

Land-use conflict Biomass

Keywords – title

- > Deforestation
- > Brazil
- > Amazon Rainforest
- > Timber
- > Indigenous people

Introduction

The Gleba Nova Olinda covers a total area of about 87,000 hectares (ha) and is located in the municipality of Santarém, Pará state, Brazil. It is composed of state public land with a rich and abundant sociobiodiversity. It is occupied by 14 communities (São Raimundo do Alto Aruã, São Francisco, Novo Paraíso, Cachoeira do Aruã, Gapó Açú, São Luís, Sociedade dos Parentes, Fé em Deus, Vista Alegre, Repartimento, Mariazinha), three of which are indigenous communities (São José III, Novo Lugar e Cachoeira do Maró) of the Borari ethnicity.

Located in the area of influence of the BR-163 road, the Gleba Nova Olinda is characterized by highly dynamic and violent processes due to the rapid formation of land and labor markets. Thus, violence is used as a mechanism of land appropriation, the absence of the state works as an ordering vector of the process, causing rapid spread of conflicts related to the use and control of natural resources and the intensification of migratory flows.

Alongside the rapid occupation of the rural areas, there is also the growing urbanization of the region. The growth of the cities of Santarém, Juriti and Itaituba, is related to where migratory fronts that flow attracted by new economic events (agribusiness, mining and services).

Since the 1990s, the Gleba Nova Olinda has undergone an intense environmental conflict, marked by violence, exclusion and disputes over land, forest resources and even symbolic struggles over the definition of the identity of traditional communities (remarkably among those who claim a Borari indigenous ancestry and those who deny the recognition of this ethnic/cultural distinction).

This conflict has led to violent actions from both parties, including death threats to community leaders and the destruction of timber company assets (through pressure on state officials responsible for conducting studies in the



Riverine and indigenous people on the São Pedro's beach during the meeting with MPF
Source: Rede Mocoronga

region). For this reason, in recent years there has been an intensification of the actions of National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) and National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA) agents, and prosecutors interested in mediating the conflict in order to prevent the escalation of violence.

The State Government, through Land Institute of Pará (ITERPA) and Institute for Forestry Development of the State of Pará (IDEFLOR), has also performed actions aiming at the agrarian regularization in place in the place, as it has an interest in the definition of the limits of each community in order to liberate the land from farmland to grant as public forest areas. This proposal may permit exploring these areas by private companies through competitive bidding.

Background

The conflict between the residents of the Gleba Nova Olinda, indigenous communities and logging companies has intensified since 1999, when the Land Institute of Pará (ITERPA) regularized the first areas to logging. This processes aimed for sustainable management of forest areas. However, it eventually provided legal mechanisms to legitimize and conceal excessive and illegal deforestation in several other areas near the ones licensed, as verified several times by the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA).



In 2003, IBAMA inspectors conducted a 14-day-operation in the region, issuing nine infraction notices and 21 terms of seizure, attachment and notification regarding destruction of primary native forest, opening up roads without authorization, clearing of secondary vegetation area to opening a landing strip, illegal logging, forest destruction and regeneration in areas of permanent preservation. In total, R\$136,200 in fines were issued, with the seizure of machinery, equipment, guns, chainsaws, bulldozers, trucks, pickups, Global Star handsets, GPS devices and compasses.

An employee of ITERPA was pointed out by IBAMA inspectors as an intermediary in land grabbing in the region and responsible for a scheme that would have illegally settled at least 120,000 hectares of land to farmers and timber companies. Among these companies Rondon Bethlehem Woods stands out, fined in R\$100,000 at the time and whose owner was arrested for falsifying a license to reopen roads and using weapons found at the scene to intimidate community against the occupation of farmland and destruction of native forests. At least 14 local communities are suffering the impacts of deforestation and the expansion of soybean monoculture.

However, IBAMA surveillance has not prevented new areas being aggregated by timber exploitation and soybean production, which continued to obtain permits from the State of Pará.

Many local leaders complain that while farmers and loggers have free movement within the state agencies responsible for land regularization and environmental inspection, they, themselves, have difficulties even personally to go to these agencies, because of the distance between the Gleba and the municipality seat of Santarém. All this would increase the difficulty of influencing the decision-making process that ultimately generates environmental impacts on their territories and way of life.

Impacts

- Deforestation causes impacts on the biodiversity of the region and on forest resources necessary for the livelihoods of many indigenous and riverside communities and the practice of traditional medicine based on the use of medicinal plants.
- Soybean monoculture advance on the region expels many families in these communities from their lands or prevents them of accessing important public areas for their survival.
- -Those who resist land-grabbing are victims of death threats or attacks. It is suspected that at least one indigenous leader has been killed as a result of the conflict.
- The Borari chief of the village Novo Lugar, Odair Borari, suffered two attacks and was included in the State Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders. However, it imposes restrictions on their right to come and go and poses obstacles to participating in actions in defense of the territory of their community.
- There are reports that such processes rely on the connivance of corrupt State officials, creating obstacles to negotiations between the affected communities and the State.
- The licensing of state public land to private companies is constituted as an obstacle to demarcating traditional lands of Borari ethnicity.
- Farmers have used various strategies to ensure the support of local leaders, which ultimately split the communities and stimulate the tension between community members.



Members of local communities prevent logging company takes wood out of the Gleba Nova Olinda.

Source: G1



Members of local communities come together to defend their territories. *Source: Rede Mocoronga*

Conflicts and consequences

In 2007, a Greenpeace team visited the site and investigated complaints of residents. Forest management plans were discovered to have been approved without prior inspection or proper monitoring, and extracted timber had been carried in and out of management areas approved by past management of the State Department of Technology and Environment (Sectam).

According to Greenpeace, ITERPA issued six permissions for exploitation of public property in batches whose areas range between two thousand and 2.6 thousand hectares, to Alfredo Sippert, Francisco Souza, Jeferson Azulay, Rosenil Souza, José Ramos de Oliveira Rodrigues and Erivan Apinagés. NGO staff identified logging within management areas granted to the first four names. In addition, areas in the name of Alfredo Sippert, José Ramos de Oliveira Souza and Rosenil have created a large number of clearings caused by timber extraction without the use of techniques to reduce impact.

In 2008, the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT) found that about 50 farmers,

coming from the south of the country and organized as cooperative, had planned to divide the productive land of the region between them, expelling or preventing the access of the community. The whole process took place with the connivance of ITERPA. This would lead to conflicts with the leading members of coastal communities in the region and with the Borari Indians, requiring the demarcation of their traditional territory. Those leaders who publicly denounce the raids and expulsions receive death threats.

In October 2009, tired of waiting for state action to secure sustainability, their land rights and their territory, members of diverse communities of the region held a series of protests that blocked the transport of wood, according to them, illegally removed from the plot by logging. At least 200 residents camped on Arapiuns river beach Arapiuns, known as Praia do Pedrão, to make the blockade. About a thousand members of the Federation of Agricultural Workers (Fetagri), the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT) and Rural Workers Unions (STR) of Western Pará supported the action blocking access to the city's airport.

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The protest lasted more than a week, and by the end some 26 members of other communities in the area had joined. Two ferries containing more than 1500 cubic meters of wood each were seized by protesters, who accused the company that owned the timber of exploring areas not covered by the management plan approved by environmental agencies.

Representatives of the Secretary of State for the Environment (SEMA) nixed that the wood was illegal. Suspicious of the smoothness of SEMA technicians, residents demanded that IBAMA perform independent oversight. The Federal Public Ministry (MPF) tried to organize a meeting between the parties to mediate a solution to the deadlock, but in the absence of representatives of the state government, some protesters revolted and eventually set fire to the wood on the barges.

In 2010, the District Attorney and the Federal Public Ministry issued a joint recommendation to the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Director of the Institute for Forestry Development of the State of Pará (IDEFLOR) not to authorize new forest management plans in Nova Olinda plot I, until the process of land regularization of the area was completed. In the same year, the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) began the process of demarcating the Maró (a Borari ethnicity) territory, which intensified divisions within the community and led to a new wave of violence in the region. Also in 2010, FUNAI officials were threatened by men at the service of Timber Rondobel to prevent the studies for the demarcation of Maró territory.

In October 2010, the Government of the State of Pará published three decrees that have reserved areas in lands of Mamuru, Curumucuri (partially), Nova Olinda I and II, as areas for the "purposes of protecting biodiversity and/or forest management under the terms concession or direct management" and two areas for "the purpose of land regularization, prioritizing traditional communities and family farmers". The areas have

481,735, 119,826 and 116,524 acres, respectively.

By October 2011, the Maró territory had been demarcated. However, this has not meant an end to hostilities against indigenous peoples. In March 2013, the chief Crisomar dos Santos Costa, 60, was found dead three days after disappearing. Crisomar had received death threats because of her fight against loggers operating in the region.



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More on this case

- MAPA DE CONFLITOS ENVOLVENDO INJUSTIÇA AMBIENTAL E SAÚDE NO BRASIL. Na Gleba Nova Olinda e entorno, Povo Borari, camponeses e ribeirinhos lutam contra grileiros, madeireiros e sojicultores do Sul, que buscam cada vez mais expulsá-los de suas terras, enquanto aguardam demarcação. <http://goo.gl/hg0Yh>.

Chronology of Major Events

1999: Beginning of the process of land grabbing in Gleba Nova Olinda by loggers.

2003: IBAMA Verification Report points Iterpa as responsible for selling areas of the state for soybean farmers in southern Brazil.

2006: IBAMA identifies irregularities within the Gleba Nova Olinda. Illegal logging grows.

August 29, 2008: the Pastoral Land Commission of Santarém publishes a report denouncing impacts of soybean on Gleba Nova Olinda communities.

April 1, 2009: IDEFLOR meeting held in Santarém to discuss the territory and environment in western Pará, in the regions of the municipalities that comprise the Nova Olinda glebes I and II, and Curumucuri Mamuru.

May 2010: State Forestry Commission (COMEF)/IDEFLOR concludes consultation with civil society and farmers of Olinda and Mamuru glebes.

October 12, 2009: Residents of 26 communities of Arapiuns river and its tributary Maró block two ferries loaded with about 1500 cubic meters of wood. Other two empty rafts are also seized, but later released.

November 4, 2009: Members of the Federal and State Prosecutor participate in the meeting at Gleba Nova Olinda, São Pedro community, to discuss issues related to land tenure situation and other complaints.

November 10, 2009: Communities of River Arapiuns revolt against the omission of Pará State in relation to deforestation, and burn two boats loaded with timber, valued at R\$ 5 million.

November 14, 2009: Military Police, following a judicial decision disperse protesters in Gleba Nova Olinda. Operation is accompanied by members of the Judiciary and the Legal Medical Institute.

December 9, 2009: MPE, MPF, Secretary of State for Environment, IBAMA, the Federal Police, National Public Security Force and community representatives conduct joint surveillance operation in the management plans of Gleba Nova Olinda.

May 2, 2010: Adenilson Alves de Sousa, I Borari leader, known as Poró, is beaten by about 20 men in the community Curi.

September 2010: Chief Odair José, Borari leader, known as Dada Borari, is threatened by armed men. Complaint says it is employees Rondobel Woods.

October 13, 2010: Governor of the state of Pará, Ana Júlia Carepa, decrees reserve part of the glebes of Mamuru, Curumucuri, Nova Olinda I and II, with total area of 481,735.3325 hectares, for the purpose of protecting biodiversity and/or forest management under financial arrangements or direct management.

November 19, 2010: Indigenous peoples Borari-Arapiun deliver a letter to UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of UN Human Rights Defenders, Margaret Sekaggya. In addition to the open letter it is forwarded a dossier on the prior situation of violence and

criminalization in which the indigenous peoples live in Gleba Nova Olinda in Santarém, Pará

June 2011: Federal Court in Santarém determines within 30 days the publication of the report on the identification and demarcation of Maró indigenous land.

October 2011: FUNAI approves report outlining Maró territory.

March 23, 2013: Chief Crisomar dos Santos Costa, 60, disappears.

March 26, 2013: Chief Crisomar is found dead.

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