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## [Communities from Brazil and Mozambique exchange experiences in the fight against industrial tree plantations](#)

Exchanges between those who fight to defend their territories are crucial in helping connect and strengthen resistance movements; they also support mutual learning from the experiences, wisdom and struggles of diverse communities. In these spaces, the voices of those who have organized, mobilized and placed their bodies and communities on the frontlines to defend life are at the center.

These encounters between members of communities from Brazil and Mozambique are also important in connecting the struggles and histories of black communities who are currently resisting the multiple oppressions imposed by tree plantation companies. These exchanges, which strengthen ties of solidarity, have been taking place for more than five years – through virtual connections, face-to-face visits and various other exchanges.

"One thing that I believe is very important for a resistance movement is the unity and mobilization of impacted peoples and communities, (...) as well as the relationship between the territory, the local culture and the means of production." This was the message that Ronaldo, from Minas Gerais state in northern Brazil, gave [to Mozambican communities in 2019 through video letters](#). Meanwhile, in her message to counterparts and comrades in Mozambique, Francisca Maria of Maranhão state also warns them to "never accept the company's deceitful proposals," and to focus on uniting their struggle.

In 2021, a gathering of communities facing the impacts of industrial tree plantations from Brazil, Mozambique and Tanzania concluded with a [declaration](#) that said, among other things: "...this whole situation is causing a lot of suffering and hunger in the communities, and it especially impacts women. The government has opened the doors to companies and investors, and has closed them to the people. What is happening is a new form of colonialism in which companies are the new colonizers of lands where communities have lived for generations (...) We believe that together we will be stronger in resisting monocultures and all types of usurpation of our lands."

In September 2023, a new gathering was organized as part of the International Day of Struggle Against Monoculture Tree Plantations. The activity provided continuity to these exchanges, and once again helped strengthen solidarity between Quilombola communities in Brazil who are fighting against Suzano Papel e Celulose plantations, and communities in Mozambique fighting against Green Resources and Portucel Moçambique (The Navigator Company) plantations (1). The following was recorded in the declaration that emerged from this gathering:

### **Virtual Brazil-Mozambique gathering: Resistance against eucalyptus monocultures, and a celebration of the defense of territories**

As part of the week of the International Day of Struggle Against Monoculture Tree Plantations, which is celebrated on September 21, communities affected by large eucalyptus plantations in Brazil and Mozambique held a virtual gathering to celebrate the resistance that unites us in struggle – for our

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territories and our lives, and against eucalyptus green deserts. Communities and organizations that comprise the Alert Against the Green Desert Network gathered in the state of Espírito Santo, Brazil to attend the virtual gathering; while sister communities and organizations in Mozambique gathered at the same time in the provinces of Nampula and Zambézia. We talked about the violence of the destructive model of plantation and paper companies in our local communities, and we shared our experiences of collective resistance, proving that we are much closer than the physical distance that separates us.

For more than 50 years in Brazil, we have been fighting against large eucalyptus monocultures that were installed during the military regime as part of the green revolution – in the Sapê do Norte region of Espírito Santo state, and in southern Bahía. These plantations were originally established by the company Aracruz Celulose, which is now Suzano Papel e Celulose. In Mozambique, the companies Green Resources and Portucel Moçambique (The Navigator Company) installed their monocultures more than 10 years ago in the provinces of Nampula and Zambézia. Despite the different companies, regions and time frames, we suffer very similar impacts in our communities – impacts which we denounce: the destruction of native forests; the disappearance and contamination of waterways; the appropriation of community lands; false promises on the part of companies; and criminalization, persecution and threats.

As women, we are even more affected. In addition to having our daily work affected, there has been an intensification in the physical and psychological violence that men perpetrate towards us; this is the case of both men employed by the company and men within our communities – where we have ever-diminishing access to land, water and resources for our children's subsistence.

We also share the same Afro past and present. In Brazil, our Quilombola communities are proud of their African ancestry and their heritage of resistance against white-led companies that affected, and continue to affect, our lives. In Mozambique, the struggle for independence was fought to free the land and the people, and now we are fighting to keep our territories. As Samora Machel used to say, "our enemy is not the white man or the black man, but anyone who does harm or destroys the wellbeing of the people."

At the end of the gathering, we had mixed feelings: indignation at the injustices our communities suffer, and enthusiasm as we realize that we are not alone in this fight. With this spirit of solidarity and resistance, we have already begun to recover territories that were usurped from us in Brazil. And in Mozambique, we will not wait 50 years to reclaim our territories, which we inhabited long before the arrival of the companies and eucalyptus trees.

**Down with green deserts!**

**We stand together in this great global recovery of our territories. Towards justice and reparations!**

In Mozambique:

Napai II Community – Nampula Province  
Namacuco Community - Nampula Province  
Meparara Community - Nampula Province  
Messa Community - Nampula Province  
Intatapila Community - Nampula Province  
Misión Tabita - Zambézia Province

In Brazil:

Alert Against the Green Desert Network

Quilombola Commission of Sapê do Norte, Espírito Santo

Quilombola Community of Angelim DISA

Quilombola Community of Angelim I

Quilombola Community of Chiado

Quilombola Community of São Domingos

MST – Landless Workers' Movement, Espírito Santo

CDDH/Serra – Center for the Defense of Human Rights of Serra, Espírito Santo

MNDH – National Human Rights Movement

FACA - Anarchist Federation of Capixaba

FASE – Federation of Social Assistance and Education Organizations, Espírito Santo

WRM – World Rainforest Movement

(1) Quilombola communities are made up of descendants of African people who were subjected to slavery in colonial and imperial Brazil, and who managed to escape.