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SOCIOAMBIENTAL
Casa Socio-Environmental Fund
RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS
Lessons learned from supporting Human Rights and Environmental Defenders in Brazil - a story of collaboration, learning and collective resilience.

SUMMARY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Author: Rodrigo Montaldi[1]

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[2] The term "human rights defenders" encompasses defenders of all genders (male, female and those who identify with other genders).

Claiming the defense of territory and organizing to guarantee better living conditions pose risks to communities and community leaders, who are constantly threatened and intimidated. This is the context of pressure and violation of rights in which indigenous peoples, traditional communities, and grassroots communities live in Brazil.

The protection of territories, which includes areas with natural resources that are essential for the ways of life of these peoples and communities, becomes linked to the fight for nature preservation. Thus, the protection of the environment and the protection of human dignity are closely linked, which form the essential core of human rights, the center where all rights must converge. The relationship between the environment and human rights is such that it is not possible to imagine the full exercise of human rights without the existence of a healthy environment conducive to well-being, and both must converge to achieve dignified, full development for all the forms of life.

Environmental human rights defenders[2], in addition to working in environmental protection, play an essential role in strengthening democracy, the rule of law, the justice system, and combating social exclusion and poverty

Furthermore, they contribute to the development of a culture of rights in Brazil. In doing so, they disturb and challenge political and economic powers responsible for human rights violations, becoming themselves subject to a wide range of violations. Between 2019-2022, in addition to the global threat caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, Brazil underwent a period of severe setbacks caused by a far-right government, which was complicit in the violation of rights, thus becoming an active and encouraging agent in attacking human rights and those who defend them.

Over almost two decades of promoting conservation and environmental sustainability, democracy, respect for socio-environmental rights, and social justice, the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund has observed and reflected with concern on the realities and challenges faced in their daily lives by people who defend human rights and the environment.

Therefore, we have defended and supported forms of organization that follow leaders, collectives, and communities in building their own strategies to defend their rights, combined with the strengthening of sustainable solutions developed by the grassroots communities themselves. Although we have always supported emergencies related to the defense of rights throughout our history, the overwhelming surge in violence observed since 2019 forced us to create a special program to increase our capacity to meet the growing demand for support for these defenders.

After three years of executing the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund's Environment and Climate Justice Defenders Program, we hired an external consultancy to systematize the program's performance, as well as the results, impacts, and the knowledge and contributions that the Casa Fund provides to the agenda of human rights defenders regarding environmental matters.

Based on the assessment by the consultancy, this publication was created. It aims to present the lessons learned by the Casa Fund in the field of environmental defenders; generate reflections and knowledge about socio-environmental philanthropy in line with the theme of human rights, correlating them with climate justice; and bring together a set of articles that can contribute to the presentation of analyses, considerations, experiences and stories of transformation on the different topics, questions and problems linked to the different themes related to this agenda.

Other related themes explored in this publication include culture and the fight for socio-environmental rights, the strengthening of democracy, social control and participation in the defense of socio--environmental conservation, and the violence, conflicts, threats, and risks to which environmental defenders are subjected. It also addresses protection, security, and combating violence for defenders of forests and traditional territories; emergency support and structuring support for personal and territorial defense; and philanthropy for socio-environmental justice, among other related issues.

We present the chapters containing articles written by guest authors and, in parallel, within each article, we present the data generated by the external consultancy of the Casa Fund Defenders Program. These data relate to the issues brought up by each of the texts' authors.

Photo: Attilio Zolin

In the first chapter, **“Casa Fund and the Environment and Climate Justice Defenders Program”**, the program coordination presents the beginning of the strategy, its context, processes, challenges, discoveries, and difficulties. Then, Rubens Harry Born, with **“Environment and human rights: inseparable and historical connections for sustainability”**, addresses the connections between environmental human rights defenders and the climate issue, as well as the protection of the environment and environmental defenders. Ensuring access to environmental information, public participation in decision-making processes, and access to justice regarding environmental issues is also part of this approach, as is the relationship between defending the rights of forest peoples, combating deforestation and other illegal activities, and the protagonism in responding to the climate crisis.

In the following chapter, **“Support for human and environmental rights defenders in Brazil: challenges and perspectives”**, Raione Lima Campos presents the complexities surrounding the protection of human and environmental rights defenders, the challenges posed by this agenda, and the reflection on how to improve support capabilities for the individuals and organizations at risk. The chapter also addresses the importance of the support network´s leading role for territories and the process of deep listening to local organizations and communities.

Next, Alejandra Helbein and Sheila Tanaka present the article **“There is no socio-environmental justice without gender justice and collective care”**. Some views in this article focus on a resilient, sustainable society that recognizes and combats gender, racial and class inequalities and the growing threats and acts of gender-based violence against human rights defenders. It also discusses how financial support and strengthening of capacities aimed at care, self-care, and mutual care actions towards women defenders is important in the defense of territories.

Next, the article **“Integral Security for defenders: the importance of the support network and philanthropy”** is presented, in which Luciana Ferreira da Silva reflects on the challenges of comprehensive security for people and organizations defending human rights and the environment, the challenges of raising awareness and engaging organizations in aspects regarding security, territorial protection and the importance

of this protection being built from the territory outwards, and also on the relationship between comprehensive protection, territorial protection and climate justice.

Soon after, Sandra Carvalho, with the article **“Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Brazil: a retrospective”,** provides a brief historical review that contextualizes the adoption in Brazil of a public policy for the protection of human rights defenders, based on the demands of civil society, in the face of a scenario of serious violations.

Júlia Lima, in the article **“Socio-environmental conflicts and protection of human rights defenders: contributions to philanthropy”**, discusses collaborative philanthropy in supporting human and environmental rights defenders. The author addresses topics such as networking, cooperation, and action between funders and organizations supporting defenders; how to overcome barriers to reaching and supporting such individuals at risk, establishing areas where collaboration between funds and organizations would help to increase their protection, and how the work of funds and organizations can be more effective, with a greater impact on the protection of defenders. She also addresses the need to mobilize funds to develop strategies that allow such funds to be flexible, and targeted to those who need it, so that they can be deployed quickly and safely.

Finally, in the last chapter, **Conclusions**, Casa Fund presents the lessons learned, the impacts of the program, with results and benefits that occurred after the support was provided. It also presents reflections on the contributions of Casa Fund to the agenda of environmental defenders and the future perspectives for Casa Fund’s Environment and Climate Justice Defenders Program.

Photo: Attilio Zolin

2. CASA FUND AND THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE JUSTICE DEFENDERS PROGRAM

THE COLLABORATIVE ORIGIN OF THE PROGRAM AND REFLECTIONS FOR THE FIELD OF PHILANTHROPY

Authors: Cristina Orpheo[3] e Maria Amália Souza[4]

[3] Executive Director of the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund

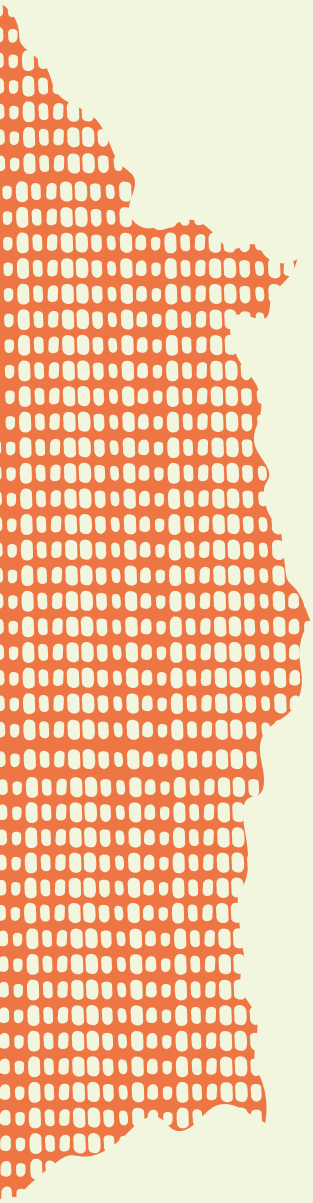
[4] Founder and Director of Strategic Development at the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund

Violence against defenders is part of Brazil's history. For 10 years, Brazil ranked first among the most dangerous countries for land and environmental defenders in the annual reports of the organization Global Witness. However, in 2018, during the presidential candidate's campaign, and with his ensuing victory, the threats to this group exacerbated very quickly. His rhetoric was filled with clear messages stating that he had no interest in protecting the large national biomes, let alone guaranteeing land for their protectors. Quite the contrary, he set in motion a rapid process of dismantling any governmental structure that could protect the defenders or prevent the advance of destruction over these large territories, exponentially worsening the violence against their guardians.

Casa Fund has been supporting not only the improvement of the lives of the most vulnerable populations in these territories for almost two decades but also long resistance processes against the destruction of many others. Therefore, we had already built a strong relationship of respect and trust with a large number of local institutions. This gave our partners confidence in us to begin signalling a critical worsening of this situation in the territories.

At the beginning of 2019, we noticed how violence was coming closer to our network of partners and those we supported, so we decided to initiate a series of conversations and workshops to address the issue of protection. From the activities we mention in this publication – especially the workshop we conducted for 50 people who received support in Alter do Chão – it became clear that we needed to become much more organized, and quickly, in order to respond to this major increase in violence. A small emergency fund was no longer enough: we had to organize ourselves for more comprehensive, systemic responses.

In July 2019, we wrote a letter to international funding partners in an appeal that reflected our distress and concern, hoping to be able to count on immediate resources to respond to this growing demand. The response was also immediate and within a month we had already received one million reais (BRL 1,000,000.00) to start providing the supports. This was a huge encouragement for us and a great demonstration of support and confidence in our capacity and commitment.



COLLABORATION

We immediately began conversations with our former partners in the most threatened territories, expanding these relationships based on these trustworthy references to understand their actual demands and what would be the ideal format to respond to them. We consulted lawyers to understand how, within the Brazilian legislation in force, we could legally transfer these resources to defenders. We also spoke to local funds that already had some experience and had already initiated similar assistance. We consulted international rapid response funds, who are very experienced in these topics, to understand their structures and procedures, so we could be able to structure agile, efficient tools for our transfers.

Within a month we were already able to start meeting some demands, while still building our internal capacity to understand such a complex universe. Understanding the existing infrastructure in this area, and where we could contribute the most with our work was fundamental. Very quickly it became clear that, despite the long experience of some international institutions in offering rapid response, particularly in the Amazon, with such remote regions where defenders hid in villages neighboring their territories, without communication, to protect their own lives and those of their families, the only form of support would have to be given in local currency to be delivered in cash by local supporters who were trustworthy enough to know where the defenders were hiding. This overwhelming reality demonstrated that the most efficient place for Casa Fund in this context would be to manage a collective fund along with the most experienced partners, where we would operate in consonance and constant consultation, using the only possible means of support in this context – local currency.

In November 2019, we organized an in-person workshop with several partners, including national and international funders, local support groups, social lawyers, and some of the defenders we were supporting, to further deepen our collective understanding of the situation, and jointly define priorities of assistance within the most vulnerable contexts.

As this context of violence continued to worsen and this collective effort would clearly have to continue in the long term, in January 2020 we hired a coordinator to facilitate this entire process, which included relations with financing partners and local partners, in addition to processing all the supports. It was a herculean, deeply painful task, as we were dealing with people who were at extreme risk, in a situation of great tension and danger. It was a colossal challenge, and each process had to be handled with a high level of delicacy, care, hospitality, and absolute confidentiality.

We also realized that working on this issue required us to build a deeper knowledge of this field and create relationships with specialized actors. Amid such a reactionary government, we needed to surround ourselves with more support. That was when WWF-Brazil, one of the first supporters of this program, invited us to co-host four webinars on Environmental Defenders together with the French Embassy in Brazil. This helped us to create a relationship with the international organizations most focused on this subject, such as the UN agencies for human rights, other embassies interested in this context, and Brazilian institutions that have worked with HRs in Brazil for decades.

We then built capacity, political support, and gathered partners in the field and financial partners. We have built a network of trust in the territory to channel requests from defenders, and also a wide network of consultation and constant exchanges, to keep us always updated and active in this scenario. We never ran out of resources for this program. Every time demand increased, a partner came forward. This was of great encouragement to our entire team, as in addition to coordinating this program, we were all very involved daily, suffering great pressure due to the dark times in which we were living.

INVISIBILITY

To provide support of this nature, we needed to be invisible to the system. Even though we complied with all laws and regulations regarding the transfer of funds, we needed to keep this aspect of our work under the radar. Therefore, in addition to working in this field – which was new for us – we also had to think about protecting our entire team, producing sophisticated security protocols, both physical and digital. Some aspects of this protocol included: traveling in pairs; always maintaining contact with the group upon departure and arrival; being discrete when having conversations in public places; registering in accommodations without institutional ties; encrypting all documents; increasing the security of our equipment passwords; migrating our emails and the entire data management system to secure servers abroad, cleaning up our institutional and personal social media accounts; changing our public language to highlight our work on sustainable solutions, and never publicly disclosing details of the defenders program.

We did everything we could possibly do to protect our local partners.

COORDINATION

he longer that government remained in office, the more the violence increased. Some local leaders were already well-known nationally and even internationally and had other funders. We began to realize that because of their personal situation, the defenders were asking everyone for help, and this began to cause agitation and confusion in the territories because ,while one defender received more support, others had nothing. We also realized that there was the risk of providing double support for the same demand. We then decided to create a conversation among the main funders to articulate the resources so that they would not be duplicated. We coordinated a space for dialogue with all actors, between funders working in the field and local supporting partners to reduce these problems. Everything was coordinated and we then created a healthy exchange with everyone to better distribute the resources.

The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic further intensified a situation that was already grave.

We heard several times that land grabbers, illegal loggers, miners, and invading farmers were not complying with quarantine measures. As communities became increasingly threatened and vulnerable due to the lack of food and to a greater susceptibility to the disease – especially indigenous peoples – violence further escalated. And we continued providing these responses as best we could, even making two major humanitarian calls for projects to respond to the most serious cases, always in a collaborative manner.

Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

CONTINUITY...

Unfortunately, despite the positive changes in the political scenario, we still do not see an end to this violence. The inspection and protection structures have been completely dismantled, and this will take time to rebuild. The pressure on the territories continues, sometimes migrating between regions, meaning that violence remains extremely present in the lives of the people defending the territories that are, not coincidentally, the most important biomes on the planet. Therefore, Casa Fund now moves toward a third stage of this program, which must continue, unfortunately, for an indefinite period.

Relationships created in times of common crisis become stronger. In the year 2023, Casa Socio-Environmental Fund promoted, in partnership with Comuá Network, the Brazilian Human Rights Fund, the Pastoral Land Commission, and the Tapajós de Fato Collective, the meeting "Talking Circles: Communication, Human Rights and Climate Justice".

We also actively participated in the National Meeting of the Brazilian Committee of Human Rights Defenders Network held by the Brazilian Committee of Human Rights Defenders (CBDDH) in Brasília. Within this meeting, there was a debate table with funds and organizations that financially support and strengthen the capacities of people and organizations defending human rights. In addition to the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund, the Brazilian Human Rights Fund, Fondo de Acción Urgente de América Latina y el Caribe (FAU), FrontLine Defenders, Seeds of Protection Project, and Defending Lives Project (from the National Human Rights Movement), the National Network for the Protection of Journalists and the CBDDH itself were present. In September 2023, we participated in the Second Forum of Human Rights Defenders on Environmental Issues in Latin America and the Caribbean, related to the Escazú agreement, organized by ECLAC-UN (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), about which we also produced a recent publication. This constant articulation and expansion of our understanding is what gives us confidence that we can always improve our form of providing support within this context. There were many other spaces where we have been active in recent years.

We are increasingly involved and committed to this discussion and are now becoming a reference for this area within philanthropy. Adapting our systems to respond to the actual demands from the field is nothing new for Casa Fund. On the contrary, it is the reason we exist. To truly provide active and effective philanthropy, it is necessary to be willing to constantly change, reorganize, relearn, and make things happen. This program is the sheer story of this desire to fulfill our role of providing financial support and strengthening capacities for the most vulnerable populations within our most important natural ecosystems, those responsible for maintaining life on the planet and for climate regulation.

Although the study technically covers the period from 2019 to 2022, we want to aggregate the numbers from 2023 at this point to demonstrate a more complete picture of the greater impact of this program so far.

From August 2019 to August 2023, the Program provided, through the Rapid Response Fund, 264 project fundings, a total of BRL 3,525,000.00 donated directly to defenders.

This, for us, is a story of resilience that is worth telling, because it belongs to us, to our local partners, to the defenders, and to a large collective, all determined to fight against this permanent state of violence that we experience in Brazil. We hope you stay with us over the following pages to discover the result of this beautiful journey.

ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE JUSTICE DEFENDERS PROGRAM

Author: Rodrigo Montaldi

Over the years, when providing support to community-based groups, Casa Fund realized that the greater the threat a region was under, the greater the vulnerability of the people who are trying to protect it, that is, environmental human rights defenders. They became the target of threats, violence, and violations of their rights. Due to the challenging political scenario, characterized by the arrival of an extreme right-wing government in 2019, threats to natural territories of financial interest have increased greatly, and Casa Fund has found itself increasingly required to provide support in such situations. There was no longer any way to respond to this context with only some emergency support: a well-structured program was necessary. It was then that Casa Fund set in motion a Program for Environmental and Climate Justice Defenders, a Rapid Response Fund for Environmental Defenders in the territories mapped as those with the greatest violations, located in the Legal Amazon, but also expanding in 2021 into MATOPIBA (the states of Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí, and Bahia).

To respond to this scenario seriously and respectfully, this Program involved a rich process of direct listening with the main actors in the most threatened regions, first through individual conversations, and eventually through a series of workshops and meetings. These involved organizations that work with the defense of rights, as well as those that work directly with some people under threat, so that an eventual program could truly reflect the actual demands of the territories, and thus offer the best possible response. This process took place throughout 2019.

The next step, in partnership with a diverse group of organizations, was to carry out four training processes: the first focused on the physical safety of urban activists in large demonstrations in metropolitan areas; the second was a workshop that brought together Amazonian leaders and focused on communication security and the physical security of the territory. The third training process was aimed at the Casa Fund team, focusing on the construction of the Security Policy and Institutional Security Protocols, encompassing several measures implemented diligently, from the physical safety of each team member, digital security of each piece of equipment, encryption, and protection of institutional data, among many others.

In addition to these thematic workshops, Casa Fund organized a fourth process, which was a strategic meeting in November 2019 with more than 50 partners from Amazonian territories: defenders, social lawyers, funds and financiers, partner organizations, among others. This meeting promoted a deeper discussion and diagnosis of the reality of defenders, exploring ways to strengthen these people and their support networks in the territories. Thus, together with local stakeholders, it was possible to truly understand the existing challenges and find the best strategies to respond to them efficiently and at the same time carefully.

It was decided, based on these listening processes, that the Casa Fund's Environment and Climate Justice Defenders Program would begin with a Rapid Response Fund and would respond to urgent/emergency situations caused by human and environmental rights violations, focusing on leaders and groups from vulnerable communities in regions of socio-environmental conflicts located in the Legal Amazon. This could be achieved through individual support as well, but mainly through collective and community support, understanding that the greatest effectiveness lies in a protective action thought out collectively, reducing any individualization within a struggle that is mainly collective. The focus of the Rapid Response Fund is aimed at serving three potential lines of assistance: i) support for basic and emergency needs; ii) support for actions that directly involve protecting life; iii) support for actions that interface with the resumption of the professional and productive lives of defenders.

In 2022, after three years of operation of the Rapid Response Fund, and with dozens of fundings given to Defenders, we realized the need to move to a second step in the Program: providing support for projects with more structuring actions, whether for the preparation of security plans, whether for advocacy actions on the participatory management councils of state protection programs for defenders or in support of institutional strengthening of organizations that provide direct support to defenders, of social legal advice, in addition to other actions.

With three years of experience in (project) execution, and a need to deepen the understanding of the real scope of the Environment

Photo: Attilio Zolin

and Climate Justice Defenders Program, the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund hires an external consultancy to systematize the performance of the program, as well as the results, impacts, and learnings. Based on the external assessment, this publication was created with the purpose of presenting the lessons learned by Casa Fund in the field of environmental defenders, generating reflections and knowledge about the role and potential of socio-environmental philanthropy in supporting these people.

Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND MATRIX

The data analyzed in this Assessment originated from the Casa Fund database, which stores information from funding request forms for defenders and collectives, and reports sent after these resources were used.

Since the questions on the forms and reports were, until then, mostly open-ended, the consultancy chose to use a methodology of reading, collecting, categorizing, and systematizing the answers from the transfers we analyzed. Given the reality that the answers to open-ended questions did not always correspond to what was asked, the categorization of answers was validated with Casa Fund so that, from each answer, the data and information that would really answer the questions in the Assessment Matrix were extracted. For some of the questions, both in the initial form and the final report, it was possible to use the comparative methodology of Before and After responses, which allows the analysis of the evolution of a given question over time.

In addition to the Evaluation Matrix, the external consultancy built and validated with Casa Fund a Theory of Change for the Program, to determine indicators that could substantiate an assessment of the reach of the Program's results and an analysis of its impact.

This evaluation matrix includes two axes: Performance and Transformation. Each of these axes has dimensions and, for each dimension, some questions are analyzed. A summary of the evaluation matrix is represented below:

TABLE 01 - SUMMARY OF THE CASA FUND EVALUATION MATRIX

AXIS	DIMENSIONS	QUESTIONS
PERFORMANCE	Program Performance	Profile of organizations and people supported – Male and Female Defenders
		Profile of support provided
		Support Network for Defenders
TRANSFORMATION	Impact of the Program	Changes and benefits that occurred with the support provided
	Casa Fund Learning and Contribution to Defenders	Evaluation of the Casa Fund Defenders Program
		Improvement of the Casa Fund grant application process

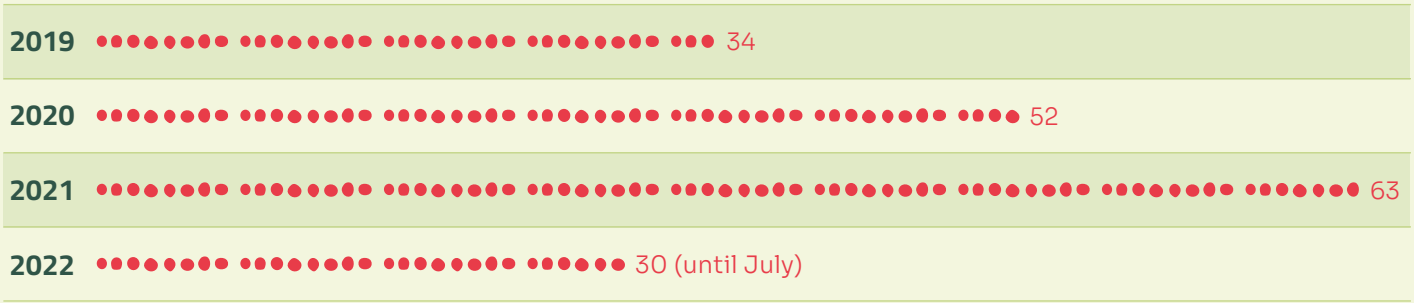
The period analyzed by the external assessment was from 01/08/2019 to 31/07/2022, during which Casa Fund granted 175 supports — a total amount of BRL 2.4 million.

The granted values are shown in the tables below:

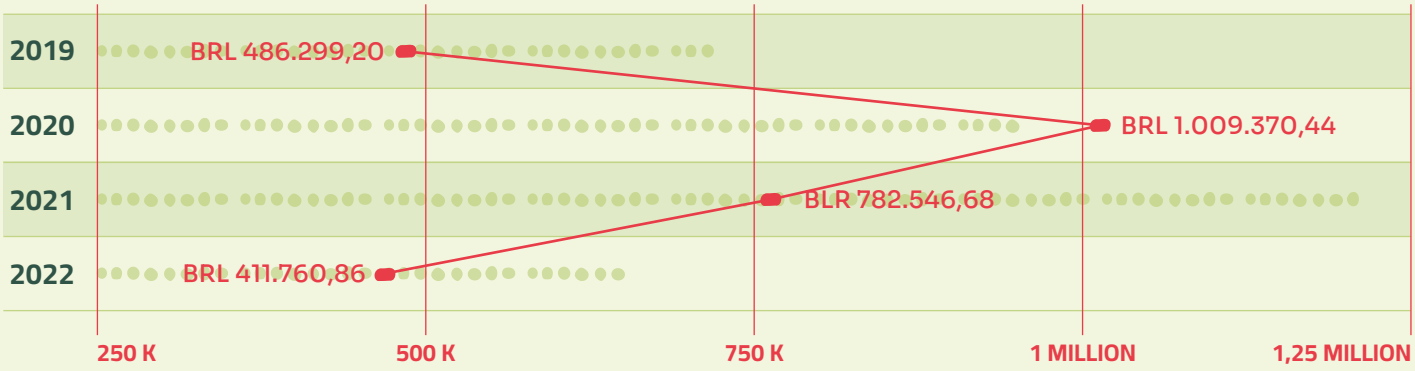
TABLE 02 - SUMMARIES OF AMOUNTS PER SUPPORT

RESPONSES	AMOUNT (R$)
Minimum support Amount	BRL 1.500,00
Average amount per support	BRL 14.168,17
Maximum support Amount	BRL 71.812,00

GRAPH 01 - EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF EMERGENCY GRANTS FOR DEFENDERS



GRAPH 02 - NUMBER AND TOTAL AMOUNT OF EMERGENCY GRANTS BETWEEN 2019 AND 2022 (UNTIL JULY)



It is important to highlight that, among the 175 grants, some people or organizations received funds more than once, some of them receiving funds up to six times. Despite this, after initial exploratory assessments, it was agreed between the consultancy and Casa Fund that, except for very specific items, such as **the grantee's gender** and **the state they were** from, that the 175 fundings were analyzed separately. This occurred because it is understood **that with each grant, the conditions of risk, threat and context to which that same person is exposed to, change**.

3. ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS: INSEPARABLE AND HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Author: Rubens Harry Born[5]

[5]Mr. Born has been a collaborator, for over 40 years, of civil society organizations that work with socio-environmental challenges, democracy, and rights. He participates in international climate change negotiations and monitors public policies associated with global environmental agreements. He is a collaborator at Fundação Esquel Brasil, Movimento Escazú Brasil and FBOMS – Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements for Development and the Environment. He is an advisor to the Brazilian Institute for Consumer Protection – IDEC. He was one of the founders and advisor of the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund. Mr. Born is a civil engineer specializing in environmental engineering; attorney; he holds a master's and doctorate degree in public health.

Over the last few decades, the effects and contributions of people, groups and organizations dedicated to protecting and restoring environmental quality and integrity, as well as promoting sustainability, have been significant.

Among the contributions accumulated during the period are perspectives on democratic governance, participatory management and rights regarding the environment, despite much resistance and neglect in the face of issues and proposals arising from the mobilization around the environmental dimension.

It is not appropriate here, in this brief text, to discuss the different currents of perspectives that are present in the actions and positions of social stakeholders participating in different segments and sectors, including state, intergovernmental, academic institutions, or civil society organizations. However, it is evident that the various initiatives and perspectives have been significant for the evolution and consolidation of the right to a balanced environment and essential for a healthy quality of life — as stated in Article 225 of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution – and also for the mechanisms and bodies of environmental quality management.

In recent years, there has been a growing perception among the population and some sectors of society, in general, that the planetary environmental crisis and localized situations of environmental degradation and pollution are related to the scope of what can, in theory, be conceived as development. Although there is no explicit mention of environmental issues in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by Resolution 217 A (III) of the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948, public, academic, and/or political debate has grown since then. The release of Rachel Carson's book "The Silent Spring" in the early 1960s — seen as an initial milestone in recent "environmental awareness" – contributed, for example, to debates around models of agricultural activities, risks and impacts on health, and the need to transform the chains and criteria of agricultural production.

The different forms of water and atmospheric pollution, motivated, for example, international conferences and agreements, the creation of government bodies, and the formation of principles (such as the polluter pays and the user pays principles) to support approaches, generally of a utilitarian nature of the environment, but in the search for attributions of responsibility with the necessary care to prevent and counteract impacts.

"Protect nature, combat pollution, reuse waste" are some of the slogans that emerged and supported efforts to reverse the various environmental crises arising from human activities. Multiple crises that, as early as 1997, were already considered by the UN Commission on Environment and Development (The Brundtland Commission), in its report "Our Common Future", as a single crisis: the civilizational crisis of the development model. Previously, in June 1972, the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, proclaimed the following in its first paragraph:

"Man is both creature and moulder of his environment, which gives him physical sustenance and affords him the opportunity for intellectual, moral, social and spiritual growth. in the long and tortuous evolution of the human race on this planet a stage has been reached when, through the rapid acceleration of science and technology, man has acquired the power to transform his environment in countless ways and on an unprecedented scale. Both aspects of man's environment the natural and the man-made, are essential to his well-being and to the enjoyment of basic human rights - even the right to life itself."

This anthropocentric perspective, focused on utilitarian approaches to ecosystem goods and services, is evident in many of the principles of the Stockholm Declaration, which also presented the notions of progressiveness and responsibilities in the management of environmental quality, considering the needs of future generations. Despite this, the Stockholm Declaration pointed to aspects that underlie the human right to a dignified life and well-being, as indicated in its Principle 1:

> **"Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being, and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations."**

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as Rio-92 and sometimes Eco-92, took place in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, after the worsening of "ecological" crises". This led to the signing (and subsequent entry into force as from 1994) of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, in addition to non-binding agreements between States: Agenda 21, the Declaration on Conservation of all types of forests, and the Rio de Janeiro Declaration on Environment and Development. This Declaration also denotes the utilitarian perspective towards the environment, but makes explicit reference, in its Principle number 1, to "Human beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature", and states, in Principle 8, that "to achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, States should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption." Special attention should be given to Principle 10 of the Rio de Janeiro Declaration, which became known as the principle of the three rights of access: to information, participation, and justice in environmental matters. Principle 10 says:

> **"Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided."**

Twenty years later, at the Conference on Sustainable Development, also held in Rio de Janeiro, in June 2012, and known as Rio+20, the topics under debate were grouped into two large blocks: the first, called "green economy", covering various themes and sectoral policies (energy, agriculture, etc.) for development transformations, and the second, on governance, notably in the global sphere and in the United Nations System, in order to have more effective and efficient institutions and instruments for the "transition" necessary for sustainability. As a result of Rio+20, the United Nations approved, in 2015, the 2030 Agenda, with 17 SDGs — Sustainable Development Goals — covering 169 targets, which cover topics associated with instrumental rights (e.g., governance and transparency, in SDG 16) and material rights that are important for the transformations expected by the end of the third decade of the 21st century.

In 2015, to face the climate crisis, the Paris Agreement was adopted, which is a treaty that makes up the multilateral climate change regime. It is considered innovative by some, due to the fact that the targets for reducing anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions were defined nationally (the so-called NDC — Nationally Determined Contributions), but as a mechanism to control their compliance, requirements of transparency and periodic assessment (in principle, every five years) of their implementation were established, the first being planned for 2023. Visibility to the issue of the connection between human rights and environmental crises and global warming was a novelty in the negotiation of the Paris Agreement, the result of years of debates and pressure from different segments of society, from environmental groups to human rights institutions, among others. Although politically significant, as it recognized such connections, human rights were only mentioned in the preamble of the treaty, a section that does not result in enforcement mechanisms. However, it is worth highlighting part of the preamble of the Paris Agreement, with this mention of human rights and some of the challenges (both procedural and material) to facing the climate crisis:

Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

"Emphasizing the intrinsic relationship that climate change actions, responses and impacts have with equitable access to sustainable development and eradication of poverty,

Recognizing the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change,

Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights

of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity,

Recognizing the importance of the conservation and enhancement, as appropriate, of sinks and reservoirs of the greenhouse gases referred to in the Convention,

Noting the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth, and noting the importance for some of the concept of 'climate justice', when taking action to address climate change"

(emphasis added by the author of this article).

What became evident, already in 1992, was that it is not enough to pay attention to the challenges that are considered objects of substantive law[5] in environmental matters, that is, that deal with environmental conservation and restoration, the integrity of ecosystems, prevention of pollution, promotion of health and dignity of human life, among other elements, and making efforts in this direction, if there are not adequate actions and standards regarding the instruments and government bodies that are necessary to provide an intact, healthy environment for all people.

Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

Principle 10, among other global principles and declarations, highlighted that instrumental rights are important and necessary to ensure the possibilities of fulfilling the (material) right to a balanced environment.

With Principle 10 as a source of law, two international treaties were drawn up and put into effect to deal with the instrumental rights of access to Information, public participation and justice in environmental matters: (i) the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Escazú Agreement, negotiated between 2015 and 2018, and which came into effect in 2021; (ii) the Aarhus Convention, denomination for the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, adopted by the European Community in 1998. Such agreements with binding obligations from the legal point of view are relevant, as they provide the basic platform of instrumental rights for the exercise of democratic governance of policies and actions aimed at the use of environmental goods and services and the management of environmental quality and integrity.

The Escazú Agreement is also innovative for several reasons: in addition to explaining the principles of progressivity and non-regression in environmental matters, and especially in relation to instrumental rights of access, the regional agreement became the first treaty — and the only one until now — with obligations on the Parties to establish safe conditions for the integrity and work of people, groups and organizations that defend human rights in environmental matters.

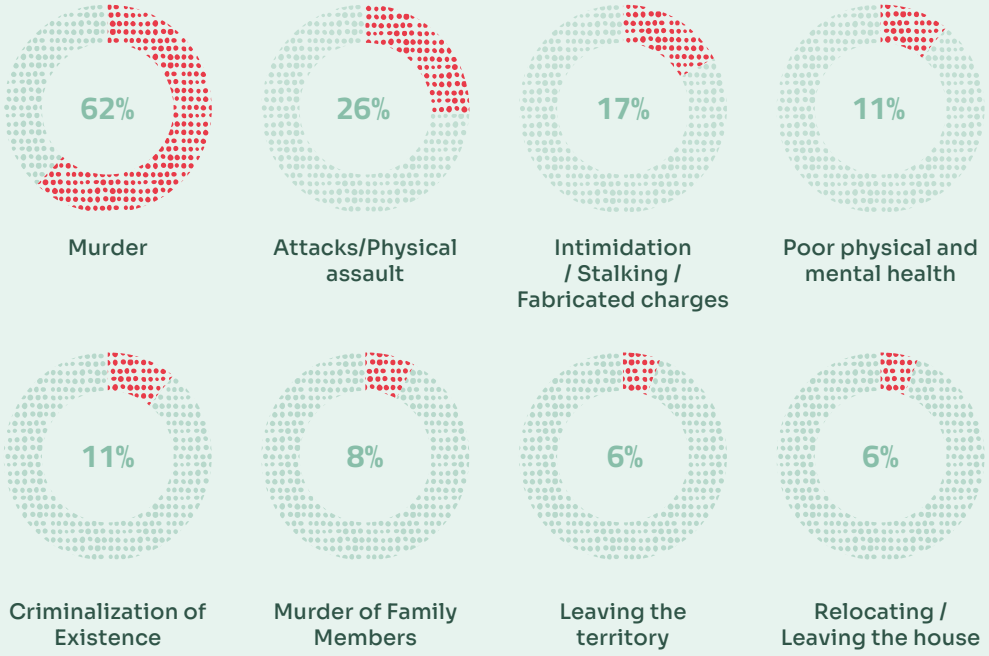
Unfortunately, Latin America is the region in the world with the highest rate of murders, threats and violence against environmental defenders and indigenous peoples, with Brazil being one of the countries with the highest homicide rates and various forms of pressure against environmentalists and indigenous peoples.

In fact, regrettably, actors interested in the exploitation — legal or illegal — of natural resources, constitute part of the scenario that portrays situations of tension and threats to the work of defenders of indigenous territories and other territories destined for traditional communities. These threats also affect groups, leaders, and, sometimes, public agents working in the defense of environmentally protected areas or agricultural settlements. In this field, the Escazú Agreement can provide progress in prevention mechanisms for preventing and sanctioning the occurrence of violence against human rights defenders in environmental matters. By decision of the first Conference of the Parties (CoP1) of the Escazú Agreement, a Forum on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters was established, whose initial function was to draw up a regional action plan so that National States can be more effective in their responsibility to protect defenders. It is expected that this plan will be approved at CoP3, in 2024, considering public consultation (2023) and debates at the Forum's two regional meetings, in Quito, Ecuador (2022) and Panama (2023).

Photo: Attilio Zolin

CONFLICTS, THREATS AND RISKS TO WHICH ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS SUPPORTED BY CASA FUND ARE SUBJECTED TO (FROM 2019 TO 2022).

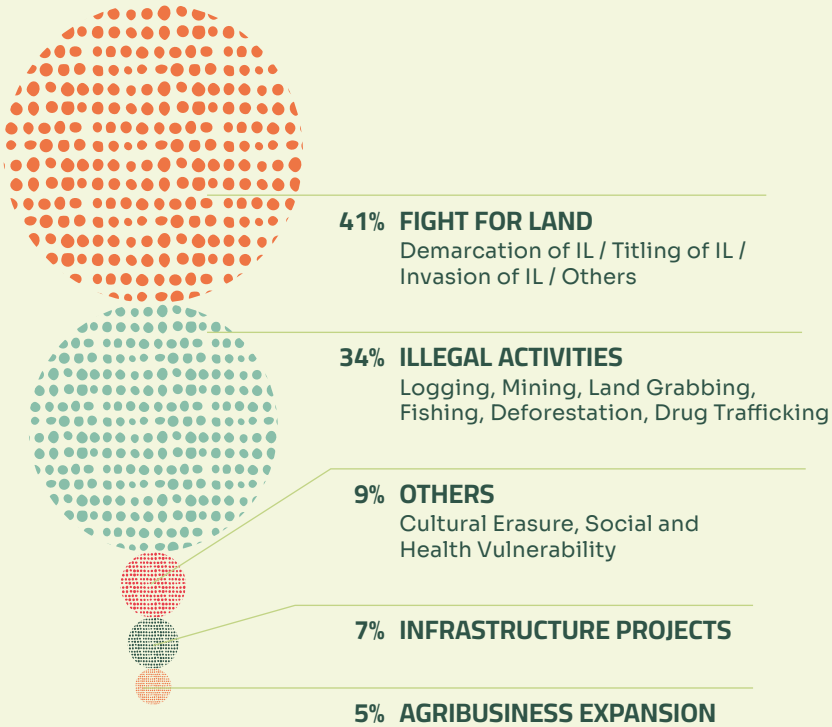
GRAPH 03 - RISKS TO DEFENDERS



GRAPH 04 - SOURCE OF THREATS TO DEFENDERS

FARMERS / LARGE LANDOWNERS	30%
ILLEGAL LOGGER	29%
SQUATTERS / LANDGRABBERS	23%
ILLEGAL PROSPECTORS	20%
PUBLIC AUTHORITY / SERVANTS	14%
COMPANIES / ENTREPRENEURS	13%
FEDERAL POLICE	11%
POLITICIANS	9%
ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES (FISHING)	7%
A SPECIFIC INDIVIDUAL	7%
TRAFFICKERS / TRAFFICKING	5%

GRAPH 05 - REASON / ORIGIN OF HARASSMENT OF DEFENDERS



41% FIGHT FOR LAND
Demarcation of IL / Titling of IL / Invasion of IL / Others

34% ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES
Logging, Mining, Land Grabbing, Fishing, Deforestation, Drug Trafficking

9% OTHERS
Cultural Erasure, Social and Health Vulnerability

7% INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

5% AGRIBUSINESS EXPANSION

Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

GRÁFICO 06 - CONFLICTS AND TENSIONS / DEVELOPMENT VECTORS

FIGHT FOR LAND/AGRARIAN CONFLICT	27%
LUMBER EXTRACTION	23%
LAND GRABBING	21%
NATURAL RESOURCES EXTRACTION	21%
HYDROELECTRIC/DAM	19%
AGRIBUSINESS	19%
MINING COMPANIES	18%
SMALL-SCALE MINERAL EXPLORATION	18%
FARMERS/LANDOWNERS	13%
DEFORESTATION	13%
COMPANIES/PRIVATE SECTOR	10%
HIGHWAYS	9%
CATTLE RANCH	9%
DRUG TRAFFICKING	7%
POLLUTION/CONTAMINATION OF RIVERS	6%
PUBLIC AUTHORITIES/BRAZILIAN STATE	5%
REAL ESTATE SPECULATION	4%
HUNTING	3%
POLICE	3%
PORTS/OIL REFINERIES	2%

Brazil can and must advance in making its government bodies, policies, and tools (mechanisms) for protecting and supporting people, groups and organizations threatened for acting in defense of human rights in socio-environmental matters and/or conservation of assets more effective. Especially because efforts to reduce deforestation — a relevant axis for tackling climate change — and protect biodiversity and water security, depend not only on effective public policies but also on the actions of all sectors of society.

In the case of Brazil, even more so, as the Federal Constitution determines that everyone has a duty to defend the environment and "preserve it for present and future generations".

The command of article 225 contained in the Brazilian constitution is clear: there is the right to an ecologically balanced environment — a common good for the people and essential to a healthy quality of life — which, in return, demands the duty of the Government and the entire community for the attributions foreseen and resulting from the pursuit for sustainability and environmental integrity. There is a doctrinal and jurisprudential recognition in Brazil that the right to a healthy environment, as addressed in the Federal Constitution, is a human right, also protected as an entrenched clause, according to article 60 of the constitutional charter. A similar provision was also inserted in the Constitutions of Portugal and South Africa (SARLET; FENSTERSEIFER, 2011).

Photo: Attilio Zolin

Photo: Attilio Zolin

[7]Principles 14, 18 and 19 of the Rio de Janeiro Declaration on Environment and Development (1992) address the conduct of States regarding prevention and transparency regarding transboundary environmental damage.

[8]ADirect Action of Unconstitutionality n. 4,066, in a decision on the constitutionality of legislation that prohibited the use of asbestos, attributed supralegal status to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal (1989).

At the regional level, a relevant milestone was the approval, at the beginning of 2018, by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, of the "Advisory Opinion 23/17", on the environment and human rights (CORTE, 2018). It was the first time that this Court prepared what should be understood as the right to a healthy environment, also relating it to the social, cultural, and economic rights provisions of the American Convention on Human Rights and the Protocol of San Salvador. In addition to highlighting the interdependence and indivisibility that exist between human rights and sustainable development, the Court affirmed that States are obliged to protect the environment and guarantee and respect the human rights of all people, and, in some special situations, even those outside their territories. They also have a duty to prevent environmental degradation beyond their borders, based on activities carried out in their territories.

Também no âmbito global, ocorreu evolução Also at the global level, there has been progress in recognizing the connections between human rights and the civilizational challenges for environmental protection. After meetings and a prior Resolution (no. 48/13) of 2021 of the UN Human Rights Council (UN, 2021), the United Nations General Assembly, in its Resolution 76/300, recognized, in July 2022, the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right (UN, 2022). Regarding the 2022 Resolution, it is stated (LIMA, 2022) that "the promotion of this right requires the full implementation of existing multilateral environmental agreements under the principles of international environmental law".

In Brazil, a relevant judicial decision taken in the course of ADPF 708 (Claim of Non-Compliance with a Fundamental Precept) before the STF (the Federal Supreme Court), in June 2022, recognized as unconstitutional the government's omission, which began in 2019, in employing and maintaining, annually, resources for the National Climate Change Fund (BORGES, 2022). The decision is also based on the State´s duty to protect the environment and adequately comply with international agreements entered into by Brazil. In this decision, the STF ratified positions expressed in other cases brought to the Court, that environmental law treaties are a "type" of human rights treaties ratified by the country and thus have "supralegal status", i.e., a higher legal hierarchy. Thus, the Paris Agreement and other multilateral environmental treaties have a hierarchical position above ordinary legislation and regulatory decrees.

O agravamento da crise climática, por um lThe aggravation of the climate crisis, on the one hand, and the insufficient implementation of the national goals and commitments of the Paris Agreement, on the other hand, led the UN General Assembly to approve, by consensus, in March 2023, a new resolution to demand that the International Court of Justice, in The Hague (an autonomous body of the United

Nations System) expresses its opinion on the obligations of countries to implement commitments associated with climate change (UN, 2023). This issue has been raised in many legal actions presented in courts in several countries, sometimes demanding effective actions from governments, sometimes demanding responsibility for social and environmental damage caused by enterprises that emit greenhouse gases, for example. These are cases of “climate justice”, even though there are different approaches and concepts to give meaning to the expression. Nevertheless, these are initiatives that are based on the premise of fundamental rights to dignified, environmentally healthy and safe conditions for present and future generations.

Whether for legal actions or for the implementation of public policies and standards appropriate to confronting the “triple environmental crisis” (an expression that has been used by the United Nations to refer to the climate crisis, the crisis of loss and degradation of biodiversity and to the crisis of environmental pollution, in its various forms), it is opportune and relevant to consider approaches and movements in favor of the recognition of an ethics of Nature, which results in “rights of Nature”. Such ethics, with a biocentric approach, can help humanity face the civilizational crisis, which results from utilitarian, commercial models and ethics, which perceive people, and environmental goods and services as objects of an economic “gear”.

In this sense, the debate sparked by the release in 1991 of “Caring for Planet Earth: a Strategy for Sustainable Living”, shortly before Rio-92, was remarkable. It was published by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature), UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), and the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature). The publication presented a set of principles for Sustainable Living, to be employed by countries in actions that also considered aspects of social and economic justice.


Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

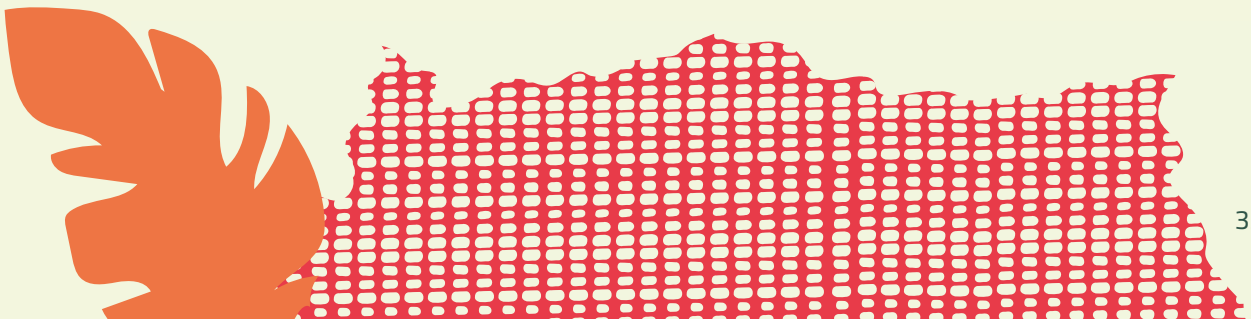
Based on this publication, the Earth Charter emerged in 2000, after years of debates between activists, scientists, parliamentarians, etc. about civilizational challenges for the well-being of all people and for dignified and sustainable lives. The Earth Charter summarized the proposals around four principles, pillars for actions: respect and care for the community of life; ecological integrity; social and economic justice; democracy, non-violence, and peace. It is a non-governmental, voluntary pact, open to state institutions, companies, communities, and civil society organizations. The Earth Charter reaffirms the relevance of the "Ethics of Life". In its preamble, it states that:

"We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. "

And, in its conclusion, the Earth Charter reiterates that:

"In order to build a sustainable global community, the nations of the world must renew their commitment to the United Nations, fulfill their obligations under existing international agreements, and support the implementation of Earth Charter principles with an international legally binding instrument on environment and development."

As we build it, it is necessary to recognize and value the connections between the environment and rights, whether human rights or the rights of nature.



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4. SUPPORT FOR HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN BRAZIL: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

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The national policy for the protection of human rights defenders in Brazil is extremely precarious and disconnected from the different realities in which environmental and human rights defenders are inserted, especially when it comes to service and assistance to various leaders who are at risk and receiving serious death threats.

The Brazilian State is far from being able to advance, in a dependable manner, in the protection of human rights defenders, due to its lack of commitment and investment in the structures necessary to fulfil its obligations regarding the implementation of public policies with the capacity to act directly in the causes that generate violations committed against those who are on the front line in defending rights.

It is worth noting that, between 2019 and 2022, the elected government intensified and contributed significantly to the dismantling of the various policies that protect territories and to the increase in attacks on human rights. Their rhetoric and actions were able to legitimize the use of force and the increase in violence in the four corners of Brazil and, mainly, in the Brazilian Amazon, where the highest rates of rural violence and socio-environmental conflicts are concentrated. This violated the very democratic rule of law and henceforth corroborated Brazil as a dangerous country for environmental activists and human rights defenders.

The upsurge in violence and the escalation of conflicts in the countryside involving the various groups and communities that struggle daily for socio-environmental justice in defense of their communities' human rights — whether in the countryside or the cities — becomes explicit in the most recent data presented by the Pastoral Land Commission (PLC, 2023), which in the last four years has seen a significant increase in violence against people and communities in the countryside, of the rivers and forests.

According to the PLC, in 2022, "the Legal Amazon concentrated 1,107 cases of conflict, which is more than half of all conflicts registered in the country (54.86%); of the 47 murders in the countryside, 34 occurred in this region, totaling 72.35%".

This violence is very much reflected in the reality of those who fight for land and territories, and who defend the forest, their cultures, and their different ways of living, especially with dignity and respect for nature. The PLC also highlighted the numerous assassination attempts and threats against leaders and people who struggle to defend their rights and their communities and social movements: "In 2022 there were 123 attempted assassinations in the countryside, a number 272.72% higher than the 33 cases registered in 2021 and the highest recorded by the PLC in the 21st century."

”Recently, Terra de Direitos and Justiça Global, organizations that work in Brazil in the defense of human rights, released the dossier “On the Frontline: violence against human rights defenders in Brazil”, in which they denounce rights violations against defenders from 2019 to 2022 (SILVA, 2023).

The dossier contains alarming numbers that portray Brazil’s reality over the last four years: “There were 1,171 cases of violence against defenders, with 169 murders.”

The 27 Brazilian states, all represented in the survey, had at least one occurrence recorded during this period. The legacy left by Bolsonarism in Brazil is evident; not that during other governments there was no violence and danger for defenders, but these last four years stand out in several elements that contributed to this scenario of violence: setbacks in rights, dismantling of government bodies, threats and attacks on democracy and patent fascism.

The dossier also highlights the Amazon region as the target of constant attacks and countless rights violations committed against human rights defenders, with emphasis on Brazil’s North region, “with 367 registered cases (31.3%); the state of Pará has the highest number of violation records, 144 occurrences in the period”.

Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

This is the context in which the Programs for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (PPDDHs) have lost even more power and the minimum conditions to meet and articulate the demands arising from the diverse realities of Brazil, thus increasing the number of people at risk (and their demands) and receiving serious threats and reducing the State's capacity to guarantee protection and security. Consequently, Brazil, and especially the Amazon, has become a place of insecurity and fear for those who defend human rights and the forest.

The third phase of the Agro é Fogo (Agro is Fire) dossier brought to light one of the most emblematic cases of grabbing of public land in settlement areas, arson, forest destruction, and serious human rights violations. According to the dossier, "The Terra Nossa SDP (Sustainable Development Project) is clear proof of the role of the State as the main violator of human rights". These are violations of rights within a Settlement Project area with a sustainable approach: a project created to serve families that meet the legal requirements as beneficiaries of the agrarian reform policy, but which in practice coexist with the ineffectiveness of the relevant government bodies and with impunity and serious human rights violations.

Human rights defenders have their identities, ways of life, customs, and cultures; they are mostly located in the rural context, but they also live in the urban context, facing the most diverse difficulties and complexities posed by an unequal, unfair society. They are leaders representing their collectives, communities, social movements, among others; they are individual and collective subjects who fight and are outraged by atrocities and the destruction of natural resources. They advocate for legitimate agendas and for what is already provided for in the Brazilian legal system — especially our Federal Constitution — and international agreements, treaties, and conventions of which Brazil is a signatory, but which it has never been able to comply with in its entirety, such as: agrarian reform, the protection of forests, the territorial rights of traditional peoples and communities, the demarcation of indigenous lands, the titling of quilombos, the right to decent housing, health, education, among other rights that are constantly violated, especially the RIGHT to LIFE.

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Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

Faced with this overwhelming scenario of serious human rights violations, mainly in the Brazilian Amazon, the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund's Environment and Climate Justice Defenders Program emerged. Its purpose is to respond to the urgencies and emergencies that arise in the daily lives of militancy of the numerous environmental activists, leaders, and community-based groups who work daily in defense of human, territorial, and environmental rights.

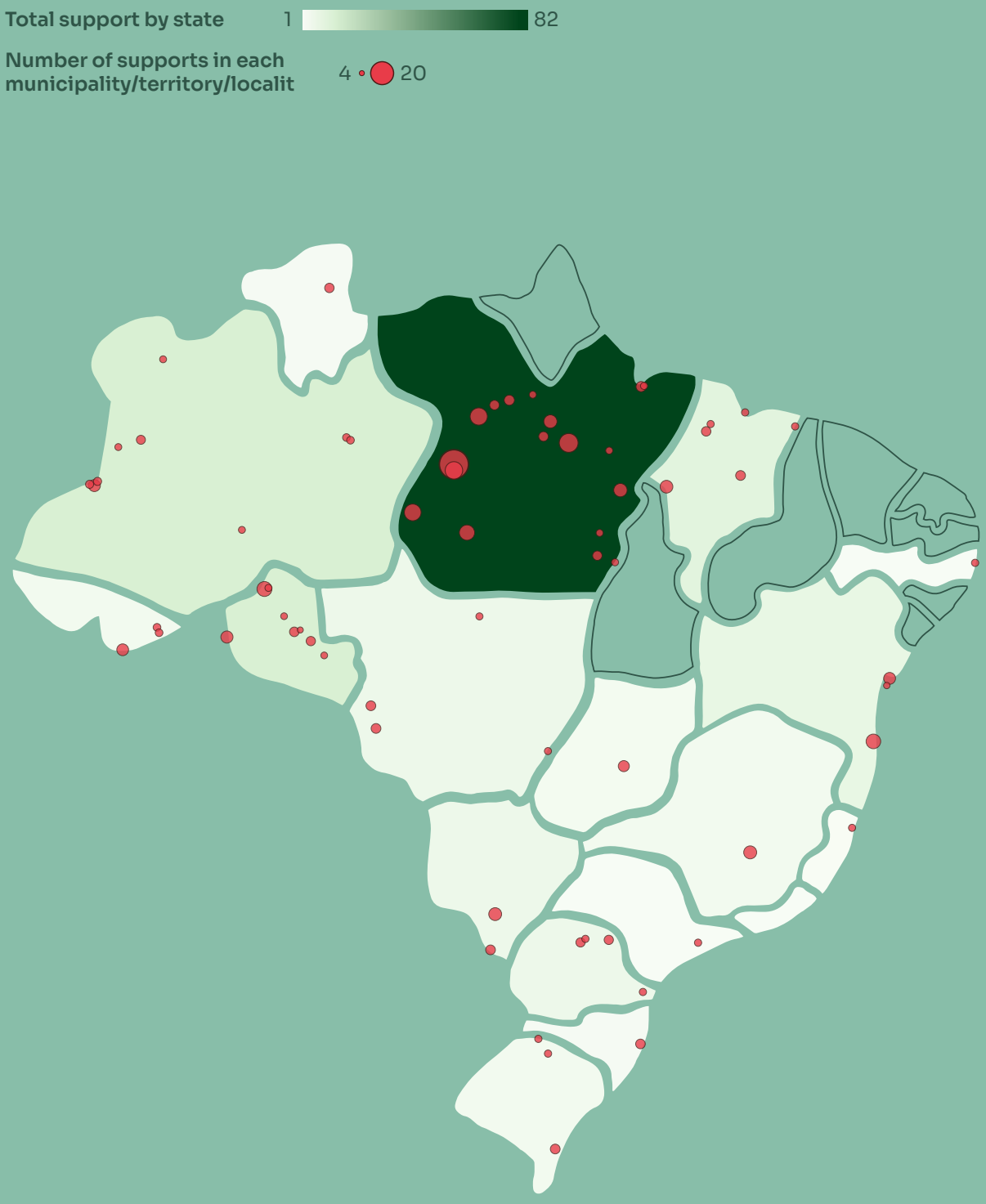
The program was born from listening attentively to groups and communities about the need of their leaders and supported groups who demanded urgent funding to protect their lives and their physical integrity in the context of the violence described above and in the context of the conflicts and disputes, mainly in rural, water and forest communities.

The insecurity in project execution in its various communities led Casa Fund to take the initiative to build a program to meet the demands that arose from leaders, in terms of emergencies in situations of attacks and conflicts, urgently and effectively.

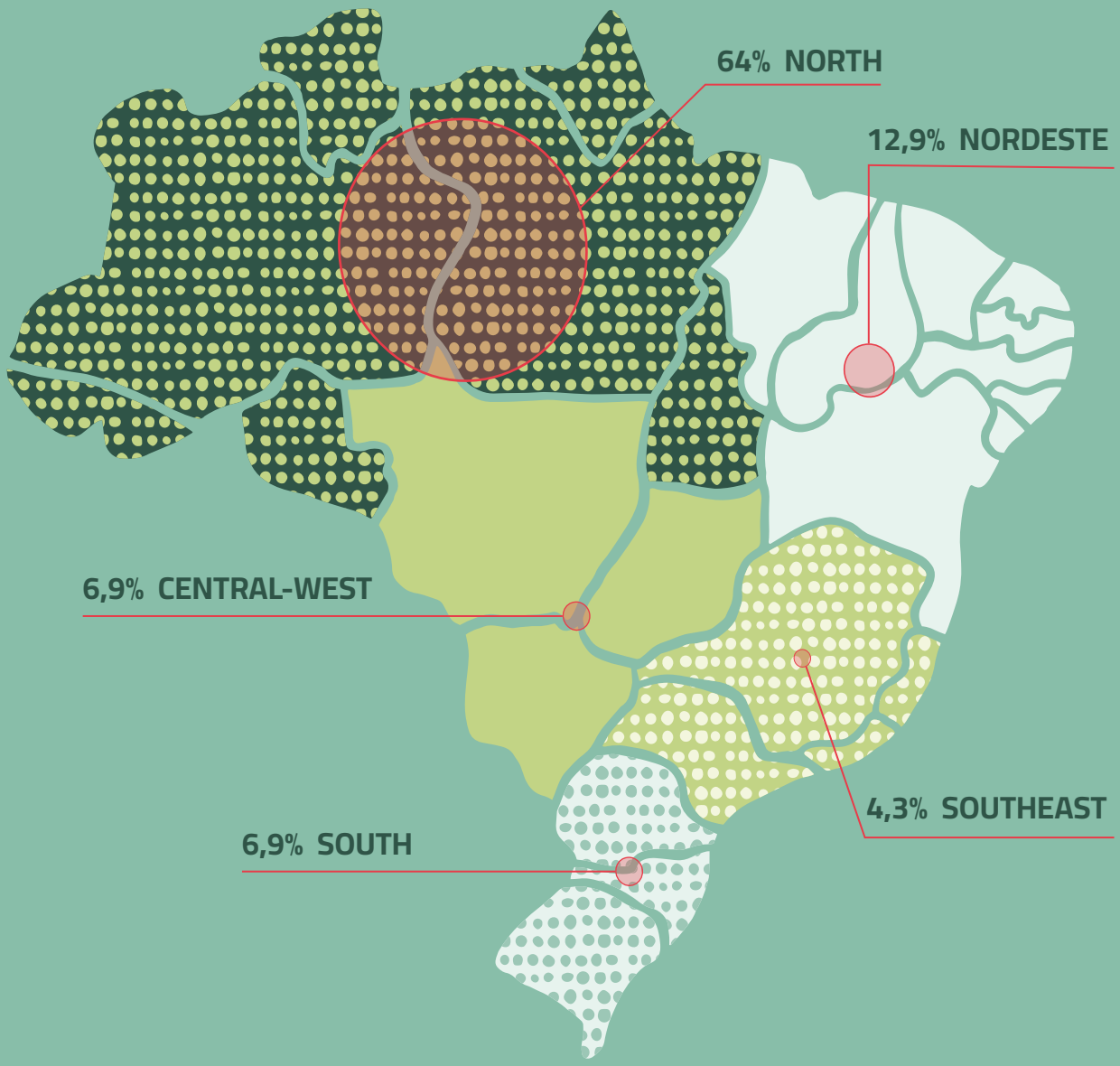
After three years of the program, Casa Fund begins another process of listening and external assessment, thus concluding a database with highly relevant effects and results for a deeper evaluation, where the data reflects reality, mainly in the country's North region, where the largest number of supported defenders were concentrated, 63.8%. The Brazilian Amazon, the stage of major disputes and external interests focused on plundering its existing wealth, was undoubtedly the biome in which there was the highest rate of conflicts and threats against human rights defenders, and, consequently, where the program had the greatest impact, with 76.0% of support allocated.

DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPORT GRANTED TO HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS DEFENDERS BY CASA FUND (AUGUST 2019 TO JULY 2022)

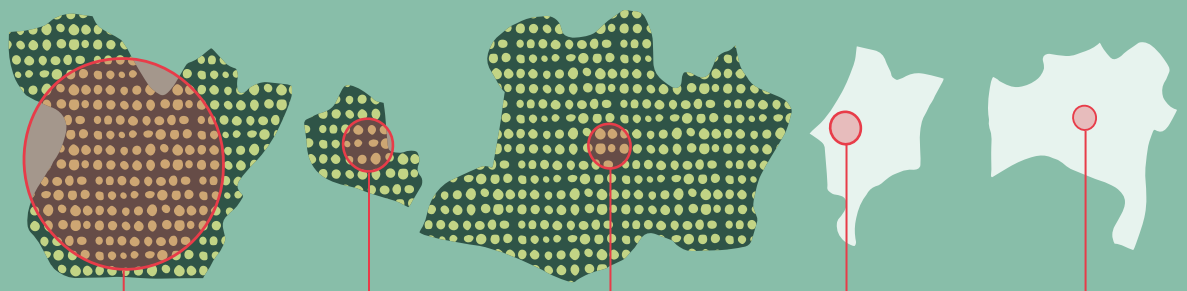
GRAPH 07 - NUMBER OF SUPPORTS



GRAPH 08 - PERCENTAGE OF SUPPORTERS BY REGION



GRAPH 09 - FIVE STATES WITH THE MOST PEOPLE SUPPORTED



PARÁ
52 defenders

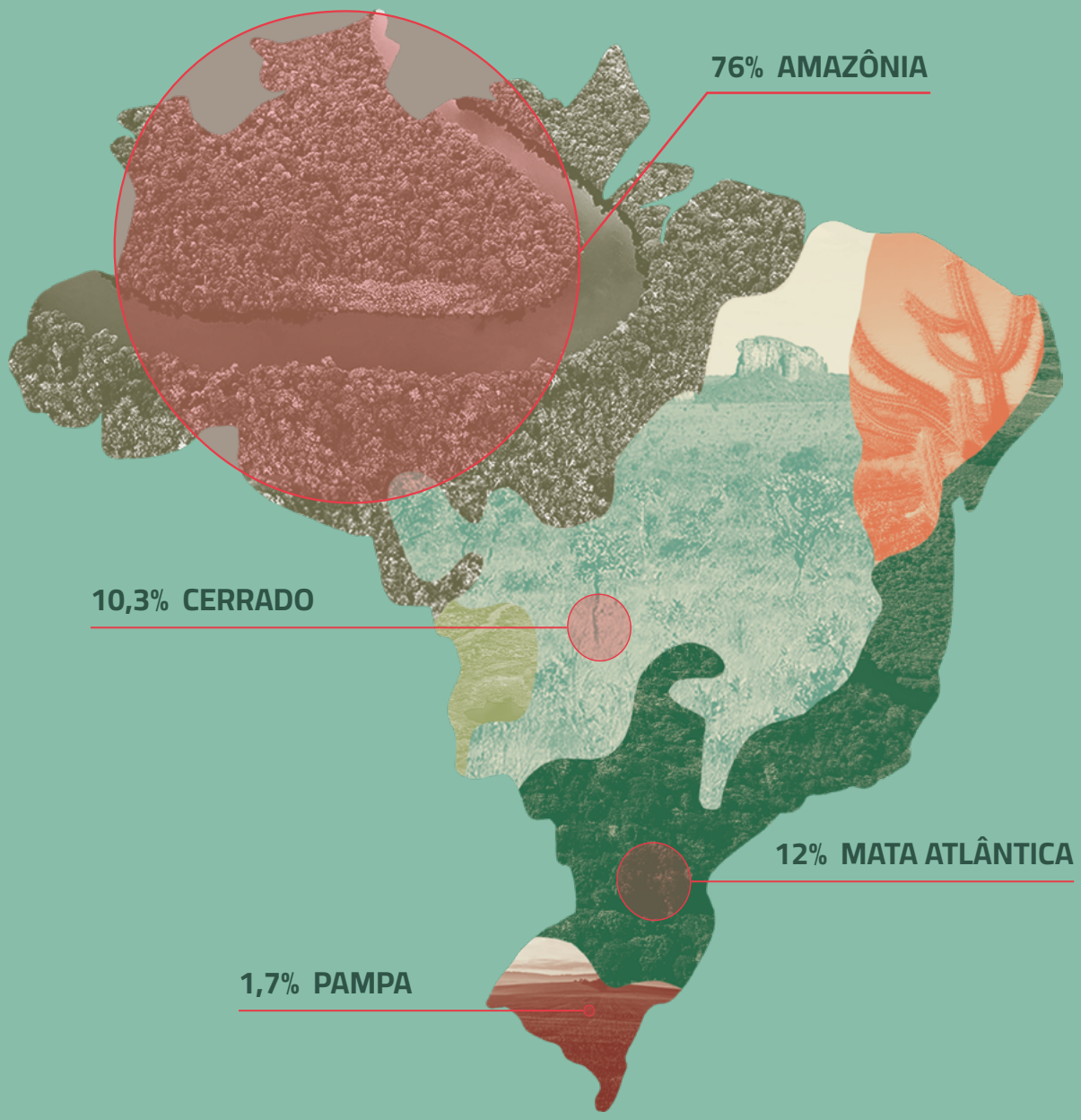
RONDÔNIA
13 defenders

AMAZONAS
11 defenders

MARANHÃO
8 defenders

BAHIA
6 defenders

GRÁFICO 10 - BIOME IN WHICH THE DEFENDERS OPERATE



There is no doubt that it is in the Amazon region where the largest number of people whose lives are threatened are concentrated; human rights defenders who see themselves as guardians of life in the forest, who monitor their territories, who defend the land for those who work on it, who oblige themselves to face their tormentors and fight to continue existing as subjects of right, remaining in their territories in harmony with nature and everything that the Amazonian biodiversity offers to the planet.

The Casa Socio-Environmental Fund, together with its network of partners, accompanied the scenario of setbacks and attacks on the national policy for the protection of human rights and worked through its program to prevent these alarming numbers of violations from becoming even more tragic, acting where the State failed to guarantee protection and security for defenders at risk, mainly in the Brazilian Amazon and in the North region, in the state of Pará. Being one of the states in the federation that stands out most in terms of violence against human and environmental rights defenders, it is worth highlighting that Pará was chosen to host COP 30 in 2025, and the rhetoric of its government shows as environmentally sustainable Pará, with proposals and potential to intervene in climate change. It is up to us to ask ourselves considering these numbers: how can the state that leads in the number of human rights violations stand out as environmentally sustainable? If those who defend this biodiversity are left with no protection and being massacred by the state itself? There is no sustainable climate action if there is no protection for those who actually protect the forest.

The results of the program assessments showed that 72% of the sources of threats are the grabbing of public lands, rampant deforestation, and illegal mining, which contaminates rivers and harms the health, especially of indigenous people, such as the Munduruku in the Tapajós region.

Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

According to studies by Fiocruz, “mercury levels above safe limits were detected in six out of every ten participants in this study, which is, 60%. In communities on the banks of rivers most affected by mining activities, nine out of every ten participants showed high levels of contamination.”

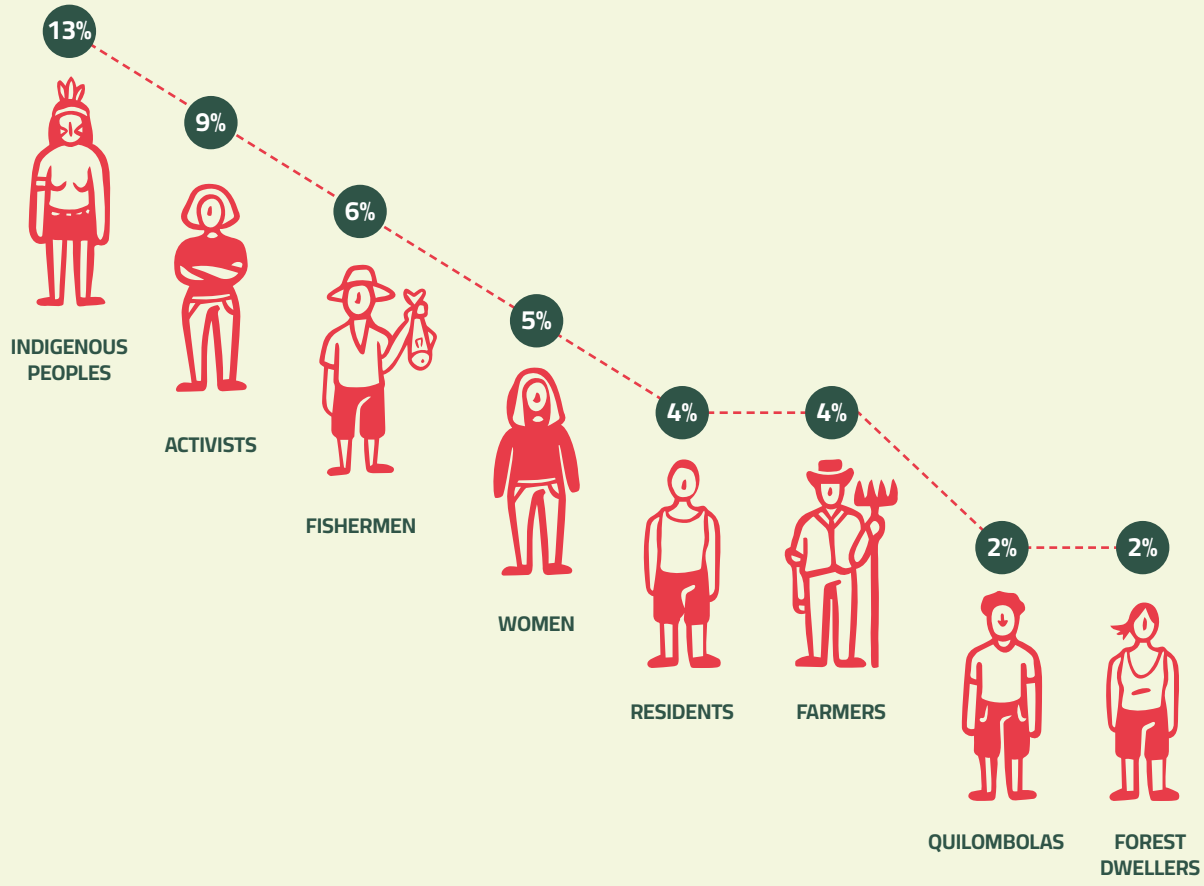
These are the main sources of threats, which do not cease; this is because the State has not yet been able to implement a policy of protection, inspection, and fulfillment of its role of protecting life and life with dignity.

When the State fails to protect life, it is necessary to build mechanisms and alternatives that can ensure the bare minimum conditions so that these groups and people in their diverse collectivities and specificities continue their work and their activism safely, because fighting is a right.

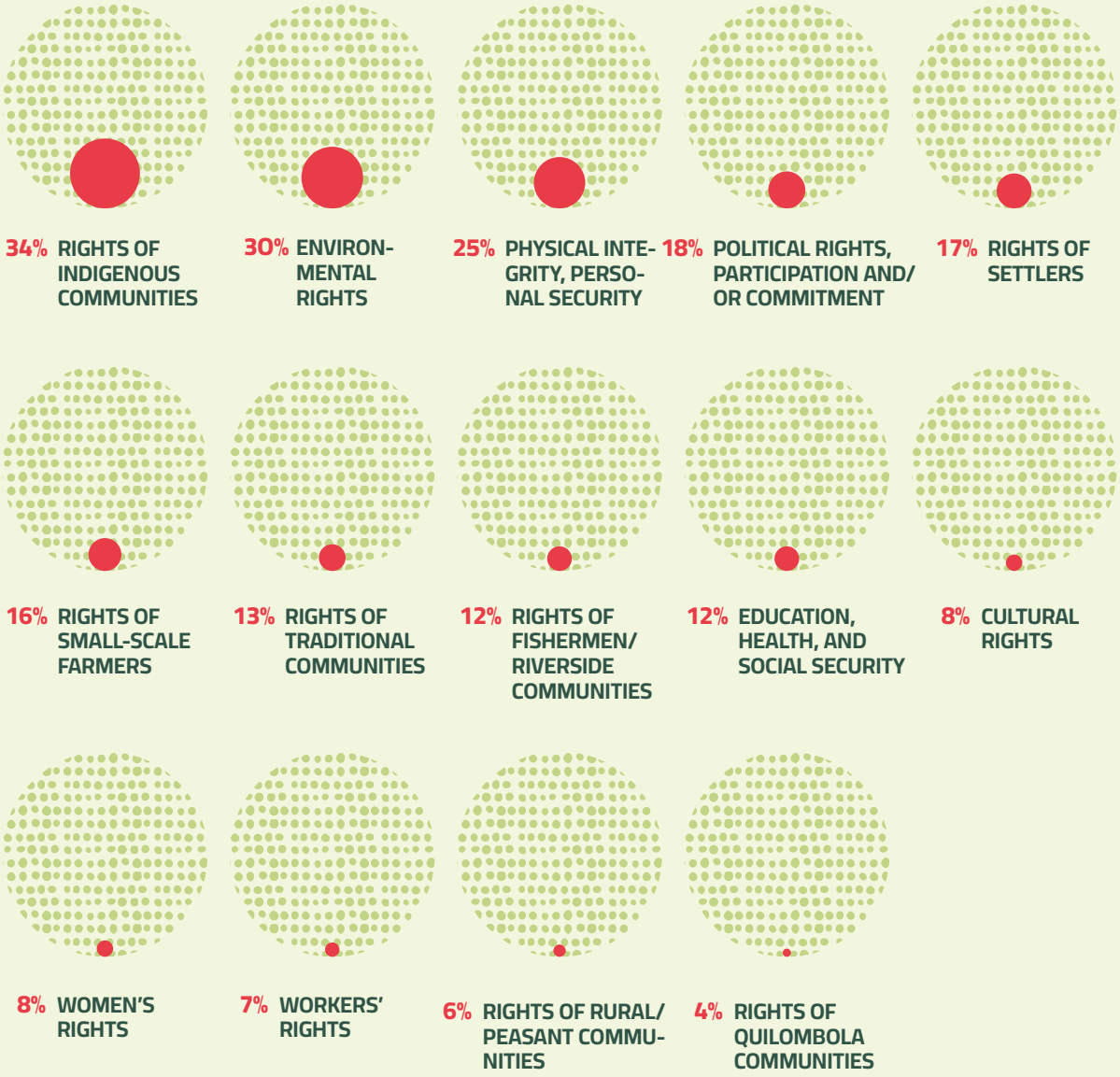
The Casa Fund Defenders Program works precisely with this perspective of strengthening capabilities, in which defenders can improve their safety, self-protection, mental health, and digital security conditions to continue fighting for their rights and the protection of forests and their territories. Strengthening community bases is fundamental in this process, so that support is even more collectivized.

PROFILE OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORTED DEFENDERS FUNDED BY THE CASA FUND:

GRAPH 11 - PROFILE OF DEFENDERS SUPPORTED BY THHE PROGRAM



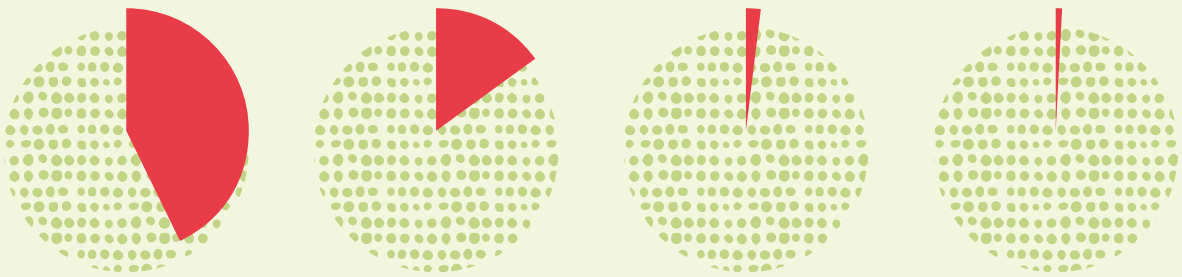
GRAPH 12 - THE ORGANIZATIONS WORK IN DEFENSE OF RIGHTS



GRAPH 13 - ORGANIZATIONS LINES OF ACTION

FOREST PROTECTION	43%
POLITICAL WORK	39%
GUARANTEE OF LAND RIGHTS	35%
SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS	23%
AGROECOLOGY/AGROFORESTRY	21%
CAPACITY BUILDING	21%
AGRICULTURE	19%
PUBLIC POLICIES	19%
WATER RESOURCES	18%
SETTLEMENTS	17%
LEGAL ADVICE	16%
SOCIAL PARTICIPATION	14%
TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE	13%
MEGAPROJECTS	11%
WATER	7%

GRAPH 14 - LEGAL FORMAT OF REQUESTING ORGANIZATIONS



43% COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION

15% CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION

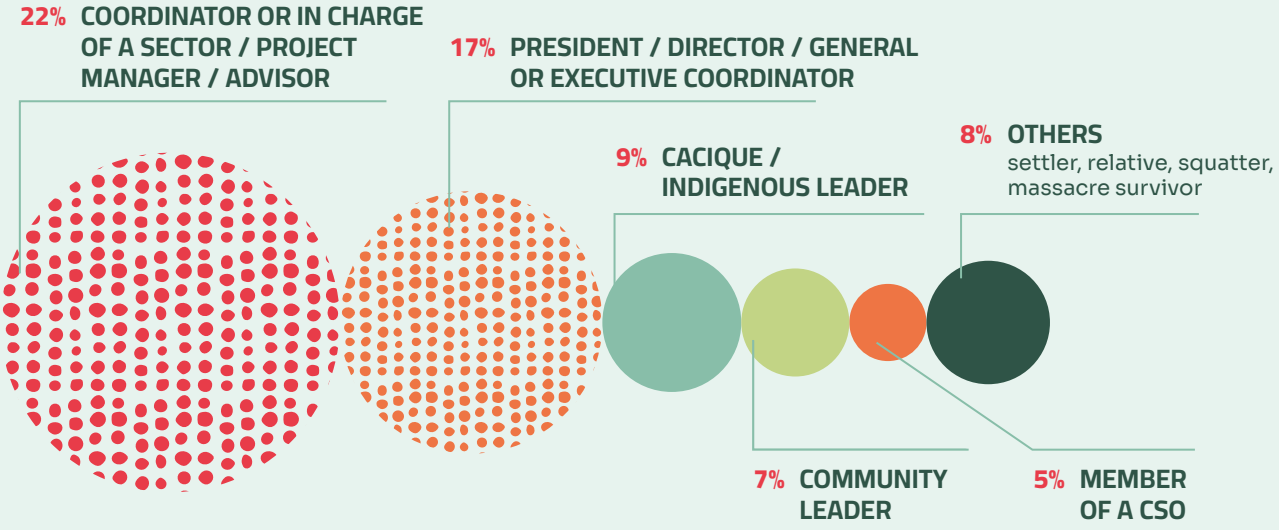
2% DISCUSSION GROUP

1% COUNCILS

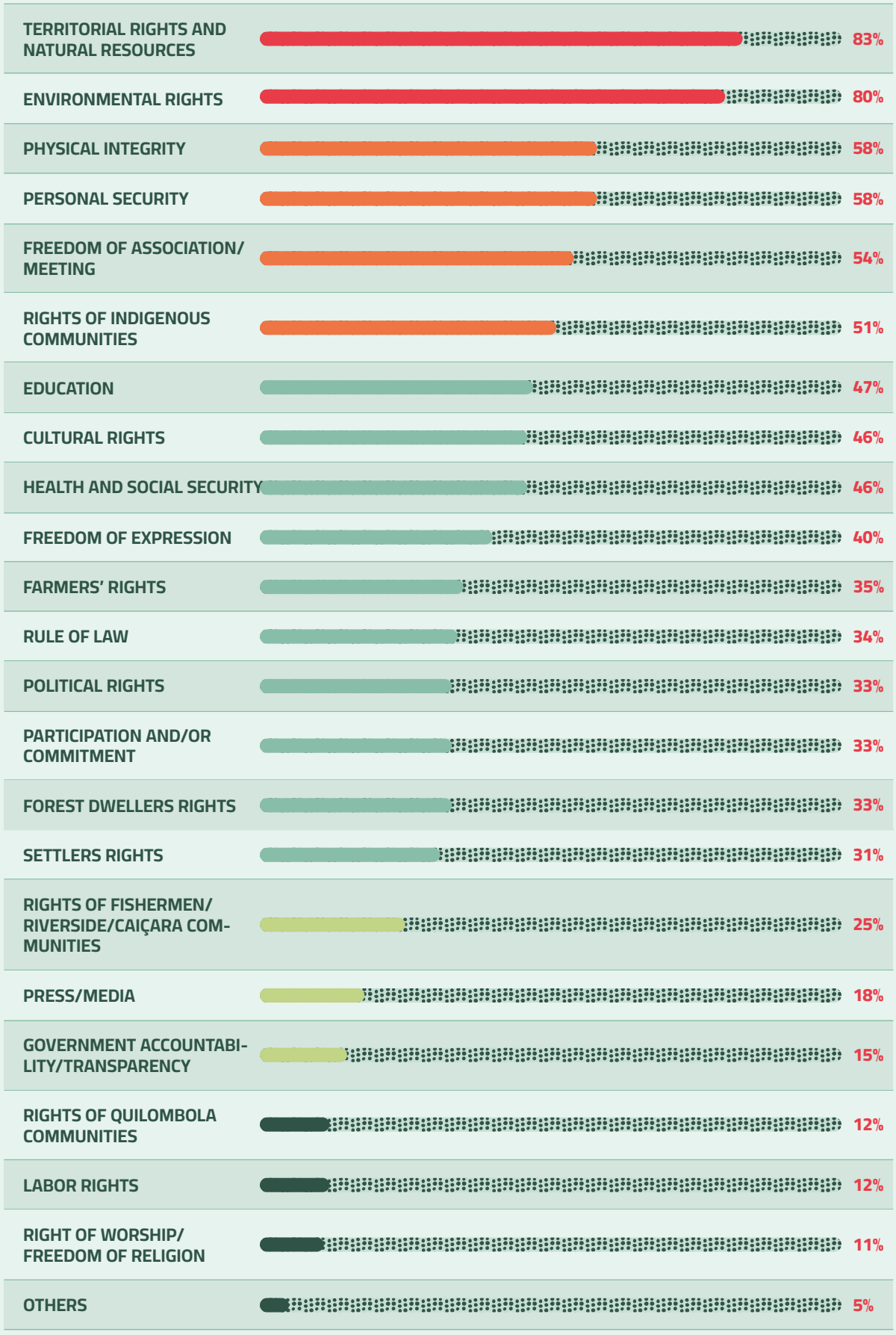

Photo: Attilio Zolin

WORK PROFILE OF DEFENDERS SUPPORTED BY CASA FUND

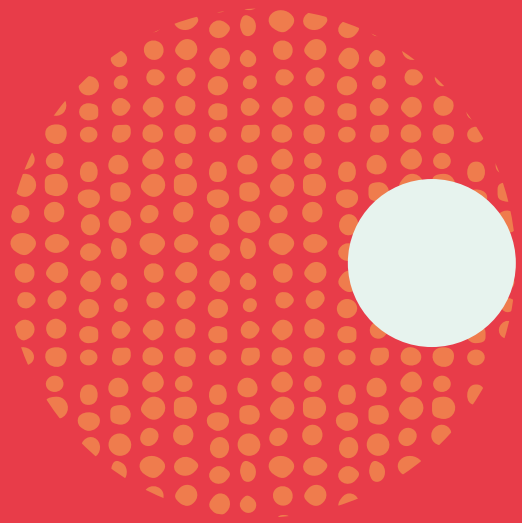
GRAPH 15 - POSITION/FUNCTION/ACTIVITY THAT THE INDIVIDUAL HOLDS IN THE ORGANIZATION



GRAPH 16 - ACTIVITY AREA IN WHICH THE DEFENDER FOCUSES



GRAPH 17 - DEFENDERS ARE FORCED TO LEAVE THEIR RESIDENCES, THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR TERRITORIES:



33%

OF THE DEFENDERS EVALUATED NEEDED TO MOVE AWAY FROM THEIR TERRITORY

- **40** had to leave their territory
- **17** have been away for more than a year
- **11** have been away for more than a month
- **05** needed to leave their state
- **04** needed to move away from their families

The positive results and effects in the execution of the Program could only be achieved over these three years because the program received collaboration from local support networks. These networks are made up of organizations, social movements, some sectors of government institutions, and grassroots associations that in some way support and monitor the daily lives of human rights defenders.

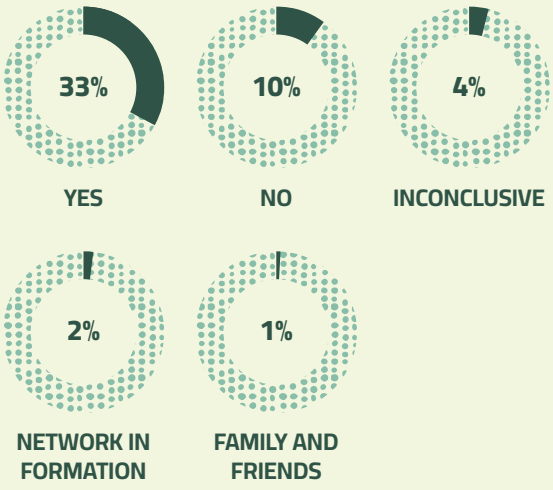
SUPPORT NETWORK FOR DEFENDERS

Respect for diversity and for the various methodologies of each of the organizations that make up the local network has been fundamental to the positive effects of the implementation and performance of the Casa Fund program to support defenders. The network collaborates by ensuring that resources arrive faster and that its deployment will fulfill its purpose; the methodology adopted by Casa Fund has been valuable especially when it comes to the specificities of groups and peoples in the Brazilian Amazon.

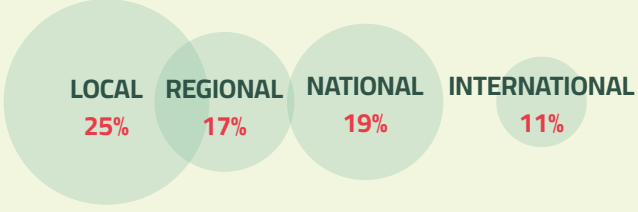
The process of listening attentively and relying on a local support network values the work of those in the field directly facing the worst scenarios of rights violations. The support network methodology strengthens the work that has already been carried out for much longer by organizations and groups that have worked directly with the problems that cause threats and conflicts, always seeking to better understand the reality and context in which human and environmental rights defenders are inserted. Human rights cannot be achieved or defended alone, in isolation and disconnected from reality, because the capitalist system does not allow us to do so. Collectiveness and networking produce positive effects, thus making the process participatory/collaborative and less imposing, a process that is built collectively, always listening to those on the front line in the territories and seeking to improve every day its performance with people and communities, avoiding colonizing attitudes.

34% of the Evaluated Defenders are linked to a network

GRAPH 18 - DO YOU HAVE A SUPPORT NETWORK IN THE TERRITORY?



GRAPH 19 - NATURE OF THE NETWORK



We consider the change of government an important step, the result of the struggle of social movements, communities, indigenous peoples, and various civil society organizations that organized themselves to defeat a far-right government and defend democracy. The restructuring of ministries, especially that of Human Rights, has generated expectations that we can be a Brazil that respects and promotes human rights; however, expectations alone do not change the facts. We must move forward with the restructuring of the protection policy. In the current scenario, we can count on a minister who is committed to this task and the coordination of the federal PPDDH, both with knowledge of the facts and which have articulated improvements within the scope of the national policy to protect human rights defenders, communicators, and environmentalists.

Therefore, despite the change of government and the attempt to restructure the protection policy for human rights defenders in Brazil, the reality of several human rights violations remains, and the threats, risks, and violence do not simply cease with the change of government. This is because the causes that generate threats are linked to structural problems that, historically, have not been resolved. The land issue, especially in the legal Amazon, is one of the main bottlenecks; it includes the demarcation of indigenous lands, the titling of quilombola territories, land regularization in favor of traditional communities, the inspection and protection of forests, and many other issues, which are legitimate agendas for the struggle of defenders at risk.

Alternative programs, such as Casa Fund, together with the network of local supporters, must continue to exist. They play a vital role in strengthening capacities, not only to immediately guarantee the safety and self-protection of people at risk but also contributing to the strengthening of groups and collectives capable of carrying out advocacy actions that enable greater pressure and organized action against the causes that generate threats to environmental human rights defenders. After all, protection and security also involve resolving the causes that generate the numerous forms of human rights violations.

Photo: Attilio Zolin

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5. THERE IS NO SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE WITHOUT GENDER JUSTICE AND COLLECTIVE CARE

Authors: Alejandra Helbein[11] and Sheila Tanaka[12]

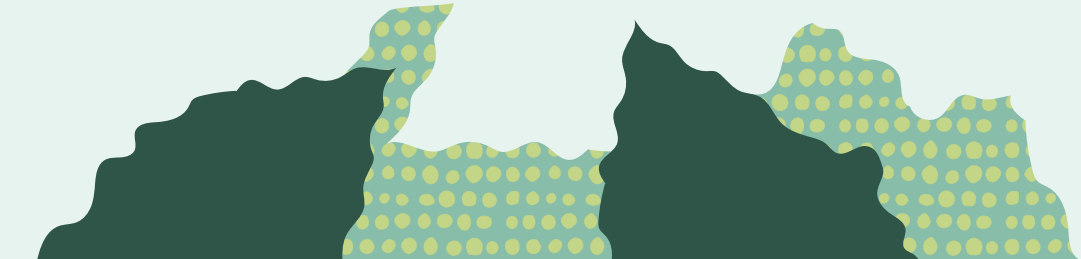
The Latin America and Caribbean region continue to be the most dangerous region in the world for people who defend the territory and the environment (HAINES, 2022). Community leaders across the region are fighting so as not to see the death of their rivers, their crops, their animals, and their people. They are fighting for the survival of their lands, their identities, and cultures.

It is a struggle to sustain life, in which women suffer the greatest impacts and in turn lead resistance against the advance of extractivism, mining, deforestation, and the impacts of agricultural industries and dams.

[11]Alejandra Helbein is the coordinator of the Women and Territories Program at the Urgent Action Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean (UAF-LAC). She has a degree in History from the National University of Colombia, with an emphasis on environmental history. Her investigative work focuses on socio-environmental conflicts in Latin America and the relationships between cultural diversity and the natural world.

[12]Sheila Tanaka is the coordinator of the Rapid Response Grants Program at the Urgent Action Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean (UAF-LAC). She has a degree in International Relations from UNESP-Franca, with a master's degree in Latin American Studies from the Free University of Berlin; she has worked since 2010 with social movements and civil society organizations in Latin America. latino-americanas.

Despite the systematic and historical exclusion of women from deliberative processes and political participation, their leadership in the defense, protection and care of the land is a reality that has been accentuated in recent years as specific spaces for women and LBTIQ+ collectives have flourished in the region.



However, the Latin American territorial and socio-environmental dispute scenarios continue to be marked by the multiple forms of violence suffered by women defenders and gender dissidents, ranging from criminalization, harassment, persecution, intimidation, physical, sexual, psychological and digital attacks, and murders. Reports from grassroots organizations denounce the specific forms of gender-based violence endured by leaders, who face, simultaneously, the delegitimization of their work by their male counterparts and representatives of police and political institutions. The historic naturalization of gender-based violence on the continent intersects with structural racism, and indigenous, black, quilombola, and mixed-race communities report cases of brutal aggression and systematic disrespect for their basic rights by local authorities and in clashes with farmers and companies.[13]

The effects of the various forms of violence suffered by women defenders of territories are often made invisible in the struggles for justice.

Exhaustion, illness, emotional disorders, and loss of social and cultural ties are some examples of recurring impacts experienced by defenders in their political organization process. If, on the one hand, these effects represent real risks for the well-being of the defenders and the continuity of the struggles, on the other hand, they are also frequently overlooked in the planning of community and political actions.

[13]FAU-LAC 2020

Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

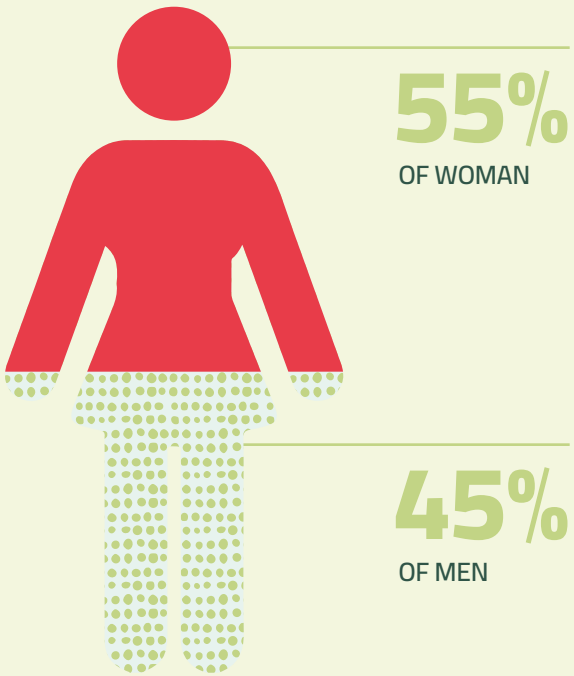
Faced with this reality, many groups of women defenders have emerged to strengthen collective care for health and well-being, linking this care to the defense of the territory and the environment.

The defenders rescue ancestral knowledge about the earth-body and the territory-body, according to which the earth is a living organism, in whose body we live, and which has a direct relationship with our own bodies.

They highlight the relationship of interdependence that we have with the environment and territory, the natural resources, and other living beings, and relate the impacts of extractivism on the land with the impacts that they experience in their bodies on a daily basis.

GRAPH 20

AMONG THE EMERGENCY SUPPORT FOR DEFENDERS GRANTED BY CASA FUND,

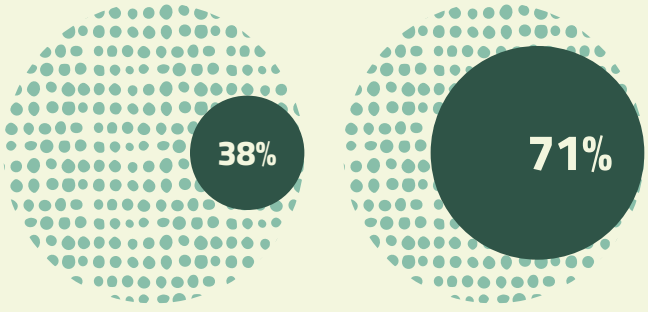


Therefore, defending the territory and the environment is also defending the well-being of the people who care for it. Sustaining life involves meeting not only the material needs but also the psychological, emotional, physical, spiritual and digital needs of defenders, to maintain their daily actions. Protection, security, and collective care are aspects of the same strategy for the continuity of struggles and life in the long term.

The context of the Covid-19 pandemic has brought countless lessons to grassroots organizations and philanthropic organizations regarding the need to take care of maintaining life first, to adapt and to make actions more flexible to strengthen care for defenders. Perspectives on health have become especially important, giving visibility to the relationship between communities and their territory, sustainable modes of production and practices specific to people's cosmovisions (worldviews). It is essential that we incorporate these lessons learned, and that the planning of advocacy, communication, and mobilization activities for human and socio-environmental rights takes into account the multiple dimensions of care necessary to maintain the lives of activists and defenders. It is therefore necessary to guarantee specific financing to promote these actions.

Photo: Fernanda Cunha da Silva

GRAPH 21 - HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS DEFENDERS INDICATE SUFFERING HEALTH AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS PROBLEMS



HEALTH PROBLEMS

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE CASA FUND:

14% of defenders indicated that their health status had improved

28% of defenders indicated that they had experienced improvements in their psychological status

Analysis of the reports allowed us to assess that just having access to emergency financial support is already an important factor in improving the psychological state of defenders and improving their feeling of acceptance.

GRAPH 22 - EVOLUTION OF THE DEFENDER'S HEALTH STATUS

Health status is **good, has been stable** since I requested the support until it ended	11%
Health status is **good, has improved** since I requested the support until it ended	5%
Health status is **fine, has been stable** since I requested the support until it ended	5%
Health status is **fine, but has improved** since I requested the support until it ended	6%
Health status **has been poor** since I requested the support until the end of it	3%
Health status is p**oor, but it has improved** since I requested the support until it ended	3%
Health status **was poor** when I requested the support, and remais poor at the end of the support	1%
Health status **got worse from the time** I requested the support until the end of it	2%

GRAPH 23 - EVOLUTION OF THE DEFENDER'S PSYCHOLOGICAL STATUS

Psychological status is **good, has been stable** since I requested the support until it ended	1%
Psychological status is **good, has improved** since I requested the support until it ended	3%
Psychological is **fine, has been stable** since I requested the support until it ended	5%
Psychological status is **fine, but has improved** since I requested the support until it ended	17%
Psychological status has been **poor** since I requested the support until the end of it	16%
Psychological status is **poor**, but it has **improved** since I requested the support until it ended	8%
Psychological status was **poor** when I requested the support, and remais poor at the end of the support	9%
Psychological status **got worse** from the time I requested the support until the end of it	4%

[14]Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, based in the United States; Africa Urgent Action Fund; Latin America and Caribbean Urgent Action Fund, and Asia and Pacific Urgent Action Fund.

Based on the debate about the centrality of collective care for the sustainability of militancy and activism, the Urgent Action Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean emerged in 2009, the third in a consortium of four sister funds. Driven by the same principles, but with independent ways of operating, Urgent Action Funds around the globe mobilize resources so that organizations and movements of women, trans and non-binary people can act in defense of their rights and access agile, strategic, and direct financing to face unforeseen contexts. We currently support organizations and collectives in more than 110 countries around the world, including areas affected by armed conflict, rising violence, political instability and extreme repression in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Pacific and other regions.

Our political ethics are rooted in collective care and protection. In these years of working with organizations, we have learned that care is integrally related to the protection and safety processes of leaders and organizations, from a perspective in which the collective acts to protect and care for lives in the personal, family, organizational and community scopes. We also learned that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to care. What works for one group does not necessarily make sense for another, which is why it is important to constantly listen to the contexts, identities and particularities of groups working in socio-environmental defense.

Photo: Rhaul de Oliveira

Photo: Opá Tenondé

Many of the collective care practices that we have supported over the years are related to the possibility of meeting – highlighting the importance of the face-to-face and physical dimension for reception – to cultivate trust and self-esteem in a collective way, in addition to containment and emotional support in the face of different situations of risk and violence that defenders experience in their personal lives or through their activism. Post-violence containment practices, shelters, relaxation spaces, psychosocial and emotional support workshops, communication campaigns, training workshops and construction of solidarity networks are examples of how women defenders collectively approach and politicize the intimate aspect of violence and micropolitics.

This take on care understands that the protection of the territory also occurs through healing spaces, strengthening cultural identity, and, therefore, from an intergenerational perspective, in which older and younger people have fundamental roles in ensuring the continuity of life.

Strengthening the programs of funds and philanthropic organizations to fully protect the lives and well-being of defenders of the territories is urgent and necessary. The systematization of experiences from these programs are fundamental contributions to the next generations and to current initiatives to care for defenders and their surroundings. By supporting collective care for territorial defenders, we are sowing other possibilities based on diverse identities, knowledge, and experiences in a broad dimension for the Earth and the diversity of life.

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6. INTEGRAL SECURITY FOR DEFENDERS: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUPPORT NETWORK AND PHILANTHROPY

Author: Luciana Ferreira da Silva[15]

Medicine and poison are made from the same leaf. We will then dose the measure for the care and defense of the shoreline villages, the splicing of stories, the harbouring of memories, the vivacity of the body, the stimulation of joy, the cultivation of beauty, the recognition of cycles and sensitivity to the multiple forms that understand existence as ecology.

Luiz Rufino

For at least 7 years, we have been thinking, working, studying, and acting in the field of Integral Security – also called Holistic Security – together with different groups, collectives, communities, organizations, movements in the countryside and peripheries, between the Amazon region and the Pantanal, in Brazil and some Latin American countries. Such educational processes make us believe, as does the epigraph that opens this text, that Integral Security is a diffuse term and under construction, and just like the plants that make medicine and poison, it accompanies the movement of life, changes according to the social and political context of which it is part of.

Recently, during group work, we heard from an indigenous expert his concern regarding the term “Security”, which in his opinion seemed somewhat militarized, especially when dealing with indigenous peoples. “This word Security makes me afraid that everything will turn into prison and dictatorship, we need freedom!”, he said.

In the same conversation, another person told us in response, “Everything we don’t take for ourselves, someone else uses and does what they want... indigenous people use security for many things...”

[15]PhD in Education (Unesp/Rio Claro), she has worked for over 20 years with popular education along with civil society organizations and social movements, schools and universities on different themes, including integral security for activists.

These and other dilemmas were part of our research over the years. We carried out many exercises with the word **Security**. It was open, put to the judgment of social movements, communities, and a number of defenders, almost all of them in high-risk situations. Following the footsteps of Popular Education and Paulo Freire, we searched for the words and generating themes among the groups we worked with, and then the word **Security**, treated by us in the form of a question and not a statement, was given new meaning in the educational processes carried out.

Starting from the question "what is **security** for you?" or "what makes you feel safe?", people engaged in elaborating non-obvious answers, which surprised and moved our practices, transforming everything into new questions: how to do work in the field of security and protection that meets to the specificities and needs of the location, territories, certain ways of life?

In this sense, different ways of doing things and approaching the issue of integral security were constructed, always with a view to doing things with people and not for them.

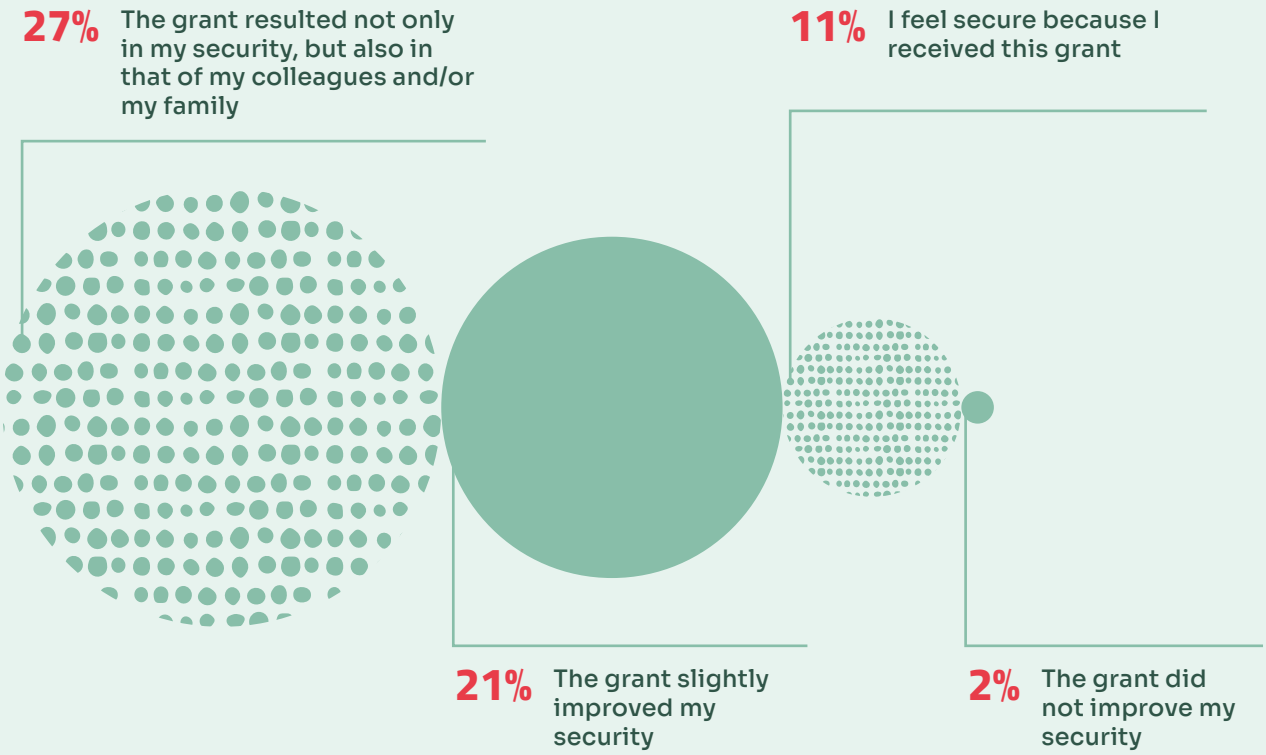
The meeting spaces to talk about Integral Security also became spaces for exchanging knowledge about protection, self-defense, popular organization, strategy development, communication, technologies, in which communities shared ancestral knowledge of resistance and we, in some way, would connect this knowledge to available technologies, then building what we called a "mosaic of possibilities", guided not by risk, but by the possibilities already constituted in that subjective territory.

Photo: Alanna Carneiro

In one of these many learning workshops on Integral Security focusing on digital care, one of the participants used the word "control" as a definition for feeling safe. For him, having control over something brought him the notion of security, with the forest space being safer for him than the internet space, for example.

We also noticed that many defenders linked the sense of security to the sense of belonging to their territory, to the place where they learned to live and resist, they linked the protection of their lives to the protection of their home, their land, a river, and the culture, always from a collective perspective. With native peoples and traditional communities, we learned that life is only possible together, with each other, and that security is something present in all people from a very early age; it is closely linked to the sense of survival.

GRAPH 24 - IMPACT THE GRANT HAD ON SECURITY



With the interactions, learning and the acquisition of technological tools and systems, we followed a significant process of transformation in communities, especially in Brazil's North region. The Covid-19 pandemic opened space for the Internet and so many communication technologies strongly to enter the territories.

However, in the last 4 years, we have been dealing with new dilemmas: disinformation, online gaming addiction, and overexposure to social media. How to place technologies at the service of the fight for rights?

FROM DIGITAL TO INTEGRAL

In our experience, the field of Digital and Information Security was invaded, taken by storm by Integral Security. Perhaps this also happened to other activists and organizations, given the Brazilian historical and social context. In the last 10 years, we have seen the insurgency of social struggles for rights reflect the need for security and protection, especially physical, in equal proportion.

In 2013, exactly 10 years ago, Brazil experienced a moment of great political, social and economic effervescence. The presence of major events, which arrived here to increase the country's visibility as a place suitable for development, shared space with intense demonstrations, especially in large urban centers. In parallel with the political speeches, high-technology surveillance equipment arrived with the purpose of providing a sense of "security" to the world, and thus boosting the country's reliability for holding mega-events. The market for surveillance equipment has grown, and, driven by the advent of Wikileaks and the revelations of Edward Snowden, many collectives are dedicated to studying and acting on the policy of data capture, espionage and surveillance of large corporations and governments.

In 2016, Dilma's government was under great political pressure from both the market and social movements. The president, who had her email account spied on by the United States government, suffered a coup. Her replacement, Michel Temer, imposed strong repression and used information obtained by the secret service to persecute and harass his opponents and also to maintain control over social movements.

[16]Led by journalist Julian Assange, the organization published huge quantities of confidential documents from the United States government, with strong worldwide repercussions.

[17]Edward Snowden is a systems analyst, former NSA contractor who has made public details of several programs that make up the American NSA's global surveillance system.

In In 2018, we witnessed what is most problematic in this relationship between technology and data manipulation: disinformation. Brazil went through an electoral process based on fake news and elected a president who not only took advantage of the lies but also used them to stay in power, transforming social networks and internet communication channels into a stage for defending his interests and disseminating hate speech, especially against social movements and rights defenders.

In 2019, under the pretext of making Brazil a "safe" country, the then president, elected with the motto "every Brazilian has the right to a weapon to defend themselves", committed himself, not only to arming the population but also to "ending all activism". The strategy of freezing government protection actions and the inspection of state bodies creates a true state of war in the country, especially in the countryside and forests: police against population, population against population. Local militias are installed, organizing parallel powers, delegitimizing the State power. Threats, conflicts and murders against activists and defenders have always occurred, but they increased considerably during his government.

According to a report by the Pastoral Land Commission (PLC, 2019), 1,254 incidents of attacks were recorded, an average of five cases per day. Land disputes impacted the lives of 859,023 people, a record since the cases began to be reported by the organization in 1985.

The most recent report released by the organization points out that the Legal Amazon region concentrated around 59% of land conflicts in 2022, with 38% of the 47 people murdered in the field being indigenous, which totals 18 cases, followed by landless workers (9), environmentalists (3), settlers (3) and salaried workers (3). The deaths of indigenous expert Bruno Pereira and journalist Dom Phillips, in the Javari Valley/Amazonas, add to the critical scenario of victims of agrarian conflicts in 2022.

This entire context of violence faced by grassroots social movements, defenders, and activists, changed the work of organized civil society.

Many organizations and collectives that worked in the field of information security and digital care were called upon to act in the emergency, to create some type of relationship with physical and operational security, organizational security and collective or network care, also on account of strong digital mediation. Funds and foundations began to receive many requests for protection and security from defenders, who also could not count on state protection programs, which were completely dismantled. The emergency support lines, especially for the Amazon region and other biomes, such as the Cerrado, were fundamental to ensuring the protection and safety of defenders.

Photo: Alanna Carneiro

INTEGRAL SECURITY, SUPPORT NETWORK AND PHILANTHROPY

The theme of Integral Security is a relatively new subject, but we have in the body, the heart and soul of the Brazilian people, a sequence of ancestral information, that corresponds to struggles and resistance. They are like intuitive protocols, which guide militancy, the defense of territories and ways of life. However, this information is not systematized, communities do not have a security plan, and when an emergency arises, when life is in danger, it is very difficult to act without minimal planning.

GRAPH 25 - DOES THE DEFENDER HAVE A "SECURITY PLAN"?

We also faced the challenge of meeting a gigantic demand from civil society organizations that urgently needed training and technical equipment to deal with threats and emergencies in the field. On the other hand, we also dealt with organizations that often minimized risks, or simply believed they had nothing to hide, with almost no police reports filed on the threats they received, not even a minimum-security protocol in areas of conflict. We monitored situations in which, faced with so many attacks, organizations ended up reacting, without time to plan or reflect on the risks of an action or activity, on measuring the impact of a post or note on social media or media outlets, for example. So, they only sought support when their accounts were hacked, their offices were invaded, or a professional was threatened.

The emergency support provided by national and international funds and foundations, which were essential during the Covid-19 pandemic, also made a huge difference in supporting defenders and their territories in the field of Integral Security. We monitored and followed many initiatives, such as the removal of persons in risk situations; the installation of protection and surveillance equipment, energy, and internet; the acquisition of computers and cell phones; the hiring of lawyers; emergency maintenance or constructions at organization headquarters and activist homes, and many other procedures. This support was created in response to emergencies, based on a relationship of trust and listening to defenders, but these are far from being effective responses to the demand for protection and security in threatened territories.

GRAPH 26 - WHAT DID YOU REQUEST FROM CASA FUND?

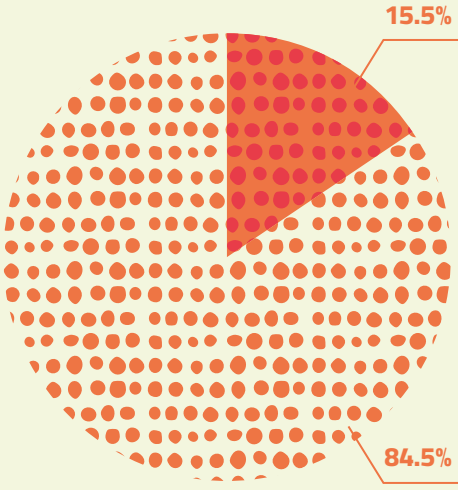
Purchase of security equipment/ services	33%
Subsistence and promotion of the work as a defender or in the defense of rights	32%
Health care (medicines, medical appointments, tests, food safety, etc.)	26%
Travel/transport and related costs	15%
Relocation (housing, transportation, food, etc.)	15%
Infrastructure and basic services (Constructions and renovations, sanitation)	11%
Attention to the family	9%
Institutional development	7%
Support for social legal assistence	5%
Hiring Legal Assistance	4%

Photo: Attilio Zolin

Over the years, we realized that the issue of Integral Security arouses fear, anguish, even paralysis, but these emotions are part of the lives of those who fight for rights. In the midst of war, defenders risk their own lives, their own bodies as the last frontier against the attacks. We accompany many people who are emotionally shaken by the drastic change in their lives and in their families. Far from providing a simple solution to this mental, emotional issue, we noticed that, by sharing the topic and the problem with a support network, “having someone to count on”, we find possibilities to deal with difficult situations when they arise.

We see few processes of sharing and even training activities on this subject; we see defenders and communities with a low impression of risks, and little technical support to act in the face of the emergency. The lack of support and training spaces in Integral Security hinders the creation of a strategic network of action. Defenders, civil society organizations, State agents, and funders need to build knowledge and joint actions to effectively face the problem of violence, political, economic and social crises, the presence of militias, different types of drug trafficking, and profound state neglect in their territories.

GRAPH 27 - CHARACTERISTIC OF THE SUPPORT: WHETHER IT WAS FOR THE COMMUNITY OR FOR AN INDIVIDUAL DEFENDER



Although almost 85% of funds were granted to individuals, funds for the community have proven to be a strategy to stimulate emotional support and a sense of collective belonging, which are so important for the sustained work of defenders, and reinforce the collective sense of the fight and protection of territories and biomes.

Photo: Sigride Ferreira de Souza

Therefore, the lessons learned over these four years of genocidal government, in addition to the two years of a coup-installed government, make us think that we are all committed to building a solid project for the defense of territories, in which security is taken very seriously. A structural and non-emergency project. In this sense, philanthropy plays a fundamental role, by influencing economically so that civil society has integral security plans, based on qualified risk analyses that bring a sense of predictability to the planning of activities, but also that guide the protection of both civil society organizations and defenders in the territories.

Philanthropy, by demonstrating interest in acting not only in emergencies or extreme situations but in promoting a true culture of Integral Security, can help develop capabilities in different spaces and sectors, strengthen the actions of defenders, and even subsidize the construction and implementation of state protection programs for defenders.

Often the support provided to a leader or defender is not enough to guarantee their safety since the target of attacks is the territory, village, community, or quilombo itself. We have monitored situations in which the installation of solar electricity in a village brought more protection than the removal of the threatened leader. Or even support for planting a good crop or purchasing a pulping machine can bring more interesting resources for the community to position itself in the face of a territorial dispute. When it comes to Integral Security, we affirm the need to delve deeper into the contexts, into the way in which layers of protection can be built, understanding the history of threats and the root of conflicts. Experience makes us believe that support for collective community strengthening, with perennial projects that generate work and promote the local culture tends to be more effective than the magical solutions that arrive from specific grants.

More than supporting, it is necessary to question how to offer support.

We opened this text with educator Luiz Rufino (2021, p. 7) and now end with him: “May we prepare our arts of healing and battle and become victorious of this demand that insists on stalking us”.

Our country is experiencing a very favorable moment in the reconstruction of public policies essential to life, especially life in the forest and countryside, where the desire for power is expanding toward. We have a government committed to social causes. We must take advantage of this moment to build layers of protection, produce intelligence on that which disarticulates and disorganizes; we must consolidate an Existence and Resistance project in line with the State and its protective policies, an alliance between civil society organizations, funds and foundations that have Integral Security not only as an emergency line, but as a structuring concept for the right to life... A worthy life for defenders, for their folks, for our folks, and for those who will come.

Photo: Alanna Carneiro

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7. PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN BRAZIL: A RETROSPECTIVE

Author: Sandra Carvalho[18]

This text provides a brief contextualization of the adoption in Brazil – based on the claims of civil society – of a public policy to protect human rights defenders in the face of a scenario of serious violations.

On November 21, 2000, the president of the Rondon do Pará Rural Workers Union, José Dutra da Costa, known as Dezinho, was murdered at the door of his residence, following a history of uninvestigated death threats. Unfortunately, Dezinho's murder was joined by many cases of defenders murdered in the state of Pará in previous years, also with a history of death threats. These include Gabriel Sales Pimenta, lawyer, murdered on July 18, 1982, in Marabá; Sister Adelaide Molinari, on May 2, 1995; João Canuto, President of the Rio Maria Rural Workers Union, December 18, 1985; Paulo Fonteles, lawyer and former state Congressman, murdered on June 11, 1987, in Ananindeua; Paulo and José Canuto, sons of João Canuto, both murdered on April 22, 1990 in Xinguara; Eldorado dos Carajás massacre, April 17, 1996; Onalício Barros, known as Fusquinha, and Valentim Serra, known as Doutor, both murdered on April 26, 1998 in Parauapebas.

[18]Coordinator of the Protection Program for Human Rights and Democracy Defenders at the NGO Justiça Global.

Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

Unfortunately, Dezinho's murder in 2000 did not represent the end of a cycle of violence against human rights defenders in Pará. Many other deaths were added in a short space of time: Trade unionist José Pinheiro, on July 9, 2001; Ademir Alfeu Federicci, known as Dema, on August 25, 2001, in Altamira; trade unionist Bartolomeu Morais da Silva, known as Brasília, on July 21, 2002 in Castelo dos Sonhos; trade unionist Osvaldino Viana de Almeida, known as Prophet, murdered on October 20, 2003; Ribamar Francisco dos Santos, treasurer of the Rondon do Pará Rural Workers Union, and Dezinho's friend, on February 6, 2004; Dorothy Stang, missionary, on February 12, 2005. Nor did Dorothy's murder represent an end to the cycle of killings, but it was a significant milestone for the Human Rights Defenders Protection Policy in Brazil, as we will see later.

This reality of murders of leaders and human rights defenders in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s was not an isolated situation in the state of Pará, but certainly one of the most alarming. It is in the face of this scenario of murders and threats that human rights organizations and social movements in Brazil set out to advocate for the creation of protection mechanisms for their leaders and social fighters/warriors (activists).

The concept of "Human Rights Defenders" began to be introduced in Brazil precisely at the beginning of the 2000s. The United Nations, on December 9, 1998, adopted the "Declaration on the Rights and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" (Human Rights Defenders - United Nations General Assembly Resolution 53/144). The UN Resolution mobilizes a global discussion around the "Human Rights Defenders" category, a political category that brings many doubts about its incorporation into social struggles, but which is gradually being introduced and strengthened, mainly since the creation of the Special Rapporteurship on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, in 2000.

In April 2002 Justiça Global, in partnership with Front Line Defenders, released the first national report on human rights defenders, "On the Front Line: Human Rights Defenders in Brazil, 1997-2001". The report, launched simultaneously in São Paulo and Geneva, had great repercussions, and highlighted the urgency for the protection of human rights defenders in the country. The previous day, April 15, lawyer and human rights defender Joaquim Marcelo Denadai had been murdered in Vila Velha, in the state of Espírito Santo, which led the then Council for the Defense of the Rights of the Human Person to summon a meeting to discuss the theme and the murder of Denadai.

At the regional level, in 2001, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States created the Special Unit of Human Rights Defenders, which became responsible for coordinating the Executive Secretariat's actions on this topic. Subsequently, in 2011 (141st Period of Sessions, March 2011), the Special Unit was replaced by the creation of the Rapporteurship on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders.

Within the civil society, on the American continent, the process of Latin American Consultations on human rights defenders was established, being carried out in three editions (Mexico 2001, Guatemala 2002, and Brazil 2004), with the goals of examining the problems and dangers facing these human rights defenders on the American continent; contributing to their protection and developing a joint agenda with international and regional mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders, in particular with the UN Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and the Defenders Unit of the OAS Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

The Brazilian edition, held in São Paulo from August 25 to 27, 2004, brought together 87 representatives of human rights organizations and social movements from 20 countries, as well as international observers from Africa, Asia, and Europe, who were committed to promoting the creation and strengthening of State protection mechanisms, as well as the concept of defenders and their international bodies in Brazil. It was when Brazilian organizations such as Justiça Global, Terra de Direitos, the National Human Rights Movement, the MST (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, or Landless Rural Workers Movement), the Indigenous Missionary Council, the Pastoral Land Commission, among others, founded the Brazilian Committee of Human Rights Defenders (BCHRD), which was created with the main task of contributing to the strengthening of public policy for the protection of human rights defenders.

Photo: Opá Tenondé

It is important to highlight that in Brazil, in the first months of President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva's first term, a Work Group was created (Ordinances 66 and 89, of May 12 and June 27, 2003, Special Secretariat for Human Rights of the Presidency of the Republic) with the purpose of outlining the public policy to protect human rights defenders in Brazil. With guaranteed social participation, and composed of government bodies from the executive, legislative and judicial branches, the WG was responsible for creating the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (PPDDH), officially launched on October 26, 2004, by the then Minister of the Special Secretariat for Human Rights, Nilmário Miranda.

The PPDDH was initially implemented in the states of Espírito Santo, Pará, and Pernambuco, and a federal team was created to meet the demands of other states in the federation. In the opinion of civil society organizations, the launch of the PPDDH by the government was premature, as basic issues, such as its methodology, were yet to be defined. Also, the way it operated, through agreements signed between the Union, federated states, and civil society, raised several questions and brought some weaknesses to the protection policy. In fact, the PPDDH only began to function properly after the brutal murder of Dorothy Stang, on February 12, 2005, in Anapu, Pará. It is worth noting that, a week before her death, Dorothy had met with members of the PPDDH National Coordination and the then Minister of Human Rights, Nilmário Miranda, during which she reported the threats she had been receiving. The murder of the missionary, with great international repercussion, encouraged the PPDDH, as well as a task force to investigate the homicide.


Photo: Rhaul de Oliveira

Photo: Opá Tenondé

After Dorothy's murder, Maria Joel Dias da Costa (Dezinho's widow and president of the Rondon do Pará Rural Workers Union) was also threatened and became the first human rights defender to be included in the PPDDH.

Initially, the PPDDH was regulated through Decree No. 6,044/2007, which established the concept of human rights defenders as "a person or legal entity, group, institution, organization or social movement that promotes, protects and defends Human Rights, and, due to their work and activity in these circumstances, is in a situation of risk or vulnerability" (art. 1, caput).

Over almost 20 years of the PPDDH's existence, we have not been successful in approving its legal framework. Bill No. 4,575/2009, which was proposed by the Executive branch and establishes and regulates the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, has been processed in the National Congress since 2009. This Bill has undergone numerous modifications and today no longer meets the needs of the protection policy.

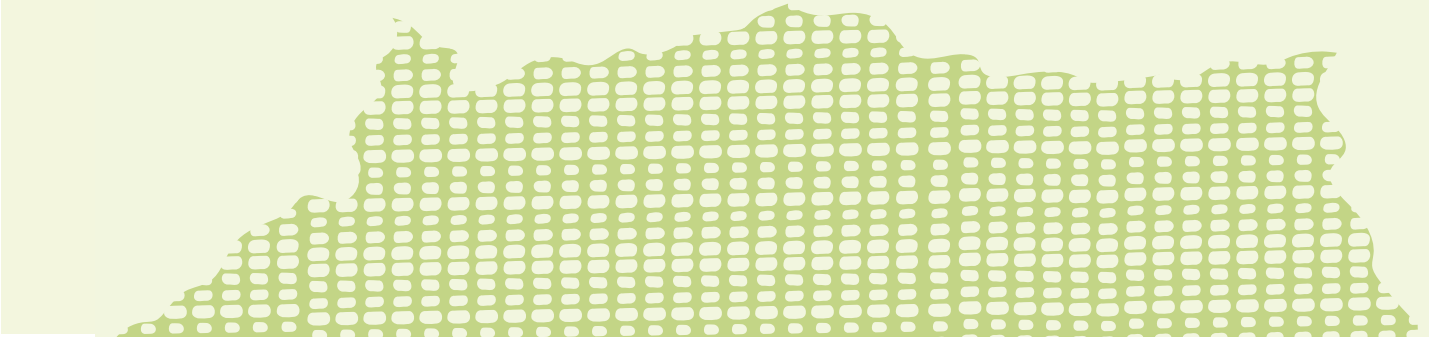
The PPDDH has been undergoing several modifications due to new decrees that promoted changes in its format, ranging from the inclusion of Communicators and Environmentalists in its nomenclature to changes in social participation and even in the definition of the concept of human rights defenders. Unfortunately, these changes largely favoured the weakening of the policy, instead of its strengthening, as we will see below.

On April 27, 2016, then President Dilma Rousseff signed Decree No. 8,724, which established the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and created its Deliberative Council, within the scope of the Ministry of Women, Racial Equality, Youth and Human Rights (revoked by Decree No. 9,937/2019). The Decree surprised civil society organizations, as it was drawn up without dialogue and, by creating the Deliberative Council, it extinguished social participation, which previously took place through the National Coordination of the PPDDH. By removing civil society arbitrarily, covertly and without any dialogue, the government expresses its discontent with the constant tensions between civil society organizations and the PPDDH Coordination. Criticisms and recommendations for improving the protection policy were not seen as contributions and became a nuisance. They preferred to silence civil society in decision-making processes, removing its chance of participation. This decree represented a huge setback in the protection policy: without social participation, the PPDDH became increasingly fragile, year after year. However, there were many attempts by civil society from then on to resume social participation. But Dilma's government was followed by two others: Temer's and Bolsonaro's, who were not at all favorable in the field of human rights.

In 2019, the enactment of Decree No. 9,937/2019, which included Communicators and Environmentalists in the PPDDH nomenclature, restricted and depoliticized the concept of defenders, defining it only as "people threatened as a result of their work in the defense of human rights" (art. 1, caput). The concept of human rights defenders is a historical and political construction in the face of a scenario of serious human rights violations and the resistance and defense of individual and collective rights are necessary to face such violations. And it is precisely this resistance and struggle that makes protection imperative. In this regard, it is necessary to reestablish the broader concept within the scope of the PPDDH's institutionality.

The Protection Program for Human Rights Defenders, Communicators and Environmentalists went through a process of further deterioration under Temer and Bolsonaro governments. The report "Beginning of the end? The worst moment of the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Communicators and Environmentalists", produced by Justiça Global and Terra de Direito and released in December 2021, identified eight worrying points in the protection policy: 1) low budget execution; 2) lack of transparency and social participation ; 3) low institutionalization; 4) lack of structure and team to meet the demands; 5) reduction in the number of cases included at the federal level; 6) political insecurity in management; 7) inadequacy regarding the perspective of gender, race and class; 8) delay, insufficiency and inadequacy of protection measures.

Given the constant weakening of the protection policy and the non-development of the National Plan for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, provided for in decree no. 6,044 of 2007, which created the PPDDH, the Public Prosecutor's Office (FPM) filed a Civil Action in 2017 Public requesting that the Union be ordered to draw up the aforementioned plan. In 2021, the 3rd Panel of the Federal Regional Court of the 4th Region, in a public civil action brought by the FPM, sentenced the Union to develop the National Plan for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders.



With the election of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in October 2022, and the installation of the Transition Government, the Brazilian Committee of Human Rights Defenders, now faced with a more favourable scenario in the field of human rights, resumed dialogue with the government to strengthen protection policy.

Among the main claims of the Committee and other civil society organizations, we highlight: 1) the elaboration of the National Plan for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Communicators and Environmentalists (according to court ruling); 2) the issuance of a new decree in which social participation is guaranteed on an equal basis within the scope of the Deliberative Council of the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Communicators and Environmentalists, and 3) the elaboration of a new proposal for a draft law on the National Policy for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Communicators and Environmentalists.

As a result of this dialogue, the government issued Decree No. 11,562, of June 13, 2023, which established the Sales Pimenta Working Group with the purpose of preparing the National Plan for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Communicators and Environmentalists (PPDDH), and the draft law on the National Protection Policy for human rights defenders.

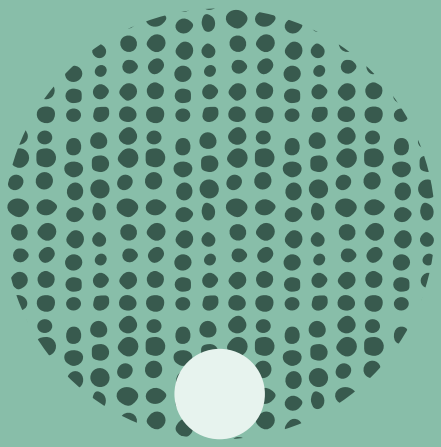
The WG will be composed of 10 members of the Federal Executive Branch (sector) and 10 representatives of civil society. The organizations ARTICLE 19, Justiça Global, Sociedade Maranhense de Direitos Humanos, and Terra de Direito had amici curiae status in the records of Public Civil Action nº 5005594-05.2017.4.04.7100/RS, which was processed in the Federal Regional Court of the 4th Region and were included in the court decision as part of the Working Group. The other six civil society organizations that will make up the working group will be appointed by the National Human Rights Council's (NHRC) Commission of Human Rights Defenders and Combat of Criminalization of Social Movements.

The Sales Pimenta Working Group is an important step towards strengthening the protection policy, but the challenges to its larger effectiveness remain great. An adequate budget is necessary so that protection measures meet the real needs of the people involved and so are the approval of its legal framework; the overcoming of administrative issues that weaken its execution; the effective resumption of social participation in the Deliberative Council; the expansion of the protection network to all states of the federation; among other actions. Nonetheless, we should still celebrate the WG as an important achievement of civil society.

[19]Gabriel Sales Pimenta, after whom the working group is named, was a lawyer for rural workers and human rights defender who was shot dead in Marabá in 1992. In 2002, the Brazilian state was condemned by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for the impunity regarding the perpetrators of the crime.

THE CURRENT OUTLOOK OF THE PROTECTION POLICY

In force today in 11 states of the federation (Rio Grande do Sul, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Bahia, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Ceará, Maranhão, Pará, Amazonas, and Mato Grosso) and with a federal team that serves the other states, the PPDDH protects around 890 human rights defenders.

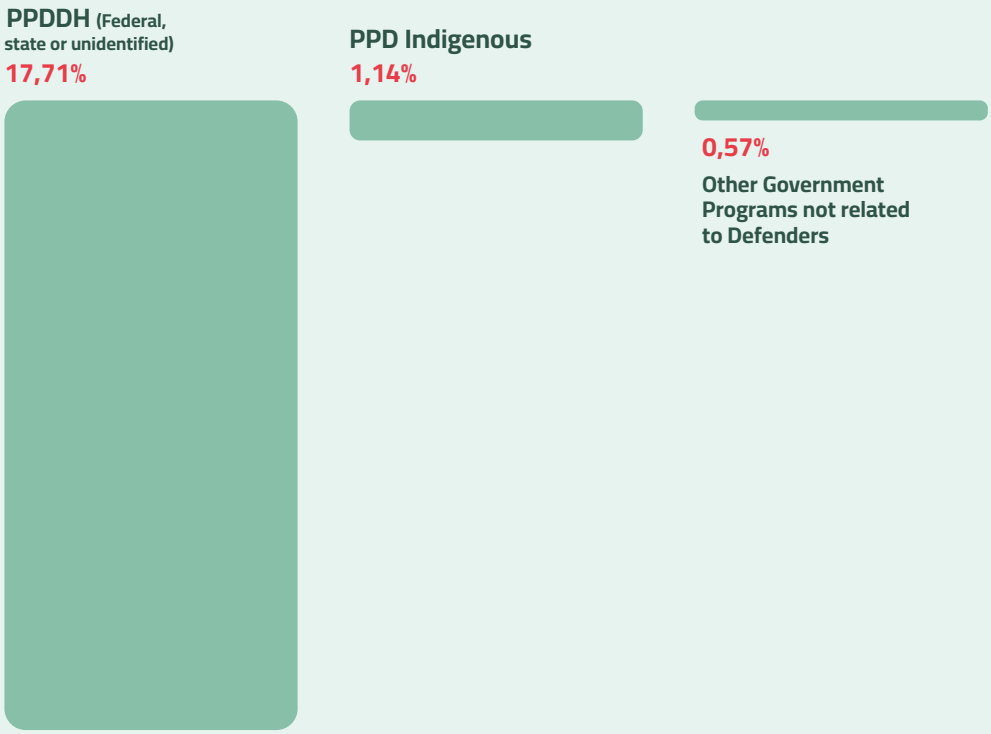


ONLY

21%

OF DEFENDERS SUPPORTED BY CASA FUND REPORTED PARTICIPATING IN SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS.

GRAPH 28 - TYPE OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAM USED



Recently Justiça Global and Terra de Direito released the research “On the Frontline: violence against human rights defenders in Brazil”, with the analysis of cases of violence against those who defended rights in Brazil throughout the government of the former president of the republic (2019 to 2022). The alarming data points to 1,171 cases of violence, including 169 murders and 579 threats, and stresses the intensification of territorial and environmental conflicts in the country, with cases registered in all Brazilian states.

Violence was categorized into eight types: threat, physical assault, murder, attack, criminalization, delegitimization, sexual harassment, and suicide. Episodes of violence recorded throughout Brazil were considered. Furthermore, the survey considered cases of violence against individuals and collectives, such as attacks against indigenous peoples and quilombolas.

Bruno Pereira, Dom Phillips, Dilma Ferreira, Fernando Araújo dos Santos, and Paulo Paulino Guajajara are some of the 169 human rights defenders murdered over the last 4 years. Most murders were caused by firearms (63.3% if the shooting and multiple shooting categories are added together). On average, three defenders were murdered per month; 140 of those killed were fighting for the right to land, territory, and an ecologically balanced environment.

In 11 of the murders, signs of torture were found on the defender’s body. In the case of the murder of the indigenous expert Bruno Pereira and British journalist Dom Phillips, in Vale do Javari (AM), in June 2022, both were ambushed and killed while traveling by boat through the region. According to investigations, they were shot, burned, and buried. The crime was allegedly motivated by the work carried out by Bruno in reporting illegal fishing in indigenous territory.

The survey data highlights that indigenous defenders were targets of much of the violence suffered by human rights defenders: 346 cases, 50 of which were murders and 172 threats. The four-year period was marked by the adoption of an anti-indigenous policy by the federal government and an increase in the invasion and exploitation of traditional territories by mining, deforestation, and agribusiness.

The research data reinforces the urgency of strengthening the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Communicators and Environmentalists and adopting measures to tackle the structural issues that generate this situation of serious attacks against those who defend rights in Brazil.

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Beginning of the end? The worst moment of the Protection Program

to Human Rights Defenders, Communicators, and Environmentalists. December 2021

Research and texts: Érika Lula de Medeiros

Organization and authorship: Terra de Direitos and Justiça Global

Critical views on protection mechanisms for human rights defenders in Latin America. Brazil. Colombia. Honduras. Mexico - December 2022.

Research and texts: Érika Lula de Medeiros (Brazil); Andrea Bolaños Vargas, Olga Guzmán Vergara and Mario Hurtado Cardozo (Colombia, Honduras and Mexico).

Organization and authorship: Terra de Direitos and Justiça Global

Lives in Struggle 2019-2022 - Criminalization and Violence Against Human Rights Defenders in Brazil. 4th. Volume

Organization: Brazilian Committee of Human Rights Defenders

8. SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICTS AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS: CONTRIBUTIONS TO PHILANTHROPY

Author: Julia Lima[20]

Latin America is the most dangerous region in the world for the defense of human rights. This data has been highlighted for some years by the main organizations that monitor and document violations against human rights defenders globally. Our region has the highest rates of people threatened, criminalized, and mainly murdered for resisting and fighting for justice when their individual and collective rights are violated. The contexts are diverse across the continent, but there is a tendency among the areas of action, as most cases occur because of socio-environmental conflicts, that is, people, collectives, organizations and communities that find themselves immersed in situations of violence and fear for defending their territories, ways of life and their relationships with the land and nature.

[20]Júlia Lima has a degree in social communications and has worked for ten years defending freedom of expression, access to information and protection of human rights defenders in international organizations such as Article 19 and the Urgent Action Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean. She has worked to strengthen protection perspectives focused on the collective care and protection of traditional peoples and communities and women defenders in Latin America. She is currently the Protection Coordinator for the Americas for Front Line Defenders.

It is also possible to draw other parallels between the cases when we analyze intersectional indicators. In most cases, conflicts involve indigenous peoples and communities, rural black peoples (quilombolas in Brazil), and peasant or rural workers communities, where women are often in leadership spaces in the community life. Those are the bodies of non-white women and men, vulnerable and whose ways of life move in the opposite direction of the economic models supported by most governments in the region, making them an obstacle to the advancement of large-scale national and international extractivist and agricultural projects, and extensive livestock farming. Largely, this opposition to a development ideal that in practice does not favour them, leaves people and communities in socioeconomically vulnerable situations, which also explains the determination with which they persist in the fight for social justice in the midst of such an adverse scenario.

Conflicts also reveal other power asymmetries. While legal processes move quickly to criminalize defenders and collective struggles, justice with regard to access to land and the guarantee of territories is an increasingly far reality for these communities. While resources do not seem to be a problem for those opposed to guaranteeing human rights throughout the region – which is evident in the complex plots often involving lawyers, circulation of weapons, perpetrators promoting acts of violence at the behest of criminal masterminds who are rarely identified, business investments aimed at corrupting community processes, among other elements that clearly reflect political and economic powers – the reality of the territories is one of scarcity. There is a lack of resources for a dignified existence and daily sustenance, but also to strengthen resistance strategies and guarantee protection in risk situations.

Photo: Rodrigo Montaldi

In the midst of so much inequality, what can philanthropy do? How can we ensure that the mobilization of resources is used to effectively advance the human rights and social justice agendas in Brazil and Latin America and also physically protect those who are individually and collectively involved in these resistance processes? To answer these questions, different organizations and funders have analyzed the importance of bringing these reflections and doubts to the collective level.

In Brazil, for example, several organizations and funds aimed at supporting human rights defenders have created a space for exchange. Its purpose is to promote greater dialogue between funds and civil society organizations, deepen the knowledge about methodologies to support the protection of human rights defenders and find a way to work on a complementary agenda that can cover the different contexts and complexities of the risks to the defense of human rights in the country.

Photo: Alanna Carneiro

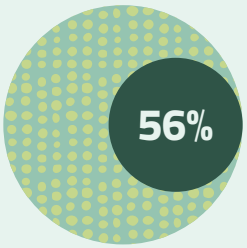
Without a doubt, emergency responses are fundamental. When talking about violent scenarios, the loss and demobilization of individuals who are important to collective processes of resistance is one of the main elements to weaken the struggles for human rights. In this sense, it is essential that funders, funds, and organizations are able to mobilize resources and strategies that reinforce the integral protection of defenders and their collective processes. The rapid mobilization of resources is one of the most essential dimensions for implementing urgent protection measures, and the philanthropy ecosystem must continue to develop strategies that allow these resources to be increasingly faster, more flexible, and targeted to those who need them.

Rapid mobilization of resources still faces some challenges. The obstacles and limits of the financial system, for example, make it difficult for many defenders and local organizations to have direct access to resources, as the previously mentioned race, gender and class discriminations also operate in these spaces. Institutional distrust in accessing international money transfers or large amounts of money, excessive red tape, and the obligation to institutionally formalize their organizational processes are some of the constant difficulties that defenders face when trying to receive resources via bank transfers. Some of these requirements are backed up by funders and funds and have a general impact on access to resources for people facing risk situations, not only in the distant corners of the country, as we would imagine. The increasingly flexible perspective of funds and organizations focused on emergency support is a possible collaboration for the human rights philanthropy ecosystem in general, but for this to happen it is important that funders are willing to adapt their criteria and ways of operating to effectively reach those who are at the forefront pouring blood, sweat and tears for the full guarantee of human rights.

Much progress has already been made in the financing framework aimed at protection. The very notion regarding protection measures has been expanded based on the realities of risks in territories. Currently, support has gone beyond physical protection measures for individuals and encompasses collective protection strategies, in addition to other historically neglected dimensions, such as psychological and emotional impacts that make people ill and that can be treated through different cultural practices and cosmovisions.

There is still a lot to be done when it comes to the diversity of perspectives on protection, and a fundamental way to achieve this is the protagonism of subjects at risk when developing strategies.

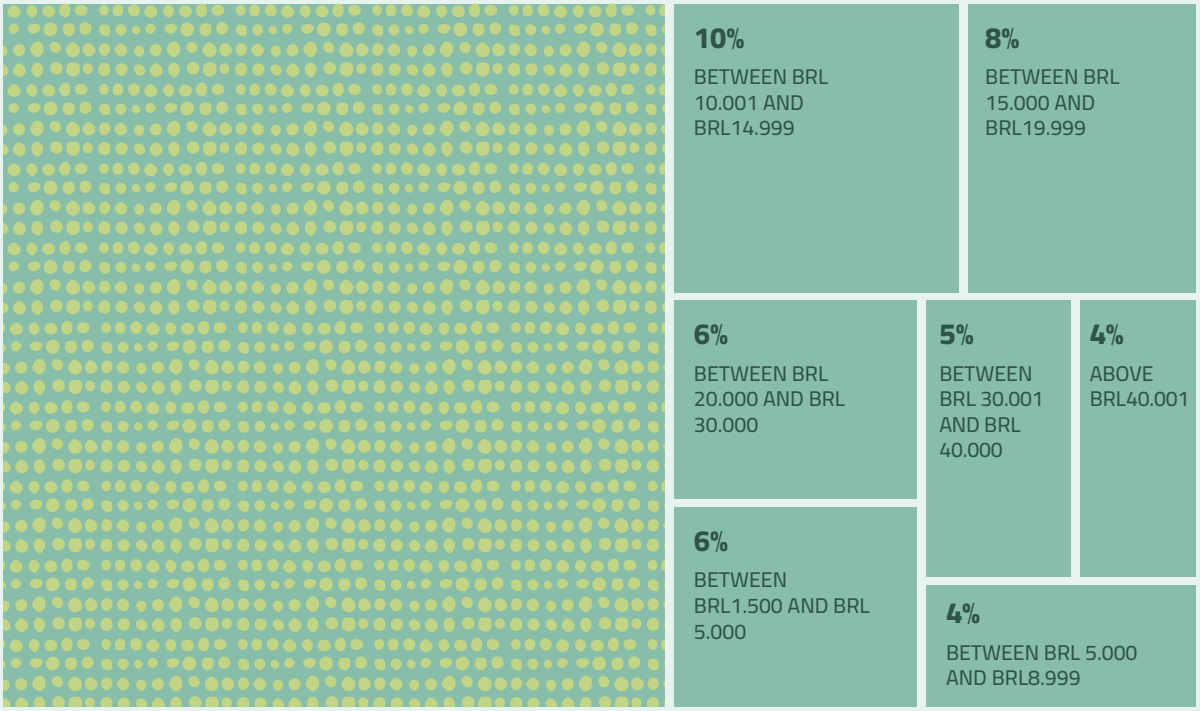
THE SIZE OF EMERGENCY SUPPORT PROVIDED BY CASA FUND



R$9.000 AND R$10.000

56% OF THE SUPPORT GRANTED WAS IN AMOUNTS BETWEEN BRL 9,000 AND BRL 10,000.

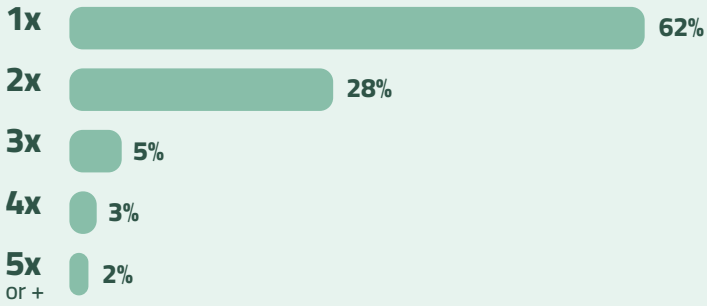
GRAPH 29 - VALUE RANGES FOR EACH SUPPORT GRANTES FOR DEFENDERS



56% ENTRE R$9.000 E R$10.000

GRAPH 30 - FREQUENCY OF SUPPORT PER DEFENDER

Some people were supported more than once, although **62%** of people had access to a single grant, as can be seen in the graph below. **28%** of people or organizations received support twice.



The temporary nature of the support and monitoring processes remains a challenge. As mentioned previously, socio-environmental conflicts in Latin America are marked by an asymmetry of power between the parties and also by a diversity of strategies to demobilize resistance processes. In practice, the violations and threats endured by defenders can be multiple and can diversify throughout periods of greater tension. Occasional support processes, although significant and crucial, are rarely able to continually help individuals until they overcome risks, as there are contexts in which the struggle is permanent. In these situations, complementarity between different civil society and philanthropic actors in alliance with local organizations plays a central role in more stable and transformative processes. From the perspective of philanthropy, it is important to continually improve the combination of resources for immediate actions and investments in more lasting processes.

Financial support for urgent protection measures is vital, but it is not the only way to help defenders and communities face processes of violence or reinforce their fighting strategies. Collaborative philanthropy working on socio-environmental agendas must diversify and expand its support and financing strategies to boost the political, economic, and cultural agendas of communities. Because in addition to emergency measures, other protection strategies also involve the full exercise of rights that can be strengthened and expanded and increasingly capable of tackling scenarios of vulnerability. An important starting point for this expansion of strategies is direct dialogue with local processes so that the construction of these financing channels is based on the reality of the territories.

Collaborative networks for confronting socio-environmental conflicts and protecting human rights defenders need to continue to be nourished collectively and act in a complementary manner to respond to more immediate needs while also contributing to the construction of alternatives to address structural inequalities in the region. The diversity of species and life forms are signs of the strength of ecosystems, just as are the territories of communities resisting throughout Latin America.


Photo: Attilio Zolin

9. CONCLUSIONS

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[21]Responsible for the External Assessment of the Defenders Program; consultants from the NGO SER.

The articles in this publication, as well as the data generated by the external assessment of the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund's Environment and Climate Justice Defenders Program, reveal lessons learned by Casa Fund and its collaborators but also bring future perspectives in the context of support for defenders.

In this section, we emphasize the results obtained and the lessons learned over the program's three years of operation, both concerning the people and collective defenders supported and the impacts on collaborative philanthropy for social justice.

According to the Evaluation Matrix of the Casa Fund's Defenders Program, in the transformation axis, we could analyze two main dimensions of the program: Impact and Learning/Contribution of Casa Fund for human rights defenders in environmental matters.

The Impact dimension identified the changes and benefits resulting from the support given to defenders and organizations. In this sense, the external assessment of the program focused on some evaluation aspects, namely:

1. **POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CHANGES IN THE DEFENDER'S WORK AFTER THE SUPPORT RECEIVED:**

   a. Specific benefits or progress in the defender's work that was possible due to the emergency support received;

   b. Improved ability to act as a human rights defender;

   c. Relevance of the changes achieved: how the assistance provided has affected their ability to carry out their work with human rights;

2. **POSSIBILITY OF MEASURING THE IMPACT THAT THE SUPPORT HAD ON THE DEFENDERS' SAFETY;**

3. **CHANGES IN THE RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES AFTER THE SUPPORT RECEIVED;**

4. **CONTEXT FACTORS THAT POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY INFLUENCED THE CHANGES ACHIEVED;**

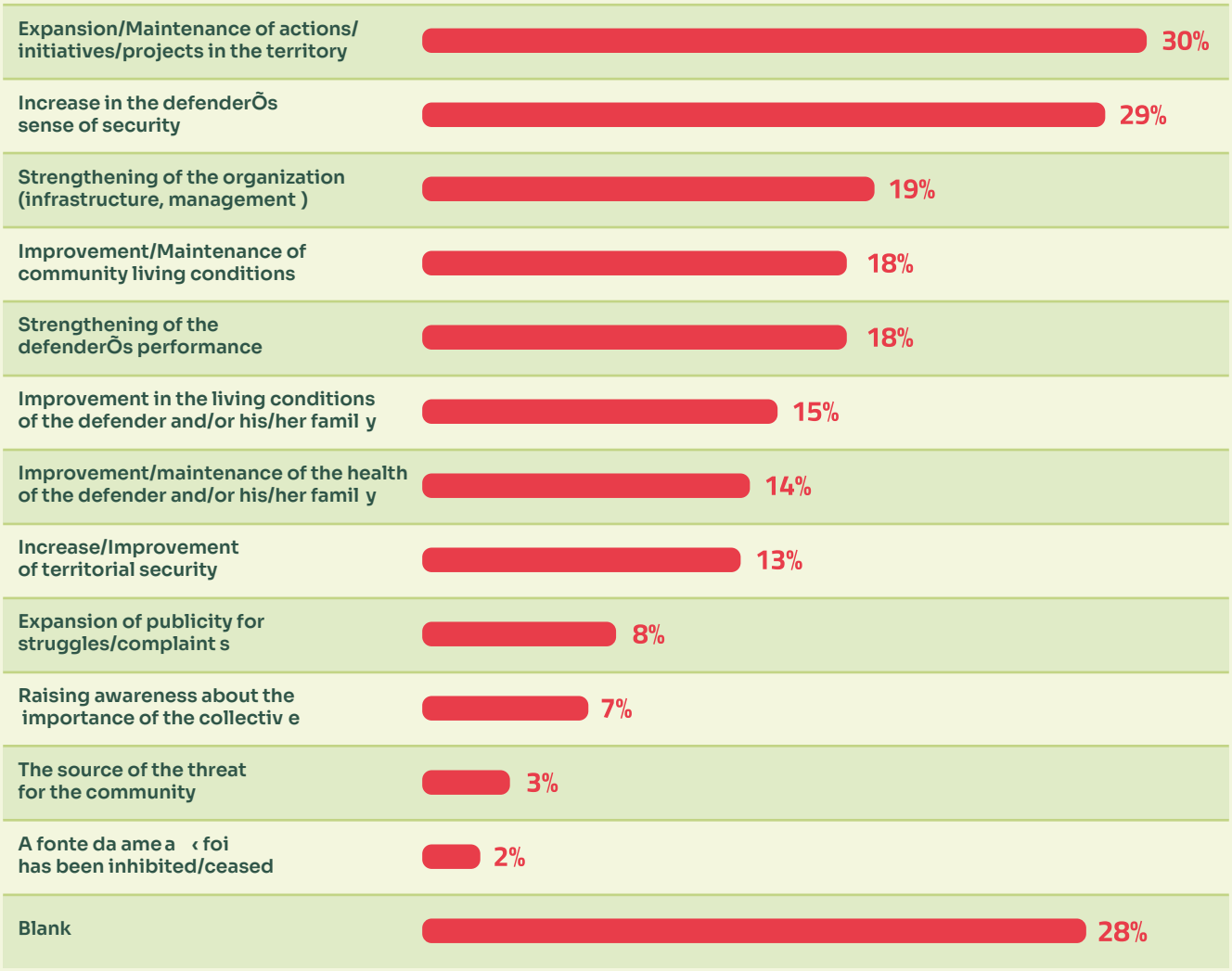
5. **CHANGES IN OTHER ACTORS AFTER THE INFLUENCE/ SUPPORT OF GROUPS.**

It is important to highlight that the Casa Fund's Environment and Climate Justice Defenders Program, especially in the Rapid Response Fund component used by all evaluated supports, is an emergency support program to respond to urgent situations of imminent risk and threats endured by defenders. Talking about changes, development and results seems at odds with the reality of urgency/emergency that is the object of those supports.

A weighted highlight, the graph below shows the main **positive changes in the defender's work** after the support was received. We highlight that **30% of those who were supported stated that it was possible to expand or maintain their activities/initiatives/projects in the territory,** 19% stated that the **organization had been strengthened in aspects such as infrastructure, administrative and institutional management**, legal regularization of the institution, among others. **18% claimed to have strengthened their work as an advocate**. Furthermore, **15% of the individuals who received support claimed that there was an improvement in living conditions** for defenders and/or their families, and **14% stated that the support allowed them to maintain or improve their health conditions**. These last two aspects, despite not being direct questions about the ability to maintain or expand work as defenders, are essential conditions for its maintenance. Given these aspects, even considering that the percentages for these changes are not that high, **it is notable and very relevant that these advances can be achieved with such emergency, low-cost fundings**.

Regarding the possibility of measuring the impact that emergency support had on the safety of defenders, **29% stated that there was an increase in their sense of safety, 13% claimed that there had been an increase in security in the territory and 8% reported that there had been increased publicity for their struggles and complaints. In 2% of the supports granted, there were claims that the source of the threats was inhibited or stopped**. With regard to the changes that occurred in the relationship with socio-environmental preservation and the sustainability of traditional communities, **18%** stated that there had been **an improvement or maintenance of living conditions in the community.** With a smaller percentage, but also regarding very important aspects, were the **awareness of the importance of the group and/or the defender in defending the rights of the territory (7%) and the strengthening of capabilities for the community (3%)**. 28% of responses related to changes were blank.

GRAPH 31 - POSITIVE CHANGES IN THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION AND OF DEFENDERS

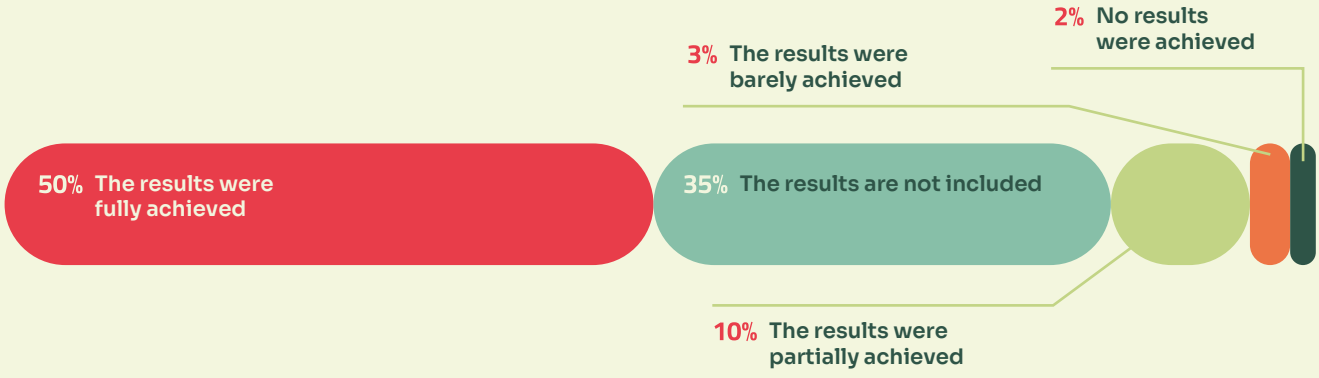


In almost all questions analyzed by the external assessment, **the high rate of "Don't Know/Didn't Answer"** responses draws attention. It is important to highlight that, in some questions, there was a large number of answers left blank which were initially categorized as "Don't Know/Didn't Answer". This occurred for a few reasons, which we summarize below:

- The situation of vulnerability in which the cases are presented and the need for urgency/emergency led to some questions remaining unanswered;
- In the case of support for indigenous defenders, the form that was made available was adapted in order to make the report simpler and many questions were removed, hence the high rate of "Don't know/Didn't answer" responses;
- In some cases, it was obvious that the person responsible for filling it out did not correctly understand what was being asked, generating the same answers for several questions, or answers in which, despite there being a lot written, they were not responding to what was asked. In order to improve this, new tools (support request form and accountability report) were proposed by the external assessment and were incorporated by the Casa Fund's Defenders Program.

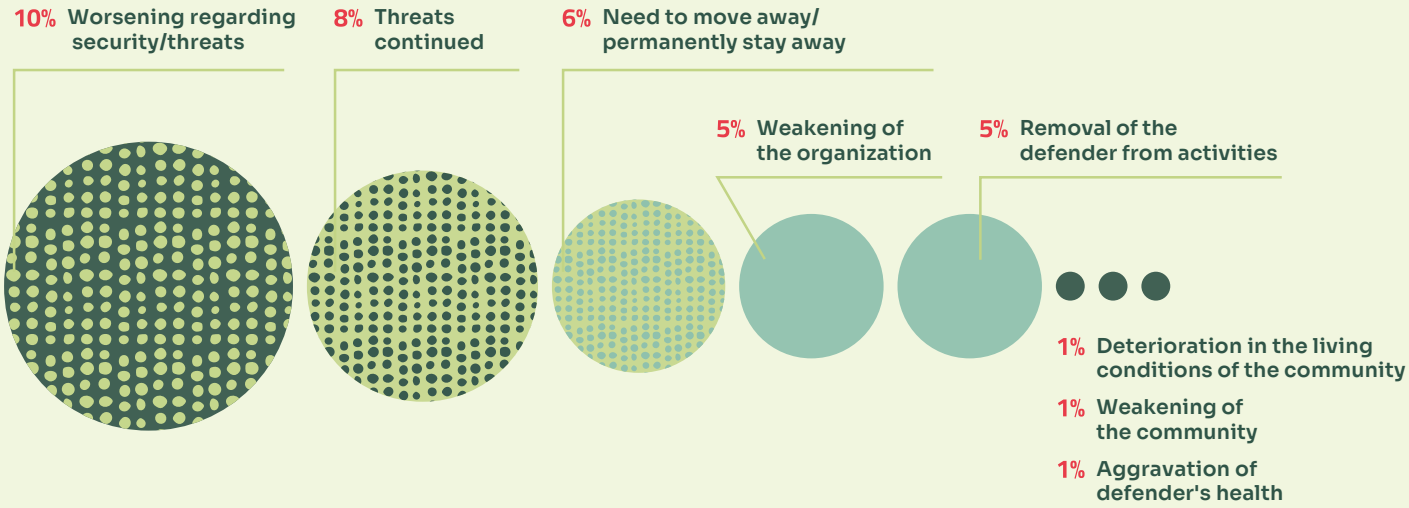
The following graph shows an analysis of the scope of results based on responses to the reports. In 50% of the supports granted, the proposed results were fully achieved and, in 10%, the results were partially achieved. In 5%, the results were very little or not achieved at all. In 35% of the reports, the results are not filled out.

GRAPH 32 - ANALYSIS OF THE SCOPE OF RESULTS



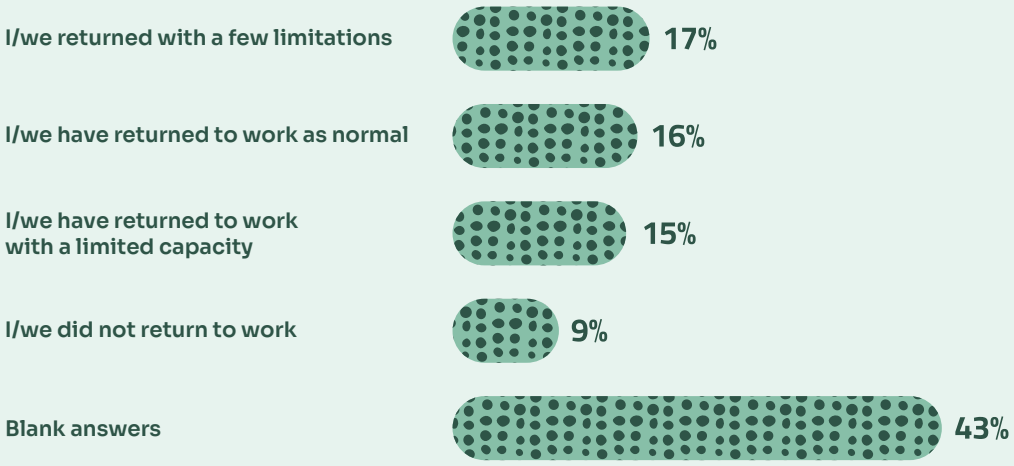
The reports also made it possible to extract some negative changes that occurred throughout the support period, in a universe where negative changes represent less than 15% of all responses. In the graph below, in 1**0% of the supports granted, despite the available resources, there was a worsening concerning security and the threats received, and in another 8%, the threats remained the same**. Despite these responses, it would be very difficult to have a subsequent picture in which the threats would have decreased as a result of the support. **It is known that support is not intended to act on the source of threats or conflicts, but rather on the living conditions and well-being of the defenders. In 6% of the supports granted, there was a need to leave the territory or remain away**. In 5% of the supports, it is reported that the threats caused the weakening of the organization of which defenders are part, and another 5% claim that there was a need to remove the defender from their activities.

GRAPH 33 - NEGATIVE CHANGES IN THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION AND OF DEFENDERS



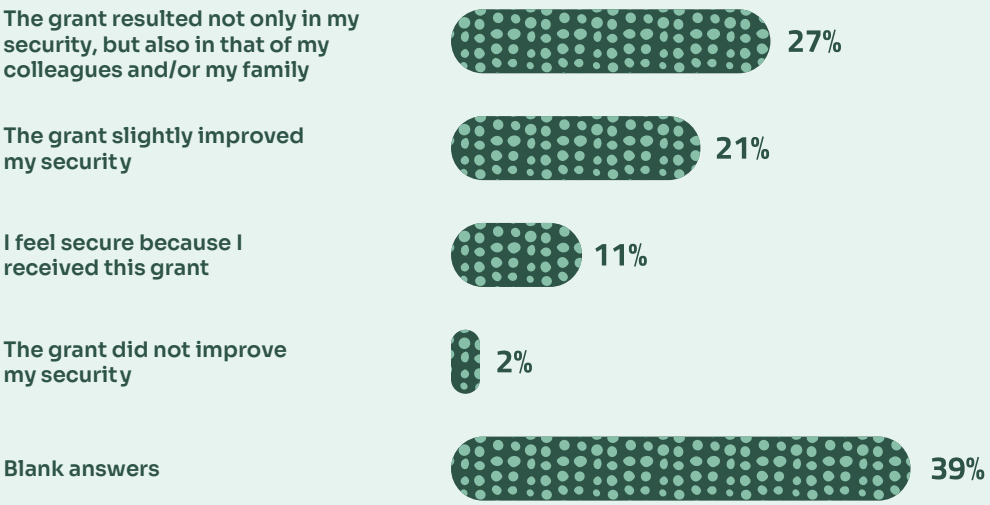
In the final report, those who received support were asked how the support affected their ability to continue human rights-related work. In only 16% of the supports granted, there was an indication that those supported resumed work normally. **In 41% of responses, the resumption of work came with limitations or the defender was unable to resume his work**. 43% of the responses were blank.

GRAPH 34 - HOW HAS THE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED AFFECTED YOUR ABILITY TO CARRY OUT HUMAN RIGHTS-RELATED WORK?



Despite the difficulties in resuming their work, when asked about the feeling of safety, **59% of responses indicated an improvement in safety; 27% reported an improvement not only in their own safety but also that of colleagues and/or family, 21% reported a slight improvement in safety and 11% reported improvements in their own safety**. Only 2% indicated that the support did not represent an improvement in safety and 39% did not respond.

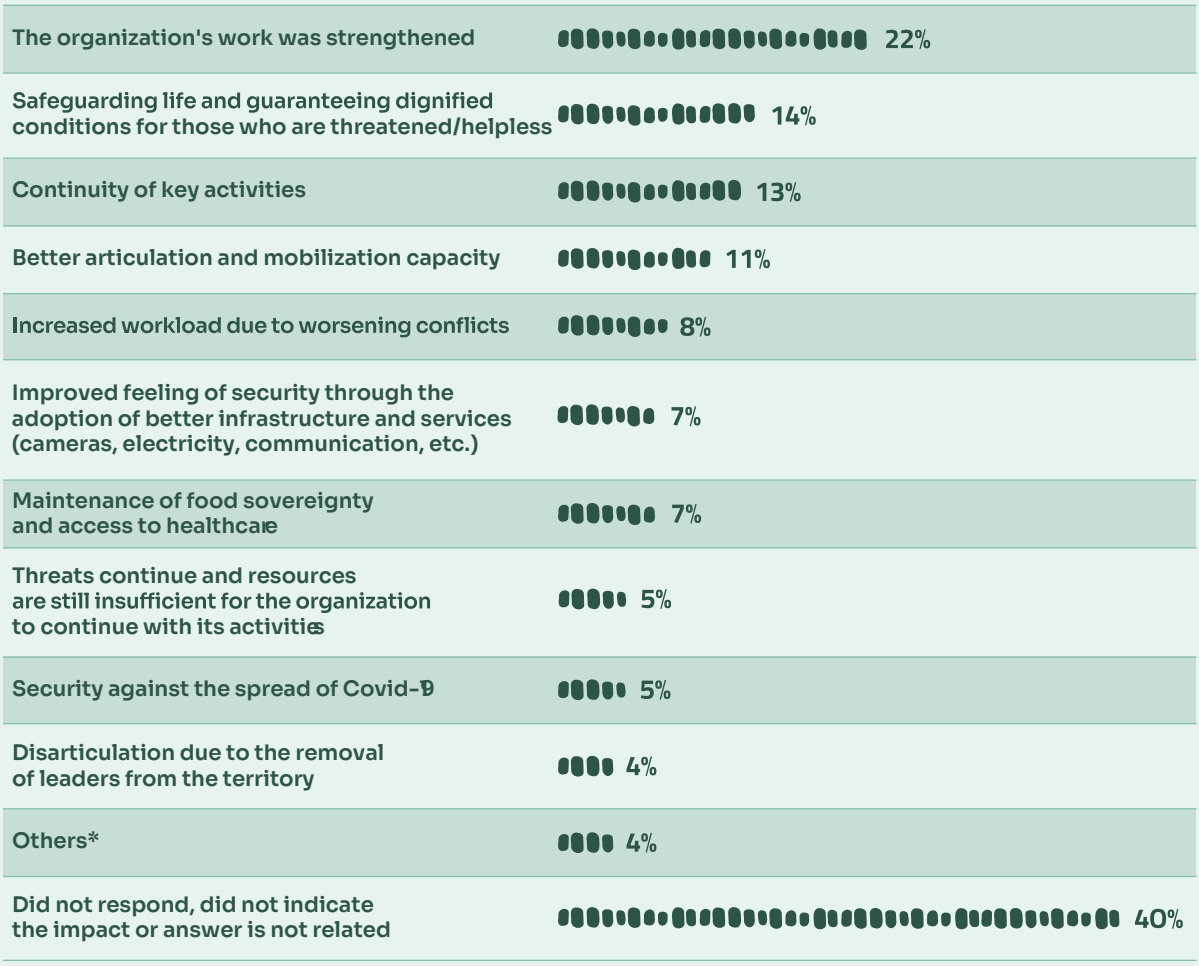
GRAPH 35 - IMPACT THE GRANT HAD ON SECURITY



When asked about the impacts of the support regarding the organization, graph 34 shows that the vast majority of impacts indicated were positive improvements. **In 22% of responses, the organization was strengthened; in 14% life was safeguarded and decent conditions were guaranteed for those at risk and 13% indicated that the support ensured the continuity of key activities**. With smaller percentages, but with major impacts, there was an indication of an **increase in the sense of security due to the adoption of better infrastructure**; preservation of food sovereignty and access to healthcare; security against COVID-19 and ensured survival for those facing threats to their lives.

Despite having received support, 8% reported an increase in workload due to worsening conflicts and 4% reported disarticulation due to the removal of leaders from the territory.

GRAPH 36 - IMPACT AND RISKS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ORGANIZATION AFTER THE SUPPORT



*Source of threat held accountable/arrested; Without impacts, threats continue, and resources are insufficient for the Organization's operations; Guarantee of Survival for those facing threats to their lives.

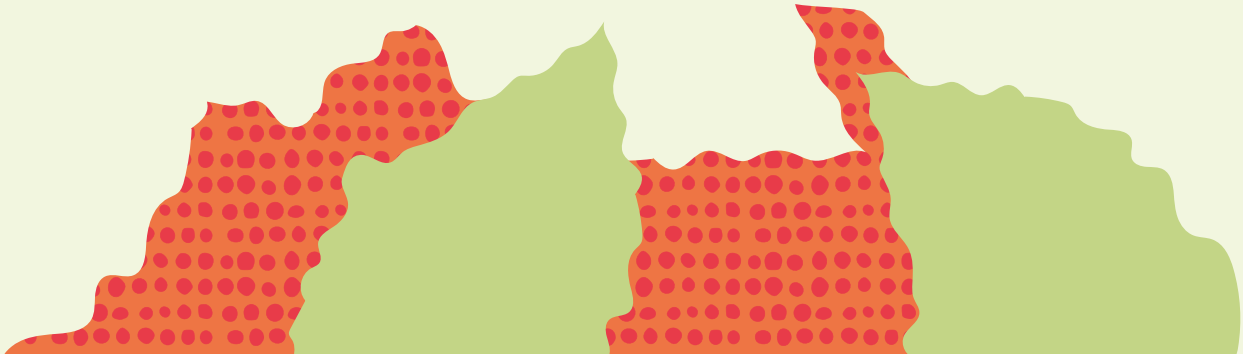
The learning dimension had two main objectives: to obtain from those who received any support an evaluation of the Casa Fund's Defenders Program and, with this, to improve the Program and the application process for requesting new support. Therefore, based on the answers found, we highlight some gaps and challenges of the Defenders Program shown by the assessment, divided into Compliments, Suggestions, Important Comments, and Demands. All the comments made by those supported are reproduced below:

COMPLIMENTS

- Agile and understanding.
- Agility and ease in the application for support.
- Clear, objective and fast.
- Emergency; meet urgent needs.
- Fair and accessible.
- No barriers, simplified accountability.
- Fundamental, emergency role, meeting urgent needs.
- Fast and helpful.
- Fast, effective, direct relationship.
- Fast, no red tape.
- Easy-to-fill report.
- No red tape.
- Helpful; answered our questions quickly and offered us guidance.
- Easy, fast and safe.
- **The Program was successful because Casa Fund supports networks and the community**, individual support is more vulnerable to misapplication of resources.

SUGGESTIONS

- Open specific project announcements for defenders.
- It is essential that Casa Fund starts to address cyber-attacks, by training defenders to prevent violence and online shaming. These attacks have become increasingly common and close to the reality of defenders on the field.
- Casa Fund´s first listening session focused on the territory and care for the physical body. It is clear that it is now necessary to delve deeper into the nuances of digital crimes – threats and violence. It is necessary to delve deeper into this new topic.
- We found the form and report difficult to understand and fill out. We needed help from non-indigenous friends. We would not be able to understand and answer it alone.
- I believe they could visit the regions where the defenders are located so that they can see the need for sustained support, not just for individuals, but mainly for collectives.
- Get to know each region and the indigenous peoples who live in different territories, to have an overview of each reality.
- Make an on-site visit, to monitor the progress of projects carried out with the financing, existing projects, and the potential of both.
- Audio/video accountability reporting.
- Carry out more field visits, get to know the reality of defenders better; this has already been happening and we evaluate positively their presence in the region.



IMPORTANT COMMENTS

- The Human Rights Defender was my mother. She was murdered for this cause. I don't think I even deserved to receive the funding but I did. This is due to your sensitivity, solidarity, and compassion not only with the Defender herself, but with her family, especially her children, who are left alone, aimless and without direction in life and without financial resources to continue their life and their parents´struggle. In my case, my mother's struggle. I am very grateful for this sensitivity and compassion towards the Defender's family. If it weren't for that, I wouldn't have benefited.
- We can't talk much about this but I'm glad you exist to acknowledge our suffering, our situation of threats and aggression and be able to help.

DEMANDS

- Help to obtain other financial supports.
- Help with the security plan, help pressuring government bodies.
- Courses: means of security; digital security courses.
- The Program needs to consider different profiles of defenders: those who do not recognize themselves as defenders, those who already understand a lot about funding, among other profiles. It is important to deepen the knowledge of these profiles to refine support.
- It is necessary to observe very carefully those fundings that include displacements and relocations due to the consequences that moving away from their territory can have on the psychological health of the defenders. "Leaving the territory makes you even more vulnerable."
- Try to deepen psychological approaches that consider the issue of gender: the difficulty that men have in accepting psychological support.
- Networks are essential to reinforce and, often, guarantee the safety of defenders.
- Legal support resources are considered a great emergency and, in general, need to be released without any red tape.

- **Cultural issues and religion (religious violence):** with the arrival of large infrastructure projects (the waterfall that was a reference for religions of African origin and the consequences that physical displacement brings). This is not considered in environmental impact studies: how do we compensate for this cultural violence?
- **Networks of psychologists that are more specialized** in the issue of defenders (search for a network of Bem Viver psychologists - check name). Collectives of indigenous psychologists - search. Strengthen networks of psychologists that strengthen defenders. Map support networks for different segments. Psychotherapists.

Photo: Meysa Medeiros

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES:

As mentioned above, at its inception, the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund's Environment and Climate Justice Defenders Program had a strong characteristic of being a Rapid Response Fund focused on emergency support to address urgent situations of imminent risk and threats suffered by people and collectives. In 2022, we realized the need to move to a second step in the Program, providing support for projects with more structuring actions, whether for the preparation of security plans, for advocacy on protection programs for defenders, or for social legal advice; and, as from 2023, supporting collectives and organizations focused on grassroots communication. Adding the funding provided until August 2023, the number of grants reaches 264 in the Program's total, which is equivalent to more than BRL 3.5 million donated directly to these demands.

We emphasize that, both in emergency support and in support to projects, the complexity of operating in this system that involves situations of violence and organized gangs is gigantic; where State structures do not work or work poorly, and where civil society organizations have a limited role on certain fronts. In this scenario, trusting relationships and joint actions are extremely necessary in order to operate safely for both organizations and defenders.

This line of funding for more structuring projects that are in the current and future perspective expecting greater support is oriented along the following axes:

PROTECTION OF LIFE AND SAFETY - actions to prevent and tackle violence, intimidation and threats against activists and communities;

STRUCTURING ACTIONS FOR LOCAL SECURITY - encompass access to communication (internet structures, energy), security workshops and security protocols, vehicle acquisition or maintenance;

MONITORING AND SOCIAL CONTROL - participation in government agencies that implement public policies on the protection of human rights defenders, such as State Human Rights Councils, among others;

ACCESS TO DECISION-MAKING SPACES - measures to ensure the presence and participation of defenders and communities affected by climate change in decision-making spaces;

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING – support for local organizations that constitute support and protection networks for Defenders, such as social legal support associations, and psychological support, among others;

EVIDENCE GENERATION - measures designed to generate information to support positions on certain causes or evaluate implemented actions;

CAMPAIGNS AND COMMUNICATION - awareness-raising actions on urgent causes, such as defending the rights of affected communities;

CAPACITY BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT- measures aimed at improving the skills, knowledge and resources necessary for communities and environmental defenders to tackle the risks and challenges associated with climate change. This may include training communities in project design, mitigation and adaptation techniques, environmental education, and development of leadership and organizational skills;

LEGAL PROTECTION - measures aimed at protecting the rights and safety of communities and environmental defenders against possible reprisals or legal (and illegal) actions against them. This may include funding legal advice, promoting laws and policies that protect the rights of people and communities affected by climate change, and reporting and monitoring cases of human rights violations;

RESPONSE TO NATURAL DISASTERS: - assistance measures for communities affected by natural disasters. This category includes measures such as medical assistance, distribution of food and supplies, and provision of temporary shelter (does not include infrastructure construction);

OPERATIONAL EMERGENCIES: - contingency measures to ensure the continuity of the work of strategic local partners (does not include the purchase of assets).

We hope to always evolve along the path of offering increasingly relevant support for defenders, as well as collaborating in the construction of more efficient structures, fundings that produce a real change in the scenario of violations while strengthening the capacity of entire communities to collectively protect themselves and their important territories and ways of life. We hope to continue counting on our network of collaborators to remain together in this process of building a stronger society to face its challenges.

"Building this Program has been a great challenge for the Casa Socio-Environmental Fund, and also a rich process of constant learning. We now feel more prepared to continue on this mission and journey, despite the sadness that comes with such a harsh reality that surrounds us. The only peace our team had during the heaviest period of this process was knowing that at least we could do something to ease so much pain. Wishing that day would come, we will rest when the guardians of our planet can live in peace in their places of origin or where they chose to live, and that they can protect, no longer with their lives, but only with their songs, their rites and their deep ancestral knowledge.

The only peace our team had during the heaviest period of this process was knowing that at least we could do something to ease so much pain. "

Maria Amalia Souza

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