**Public hearing regarding the export, use, benefits and side effects of pesticides not approvedin the European Union**
Written Statement

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**Introduction - Brazilian Context on Pesticides**

According to FAO data, Brazil is the largest consumer of pesticides in the world. In 2022, 800,000 tons of pesticide active ingredients were consumed in Brazil, according to Ibama (Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources). In 2023, the Brazilian pesticide market was worth almost 21 billion dollars, according to data from Sindiveg (National Union of the Plant Protection Products Industry). These figures have been growing year after year, showing that our country is a rapidly expanding market for agrochemical transnationals.

According to Sindiveg, the use of pesticides is highly concentrated in export targeted commodities. Considering the sprayed area of soybeans (55%), corn (18%), sugarcane (4%) and cotton (7%), we have 84% of the use of pesticides concentrated in 4 export targeted crops, mostly cultivated with genetically modified seeds.

Data on pesticide poisoning in Brazil is underreported, according to the Ministry of Health. Some of the reasons for underreporting include the difficulty in accessing the health system for people in rural areas, the lack of knowledge of toxicology among care teams, and the fear of reporting cases due to the political power wielded by farmers in some regions.

Even so, in 2019, the Ministry of Health recorded 8,412 cases of pesticide poisoning in the country. Between 2010 and 2019, the number of records increased by 109%. Between 2010 and 2021, there were 9,806 records of children aged 0 to 14 being poisoned, of which 91 died.

Pesticide contamination in Brazil mainly affects traditional, indigenous, quilombola[1] and peasant populations who often live surrounded by large agribusiness plantations. In many cases, pesticides are used as a chemical weapon to expel these populations from their lands. Farmers use airplanes to spray pesticides over traditional communities and their water sources, seeking to force these populations to migrate[2].

In 2023, the Brazilian Congress approved a new pesticide law, further relaxing registration criteria and weakening the powers of the Health and Environment agencies. Under the new

[1] They are the descendents of Afro-Brazilian slaves, who until abolition in 1888 mostly were forced to work on plantations

[2] See https://revistaforum.com.br/meio-ambiente/2024/9/4/exclusivo-guerra-quimica-que-acontece-nos-interiores-do-brasil-164982.html

law, the entire pesticide registration process is coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture, which has great influence from agribusiness and agrochemical companies. German companies such as Bayer and BASF, through their associations, have spoken out in favor of the new law. According to a report prepared by the NGO Fiquem Sabendo (2024), pesticide lobbyists and Brazilian government authorities met 752 times between October 2022 and August 2024. BASF and Bayer were the companies that participated most in these meetings, with Bayer alone having 52 meetings during this period.

**Emblematic cases**

As a way of illustrating the impacts of pesticides in Brazil, we report 3 emblematic cases below.

Contamination of organic production in Rio Grande do Sul

Contamination from pesticides applied by irregular aerial spraying on neighboring farms has harmed family farmers in agrarian reform settlements in the cities of Nova Santa Rita and Eldorado do Sul, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

One of the most emblematic cases occurred in the Santa Rita de Cássia II Settlement, in November 2020, when owners of the farm known as Granja Nenê carried out aerial spraying of pesticides on rice crops. The application was made less than 700m from the settlement, and 20 of the 100 families living in the agrarian reform settlement lost all of their production – most of which is certified as organic. The settlement is located in the buffer zone of the Jacuí Delta and, because of this, aerial spraying of pesticides is prohibited in the region.

The damage caused by the drift of the pesticides, however, went even further and reached other cities, affecting producers within a 30km radius. One week after the application of the agricultural poisons, the effects began to be felt in the Itapuí settlement, in the city of Nova Santa Rita, and in the Integração Gaúcha settlement, in the municipality of Eldorado do Sul. The contamination harmed the production of tomatoes, vegetables, beans and orchards, but also affected water sources and animals and poisoned people in the region.

One of the pesticides detected in this contamination was Glufosinate, permitted in Brazil but banned in the European Union because of its reproductive toxicity.

Chemical warfare against communities in Maranhão

Another important case occurred in the state of Maranhão. In March 2021, soybean farmers on a farm neighboring the Carranca Community, in Buriti, sprayed pesticides with agricultural aircraft near homes, poisoning the families living there. Shortness of breath, vomiting, headaches, and even fever are some of the symptoms presented by the community's residents after the poison was applied. Families have also reported the death of domestic animals, such as goats and chickens.

When trying to talk to the soybean farmers about the impacts of contamination from this type of pesticide application, one of the residents was intimidated by the farmers' employees, who threatened to put "the worst poison they had" in front of his house.

One month later, something similar was recorded in the Araçá community, in the same municipality. An agricultural aircraft made a series of low-flying flights over the community and dumped pesticides on the area, even hitting children who were playing outside their homes. The action was filmed by people in the community.

After the plane passed over, local residents reported itchy skin, burning eyes, and respiratory problems.

Pesticides and deforestation

Pesticides have also been used as a method of deforestation for cattle ranching. In April 2024, the police confirmed that farmer Claudecy Oliveira Lemes deforested 81,100 hectares of forests in the Pantanal, a protected Brazilian biome, using 25 active ingredients in pesticides over a period of 3 years. One of the active ingredients used was Thiamethoxam, banned in the European Union since 2018 due to its effects on pollinating insects. The owner has other farms that supply cattle to JBS, one of the largest Brazilian animal protein companies.

With this, we see that pesticides are not only related to agricultural production: the expulsion of traditional communities, contamination of organic production and deforestation are also among the uses of these substances in Brazil.

**Pesticides used in Brazil and banned in other countries**

According to study by Friedrich et al (2021), “approximately 80% of pesticides authorized for use in Brazil have no use permit in at least three OECD countries, including those that have an important economic activity in agriculture. In Australia, which has 40% of its territory under similar agricultural conditions, 114 pesticide active substances permitted in the Brazilian territory were not found in the records of this country. Although Brazil and India have relatively similar edaphoclimatic conditions, more than 50% of pesticides registered in Brazil do not have a use permit in India. We also verified that the list of pesticide active substances authorized in Brazil includes examples with recognized toxicity on human health and the environment.”.

Another study by prof. Sonia Corina Hess states that there are 370 active ingredients of chemical pesticides registered in Brazil. Among them, 208 (56,2%) are not registered, have a pending register or were banned in the European Union. In 2021, at least 290 thousand tons of these active ingredients were sold in Brazil. Among the top sellers are acephate, atrazine, chlorothalonil, chlorpyrifos, diuron, imidacloprid and mancozeb, all of them carcinogenic and/or endocrine disruptors.

**Pesticides manufactured by Bayer and BASF permitted in Brazil and banned in the EU**

As stated in a report published in 2020 (Luig et al., 2020) by Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Southern Africa, INKOTA-Netzwerk, MISEREOR, Campanha Permanente Contra os Agrotóxicos e Pela Vida and Khanyisa, “German pesticide manufacturers produce a number of active ingredients that are not approved in the European Union (EU) and export them to

countries in the Global South where the regulations governing pesticide approval are often weaker than in the EU. Research by the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) has shown that 62 active ingredients in pesticides were exported from Germany in 2017 that are classified as highly hazardous - more than a quarter of all exported active ingredients. Nine of these highly hazardous exports are not approved in the EU due to their noxious properties."

According to the same report, Bayer and BASF market at least 28 active ingredients in South Africa and Brazil that are not approved in the EU. Greenpeace showed in a report from 2021 that some of those pesticides return to Germany in imported Brazilian fruits and vegetables.

**Double Standards**

When faced with double standards argument, companies often claim that they comply with the rules of the countries where they operate. However, they hide the lobbying work they do to influence these laws, as mentioned above.

Another common argument used by companies is that pesticides that are not approvedin the European Union are not registered for reasons unrelated to the dangers they pose to health and the environment.

We have therefore selected two cases of pesticides not approved in the EU to demonstrate the opposite.

Glufosinate is a herbicide considered harmful if swallowed, harmful on contact with skin, harmful if inhaled, may impair fertility and harm unborn children, may damage organs[3]. In 2023, Germany exported to Brazil 6700 tons of Glufosinate, according to the Brazilian Ministry of Development, Industry, Trade and Services.

Cyanamide is a herbicide and growth regulator, considered Toxic if swallowed, toxic on contact with skin, causes severe skin burns and eye damage, may cause allergic reactions of the skin, damages organs in the long term, harmful to aquatic organisms with long lasting effects, and suspected of causing cancer, damage to unborn children, and fertility disorders[4]. Germany exported 750 tons of Cyanamide to Brazil in 2023, according to the Brazilian Ministry of Development, Industry, Trade and Services.

**Can a reduction or a marked reduction in the use of pesticides in developing countries be expected to result in an increase in hunger?**

First, it is important to note that most of the pesticides used in Brazil are intended for the production of commodities for export, and not for food that reaches the population's table. 84% of the area sprayed with pesticides in Brazil refers to the production of soybeans, corn, sugarcane and cotton, according to Sindiveg[5]. Therefore, a limitation on the import of pesticides would hardly have an impact on food production.

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[3] See ECHA: https://echa.europa.eu/de/substance-information/-/substanceinfo/100.071.466
[4] See ECHA: https://echa.europa.eu/de/substance-information/-/substanceinfo/100.006.358
[5] See https://sindiveg.org.br/mercado-total/

In addition, it is important to note that hunger in Brazil is not due to a lack of food, but rather to poor distribution and failures in public policies. In 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic and under the far-right government that dismantled several public food security policies, a survey by the Brazilian Research Network on Food Sovereignty and Security (Rede PENSSAN) found that 9% of Brazilians (19 million people) suffered from severe food insecurity. In total, 116.8 million Brazilians did not have full and permanent access to food, which corresponds to 55.2% of national households.

Also in 2020, corn and soybean production in Brazil broke historical records: 103 million tons of corn and 121 million tons of soybeans were harvested, according to data from IBGE.

This contradiction shows that the causes of hunger are more related to public policies than to the volume of agricultural production. The United Nations report on the State of Global Food Insecurity 2024 showed an 85% drop in severe food insecurity, with the return of income distribution and food security policies by the new government.

**Which sections of the population are particularly at risk, and how can that risk be minimised?**

Pesticides have a long chain of production and use, which means that their impacts extend from manufacturing, through transportation, use, disposal of packaging, and reaching residues in food, air, water and soil.

However, there is no doubt that those most affected are the rural populations living around large plantations. They are peasants, indigenous people, quilombolas, extractivists, fishermen and other populations who resist in their original places of residence, produce healthy food and refuse to migrate to the urban centers.

According to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, “Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right not to use or to be exposed to hazardous substances or toxic chemicals, including agrochemicals or agricultural or industrial pollutants.” (Article 14.2).

The same article 14 explicitly mentions the responsibility of pesticide-producing countries to take preventive measures: “States shall take all measures necessary to ensure: (...) That those who produce, import, provide, sell, transfer, store or dispose of chemicals used in agriculture comply with national or other recognized safety and health standards.”

Thus, the necessary ban on exports of dangerous pesticides by Germany finds broad support in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas.

**What international collaborations are required to regulate the global use of synthetic chemical pesticides? What is the role of national legislative and licensing procedures in that context?**

Industrial agriculture is a completely globalized market. Therefore, the problems generated by this agriculture and its solutions can only be addressed transnationally. In this sense, there is a clear geopolitical divide between the countries of the global North that manufacture pesticides and have more restrictive legislation regarding the registration and monitoring of pesticide residues, and the countries of the global South, large agricultural producers, that use pesticides and have less restrictive legislation.

This situation requires the countries of the global North to take an active stance if they truly want to put an end to this inequality. Some actions are essential:

1. Application of the same sanitary rules for products used in Germany and outside Germany;
2. German companies must refrain from using their economic power to influence the legislation of other countries for their own benefit;
3. Use part of the taxes collected from the sale of pesticides to support victims of poisoning and for actions to encourage the agroecological transition;
4. End the export of highly dangerous and/or banned pesticides in Germany.

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