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## **Brazil: Attack against human and environmental rights defenders Alcione Figueiredo Correa and Marcos Fantini**

In the early morning of 1 May 2026, a group of seven unidentified and armed individuals broke into the home of the human and environmental rights defenders **Alcione Figueiredo Correa** and **Marcos Fantini**, and held them hostage for hours. The group set fire to and destroyed the energy and communications facilities, destroying much of the building's structure and the equipment they used for defence and environmental monitoring. Alcione and Marcos managed to escape the attack and have been unable to return to their home ever since. A month after the first attack, on 5 June 2026, the activists learnt from an anonymous tip that their house had been set on fire again and completely destroyed.

Alcione Figueiredo Correa is an engineer and environmental defender. Her work in the defence of human rights has been particularly focused on the protection of water and nature. Since 2019, she has been working to protect biodiversity and water sources in the Serra da Chapadinha, in the Chapada Diamantina region of the state of Bahia. Marcos Fantini is a human rights lawyer and environmental defender. He has been advocating for the protection of the Serra da Chapadinha, primarily by reporting illegal mining interests in the region to relevant authorities and pushing for Serra da Chapadinha to be legally recognised as a strictly protected conservation area. Alcione Figueiredo Correa and Marcos Fantini run an eco-tourism centre called Toca do Lobo, where they carry out research about biodiversity, organise environmental education activities and which is also an eco-hotel. They also act as citizen forest rangers in Serra da Chapadinha, where they protect the biodiversity and water sources by looking after the territory and its species.

Alcione F. Correa and Marcos Fantini carry out monitoring and scientific research into the region's biodiversity and geodiversity through initiatives organised at their eco-tourism centre, which has made it an outpost of the UNESCO as an Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve in Brazil, as an area dedicated to the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable development and the promotion of scientific and traditional knowledge. Since 2023, Alcione and Marcos have been part of the "Save the Serra da Chapadinha" movement, which, together with locals and communities, is campaigning to turn the area into a protected area. Recently, the movement succeeded in getting the Bahia state government to hold a public consultation, in order to legally recognise Serra da Chapadinha as a protected area. It will be identify as a Wildlife Refuge, which would prohibit any extractive activities in the region.

The Serra da Chapadinha mountain is home to one of Brazil's most important water sources, which, via the River Paraguaçu, supplies around 80 municipalities in the state of Bahia and 60 percent of the state capital, Salvador. In addition, it also encompasses a wide variety of flora and fauna, some of which are at risk of extinction. The territory is contested by various economic interests, such as mining companies

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and property developers, who seek to illegally seize the land in order to exploit its natural resources, particularly minerals.

In the attack suffered by Alcione and Marcos in early May 2026, armed men threatened them and set their house on fire to force them to leave. The environmentalist couple were held captive for hours by the group and subjected to a series of threats and acts of violence. Among the threats they received, the assailants accused Alcione Figueiredo Correa and Marcos Fantini of hindering Chapadinha's progress by preventing mining companies and projects by setting up operations in the region. During this attack, the assailants also destroyed the property's entire energy infrastructure, which was powered by solar panels and batteries, and smashed and burned computers, cameras, hard drives, and radios used for their environmental monitoring work. Due to the threats and the physical damage, the environmentalist couple was forced to leave and seek refuge on their own. In early June 2026, they learnt of a new fire and the destruction of buildings, which caught their attention at the time because it was targeted towards the Toca do Lobo sign, recognising it as a UNESCO outpost.

These attacks create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in the region and generate a climate of insecurity for environmental defense. This is happening at a crucial time, when the public consultation launched by the Bahia government requires the public's participation so that the proposal to designate the Serra da Chapadinha as a protected area can move forward in line with the interests of the local population.

Front Line Defenders condemns the violent attacks against human rights and environmental defenders, Alcione Figueiredo Correa and Marcos Fantini, and expresses its concerns about the seriousness of the threats that led to their enforced displacement. The organisation emphasises that the full protection of Alcione and Marcos is essential, and that their work has a positive impact on the preservation of biodiversity and the right to water for communities in Bahia, mainly supplied by the water sources of the Serra da Chapadinha. The State must take every possible action to protect Alcione Figueiredo Correa and Marcos Fantini, as well as ensure the presence of appropriate institutional bodies to guarantee their safety and that of all those who defend nature and the territory in the Serra da Chapadinha.

#### **Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Brazil to:**

1. Ensure integral protection for Alcione Figueiredo Correa and Marcos Fantini, in accordance with their needs, in a coordinated way and with sufficient resources to safeguard their lives, safety, physical integrity and the continuity of their work as human rights and environmental defenders. This includes coordinating inter-institutional efforts to ensure their safe return to the Serra da Chapadinha;
2. Conduct a transparent, thorough and comprehensive investigation into the attacks against Alcione Figueiredo Correa and Marcos Fantini, to identify and hold accountable not only the perpetrators, but also those who masterminded the attacks against Alcione Figueiredo Correa and Marcos Fantini and their property;
3. Publicly recognise the important work carried out by human rights and environmental defenders in Brazil and the impact that this work has on improving living conditions for society;
4. Ensure a safe environment for public participation in consultation processes on environmental issues, such as the public consultation to transform the Serra da Chapadinha (Chapadinha mountains) into a Wildlife Refuge;
5. Fulfil its obligations regarding the protection of human rights and environmental defenders, and strengthen its protection framework through the ratification of the Escazú Agreement.