



Atalaia do Norte, Amazonas state, Brazil

June 6, 2022

PRESS STATEMENT

The Coordination of the Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Javari Valley (UNIVAJA), on behalf of the Marubo, Mayoruna, Matis, Kanamary, Kulina-Pano, Korubo and Tsohom-Djapá peoples, along with the Observatory for the Human Rights of Isolated and Recently Contacted Peoples (OPI), announce that Bruno Araújo Pereira, an expert on indigenous peoples, and the English journalist Dom Phillips, correspondent for The Guardian are missing. They were last seen Sunday morning June 5 traveling on the Itaquai river from the community of São Rafael bound for the city of Atalaia do Norte in the State of Amazonas, Brazil.

The two had traveled to visit a UNIVAJA Indigenous Patrol team near the Jaburu lake (which is near the FUNAI Protection Base on the Itui River) for the journalist to conduct interviews with the Indigenous team members. The two arrived at the Jaburu lake on June 3, 2022, at 7:25 p.m. On June 5 they departed early in the morning for Atalaia do Norte, stopping on the way in the community of São Rafael for a prearranged visit with the community member known by the nickname “Churrasco,” with whom Pereira planned to discuss collaboration between the non-Indigenous “ribeirinhos” and Indigenous people on monitoring and protection from incursions of illegal fishing and hunting operations.

According to data from a SPOT satellite communication device, they arrived in São Rafael at around 6 a.m., where, due to “Churrasco’s” absence, the visitors spoke with wife. They subsequently left, bound for Atalaia do Norte, a trip that normally takes about two hours. They should have arrived in the city at around 8 a.m. but did not.

At 2 p.m. the first UNIVAJA search party, comprised of Indigenous people intimately familiar with the region, departed from Atalaia do Norte. The search party covered the route that Pereira and the journalist would presumably have taken. The team also searched so-called “furos,” shortcuts in the meandering Itaquai river, but no sign of the missing men was found. The last sighting of them was from the community of São Gabriel – located downstream from São Rafael – with accounts of their boat passing in the direction of Atalaia do Norte.

At 4 p.m. another team embarked from the city of Tabatinga in a larger boat, returning later with no sighting of Pereira and Phillips.

We note that Bruno Pereira was deeply experienced and has profound knowledge of the region, having served for years as the Regional Coordinator for FUNAI in Atalaia do Norte. The two

disappeared while traveling in a new boat, with a 40-horsepower motor, 70 liters of gasoline (sufficient for the trip) and 7 empty fuel containers.

We stress that during the week of their disappearance, according to information from members of the UNIVAJA patrol group, the team had received threats in the field. These threats were not the first. Others had been made against members of UNIVAJA’s technical team, and still others officially reported to the Federal Police, the Federal Public Prosecutor in Tabatinga, the National Council on Human Rights and to the organization Indigenous Peoples’ Rights International.

Paulo Dollis Barbosa da Silva

Coordinator, UNIVAJA

Atalaia do Norte - AM, 06 de junho de 2022