

# **Sign the Manifest against the criminalisation of the MST**

Wednesday 23 July 2008, by [MST \(Brazil\)](#) (Date first published: 4 July 2008).

**Friends abroad and representatives from civil society organizations, MST is suffering an offensive launched by conservative forces in Rio Grande do Sul state.**

**Not only do they want to impede the land division, as determined by the Federal Constitution, but they intend to criminalize those who are fighting for Agrarian Reform and to hinder the permanence of the movement. In order to do this, these political forces, that defend powerful interests from economic groups and transnational corporations which are controlling agriculture in the state, and the big land owners are represented today in Yeda Crusius's government (PSDB), in Military Police, in local Judiciary sectors and in the media monopoly power.**

**MST-RS presented a formal denunciation to the Senate's Human Rights Commission, which had moved to Porto Alegre (state's capital) especially to follow the situation. In this important and difficult moment to Brazilian democracy, MST asks to friends to send protest letters to governor Mrs. Yeda Crusius and to the Justice general public attorney, appointed by the governor, who coordinates the State Prosecuting Attorney.**

**Below is the petition model, although it is opened to all comrades to write their own texts. We ask you to sign the petition and send it to the Governor, Mrs. Yeda Crusius ([governadora gg.rs.gov.br](mailto:governadora.gg.rs.gov.br)), and to the general prosecuting attorney, Mr. Mauro Renner ([pgj mp.rs.gov.br](mailto:pgj.mp.rs.gov.br)), carbon copied to MST Human Rights sector ([dhmst uol.com.br](mailto:dhmst.uol.com.br)) and to the MST press sector ([imprensa mst.org.br](mailto:imprensa.mst.org.br)), in order to us to organize all the names signing the petition.**

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IN DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY

IN DEFENSE OF FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

IN DEFENSE OF DEMOCRATIC STATE OF LAW

Mrs. Yeda Crusius

Governor of Rio Grande do Sul state

[governadora gg.rs.gov.br](mailto:governadora.gg.rs.gov.br)

C/C Mr. Mauro Renner

General Prosecuting Attorney

[pgj.mp.rs.gov.br](http://pgj.mp.rs.gov.br)

We the undersigned come to your presence in order to firmly repudiate the initiative undertaken by the Military Police Major State RS - PM 2, to the Rio Grande do Sul Prosecuting Attorney Superior Council and to the Federal Prosecuting Attorney, for the reasons stated below.

On September 20<sup>th</sup> 2007, the then General Subcommander of BM Cel. QOEM, Paulo Roberto Mendes Rodrigues, forwarded the report n. 1124-100-PM2-2007, whose elaboration had been determined by him, to the BM General Commander, whereby he releases a judgment suggesting to all the possible measures to be taken in order to impede the three MST columns that marched towards Coqueiros do Sul town to meet up.

In the report there was a secret investigation on MST, its leaders, number of members and actions in Rio Grande do Sul. The report was submitted to the state Prosecuting Attorney and to the Federal Prosecuting Attorney. The military forces report characterizes MST and Via Campesina as movements that gave up doing typical social demands actions so as to do criminal organization typical actions.

The reports' conclusion condemns the current of thought which defends the idea that actions undertaken by social movements should not be considered crimes, but instead a form of legitimate demonstration. Investigations were also focused on state MPs, town mayors, INCRA members and supposed foreigners.

Because of this Military Police action, MPE proposed a Civil Public Action impeding the MST columns to enter four municipalities in Carazinho area, and other cases to withdraw children from families that were marching. Such Military Police initiatives had not occurred since the end of Brazilian military dictatorship and offend the 1988 Federal Constitution, which prohibits military police to act upon the investigation of penal infractions and social movements or political parties. The article 144 in Federal Constitution provides that the duties of the military police are the ostensibly policing and the public order preservation.

The Military Police has invaded competence of Civil and Federal Police. On December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007 the Prosecuting Attorney Superior Council approved the report written by the prosecuting attorney Gilberto Thums (process number 16315-09-00/07-9), referring to the administrative procedure initiated by the Portaria (directive) 01/2007. The investigators had as their goal to raise information about MST. Society must be repulsed by the final report made by the investigators group. One of the decisions taken by the Prosecuting Attorney was to "...designate a team of Justice Prosecutors in order to promote a Civil Public Action aiming to dissolve MST and to declare its illegality..."

Not satisfied in trying to declare MST illegal, the Prosecuting Attorney decided "... for the intervention on MST schools in order to take all necessary legal measures to adapt it to legality, both in pedagogical aspect and the MST external influence structure". The Prosecuting Attorney decision offends the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, especially the article 22, number 1. This covenant was recognized by the Brazilian government through the Decree 592, from July 6<sup>th</sup> 1992.

The decision also offends the Federal Constitution, whose article 5, XVII, provides that "it is fully guaranteed the freedom of association with lawful purposes, being forbidden those with paramilitary character".

On March 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, the Federal Prosecuting Attorney denounced eight supposed MST members for “integrating groups that aimed to change the State of Law, the current valid order in Brazil, and to commit crimes for political motivations”, infractions stated in the National Security Law passed during the dictatorship, mentioning in its denunciation that MST camps constitute a “Parallel State” and that actions against national security would have been being supported by foreign organizations as Via Campesina, FARC - Colombian Revolutionary Army Forces, in addition to foreigners that would be responsible for military training.

The thesis which are in the denunciation were formulated by the owner of Fazenda Guerra (War Farm), FARSUL member in 2005, and ratified by the Military Police official, Coronel Valdir Cerruti Reis, who took part in Brazilian Military Dictatorship and who acted as an infiltrated member in Natalino camp for 2 years, using the alias Toninho.

There he tried to convince camped peasants to leave the movement and to accept land lots offered in Lucas do Rio Verde, in Mato Grosso state, by the dictatorship. Prosecuting Attorney legal action was presented contrary to the conclusions of the Federal Police penal inquiry that investigated MST throughout 2007, and concluded that there are no links of MST to the FARC, no foreigners offering guerrilla training in the camps and no crimes against national security.

MST has been becoming noticeable as one of the more important social movements in history, precisely for its option of fighting non-violently. Therefore, we strongly repudiate the decision taken by the Prosecuting Attorney Superior Council, for the Military Police Major State and for the Federal Prosecuting Attorney decision. We declare our support to MST struggle.

YOUR SIGNATURE