only ones who treated us as true partners in the search, valuing our knowledge and wisdom as Indigenous People who know our territory. We thank Colonel Cavalcante and the military police officers of the 8th Battalion in Tabatinga (AM) who accompanied us in the searches. We also thank the national and international press that helped us tell this story to the world, to make our voices heard and to show what is happening in our region.

### **2) The case is not over:**

We also know that, during the search, the police forces made two arrests: Amarildo da Costa de Oliveira (aka Pelado) and Oseney da Costa Oliveira (aka Dos Santos). However, UNIVAJA understands Pereira and Phillips' murder as a political crime. They were both human rights defenders and died doing work to protect Indigenous People in the Vale do Javari. They were defending our right to well-being, our right to the territory, and the natural resources that are ours and that support our lives and the lives of our relatives who are isolated.

Since 2021, UNIVAJA has presented information about invasions in the Vale do Javari Indigenous Land through the UNIVAJA Surveillance Team (EVU). We sent a series of letters with comprehensive information to the Federal Public Ministry, the Federal Police and the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI). In these documents, we denounce a gang of professional fishermen and hunters – linked to drug traffickers – who illegally enter our territory to extract our

resources and sell them in neighboring municipalities. We have provided information through our reports to the relevant authorities, but they haven't acted quickly enough. That is why today we are witnessing the murders of our partners, Pereira and Phillips.

In face of that, we express our concern about the continuity of the investigations. We know that Pelado and Dos Santos are part of a larger group. We are concerned for our lives and those who have been threatened, because Bruno Pereira was not the only one. What will happen to us when the armed forces and the press leave Atalaia do Norte? Will we continue to live under threat? We need to deepen and broaden the investigation. We need effective territorial surveillance within the Vale do Javari Indigenous Land. We need the units of Ethno-Environmental Protection (BAPes) of FUNAI to be strengthened.

Atalaia do Norte (AM), 15 June 2022.

Coordination of the Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Javari Valley (UNIVAJA)