

OPEN LETTER – Goiânia Letter

Letter of Repudiation Against the Eco-Genocide of the Cerrado

Organizers of the 5th National Week of the Cerrado

The Cerrado beats as the biogeographical heart of Brazil. It is the cradle of waters, the guardian of sociobiodiversity, and the territory of countless peoples who, for centuries, have cultivated ways of life that sustain the land and the collective good. However, this very heart is being torn apart by fire, poison, and greed. In view of the worsening environmental and human destruction affecting this biome, we, the organizers of the 5th National Week of the Cerrado (V SENACER), gathered in September 2025, publicly express our repudiation of the ongoing eco-genocide in the Cerrado and the systematic violation of the rights of its peoples and traditional communities..

1. A Crime Against Life, Nature, and Peoples

Eco-genocide — a concept reaffirmed by the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal (PPT) during the Session in Defense of the Territories of the Cerrado (Rome/Goiânia, 2022) — designates the deliberate and coordinated destruction of the biome and the physical, cultural, and symbolic extermination of its peoples. It represents the contemporary face of a historical process of colonization and territorial usurpation, initiated with the occupation of the sertões in the 20th century and intensified by the so-called Green Revolution, which transformed the Cerrado into the frontier of agribusiness and a laboratory for a devastating agro-export model.

Today, more than 50% of the Cerrado’s original vegetation cover has already been destroyed. Rivers are drying up, springs are dying, and species are disappearing.

The air and soil are contaminated by millions of liters of pesticides released annually by airplanes that poison crops, animals, and people. Criminal fires multiply, turning forests into ashes and forcing entire communities to flee.

But the Cerrado does not die alone: with it perish the peoples who protect it — Indigenous, quilombola, babaçu nut breakers, geraizeiros, veredeiros, riverine communities, family farmers, and many others who, for centuries, have cared for this territory with wisdom and affection.

2. The Verdict of the Earth: Denunciation and Justice

In 2022, the International Jury of the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal (TPP, in Portuguese) condemned the Brazilian State, foreign States, and national and international corporations for the crimes of ecocide and genocide committed against the Cerrado and its peoples. The verdict recognized that such practices constitute systemic crimes, driven by land grabbing, predatory mining, the expansion of monocultures, and the intensive use of pesticides — policies that violate human, territorial, and environmental rights, and threaten the global climate balance.

We, the signatories of this Letter, reaffirm the substance of that condemnation.

We repudiate the historical and institutional negligence of the Brazilian State, which continues to allow and encourage the destruction of the Cerrado in the name of economic interests and the profit of a few, to the detriment of the lives of millions.

We also denounce the daily violence perpetrated against environmental defenders, community leaders, and Indigenous peoples, who have been persecuted, criminalized, and murdered for protecting what belongs to all: life.

3. For the Resistance of the Peoples and for Climate Justice

The Cerrado endures because its peoples resist. The strength of the babaçu nut breakers, the guardians of the veredas (wetlands), the young educators, the quilombola and Indigenous women, the farmers, and the researchers who take part in the 5th National Week of the Cerrado (V SENACER) keeps alive the hope for a sustainable future.

Inspired by Freirean Pedagogy, we reaffirm the importance of dialogue between scientific and traditional knowledge, and we recognize the transformative role of public education and outreach in cultivating a critical awareness in the face of the climate crisis. Thus, the V SENACER stands as a political-pedagogical act of resistance, in defense of the Cerrado as a territory of life — not a commodity.

4. Inclusion of the Cerrado Week in the Academic Calendar

We urge the states and municipalities located within the territory of the Cerrado and its transitional areas to include the Cerrado Week in their school calendars as a public policy for environmental education and identity appreciation.

Such a measure – following the example of the Federal District, where Law No. 7,053, published in the Official Gazette of the Federal District on January 6, 2022, includes the Cerrado Week in the school calendar of the public education system, held annually from

September 5 to 11 – represents an important instrument for social mobilization, civic education, and defense of the biome..

5. Our Demands

In light of the legacy of the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal (TPP) and the recommendations of its ruling, we demand:

1. Constitutional recognition of the Cerrado and the Caatinga as national heritage, through the immediate approval of Constitutional Amendment Proposal (PEC) 504/2010, under the motto “*Present wealth, future legacy*”;
2. Immediate demarcation and titling of Indigenous, Quilombola, and traditional territories;
3. An end to policies that promote destructive agribusiness, mining, and megaprojects that violate human and environmental rights;
4. A ban on aerial spraying of pesticides and an urgent revision of legislation that enables the indiscriminate use of toxic chemicals;
5. Protection of the waters of the Cerrado, ensuring prioritized and sustainable access for local communities;
6. Creation of permanent public policies for food sovereignty, agroecology, and social technologies that respect Cerrado ways of life;
7. Investigation and accountability of companies, and of public and private agents, involved in environmental crimes and rural violence;
8. Continuous investment in critical environmental education and curricular restructuring to include traditional knowledge, appreciation of the Cerrado, and teacher training focused on sustainability — promoting ecological awareness and commitment to the preservation of the biome;
9. Inclusion of the Cerrado Week in the academic calendars of municipal and state education systems in regions within the biome and its transitional areas.

6. Call to the Powers and to Society

We submit this Letter of Repudiation against the Eco-Genocide of the Cerrado to the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Powers, to the Coordination of COP 30, and to national and international institutions dedicated to human rights and the environment.

We also call upon all Brazilian society to recognize that there can be no climate justice without a living Cerrado.

Without its waters, its peoples, and its biodiversity, no future is possible.

May this Letter be more than a denunciation — may it be a seed.

A seed of hope, of mobilization, and of justice — one that may blossom in every school, community, university, and territory of the Cerrado, and resonate throughout the entire country and beyond, carrying forth the voice that cries out:

“Stop the eco-genocide! The Cerrado is life, and life is not negotiable.”

Goiânia, October 31, 2025.

Signed,

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