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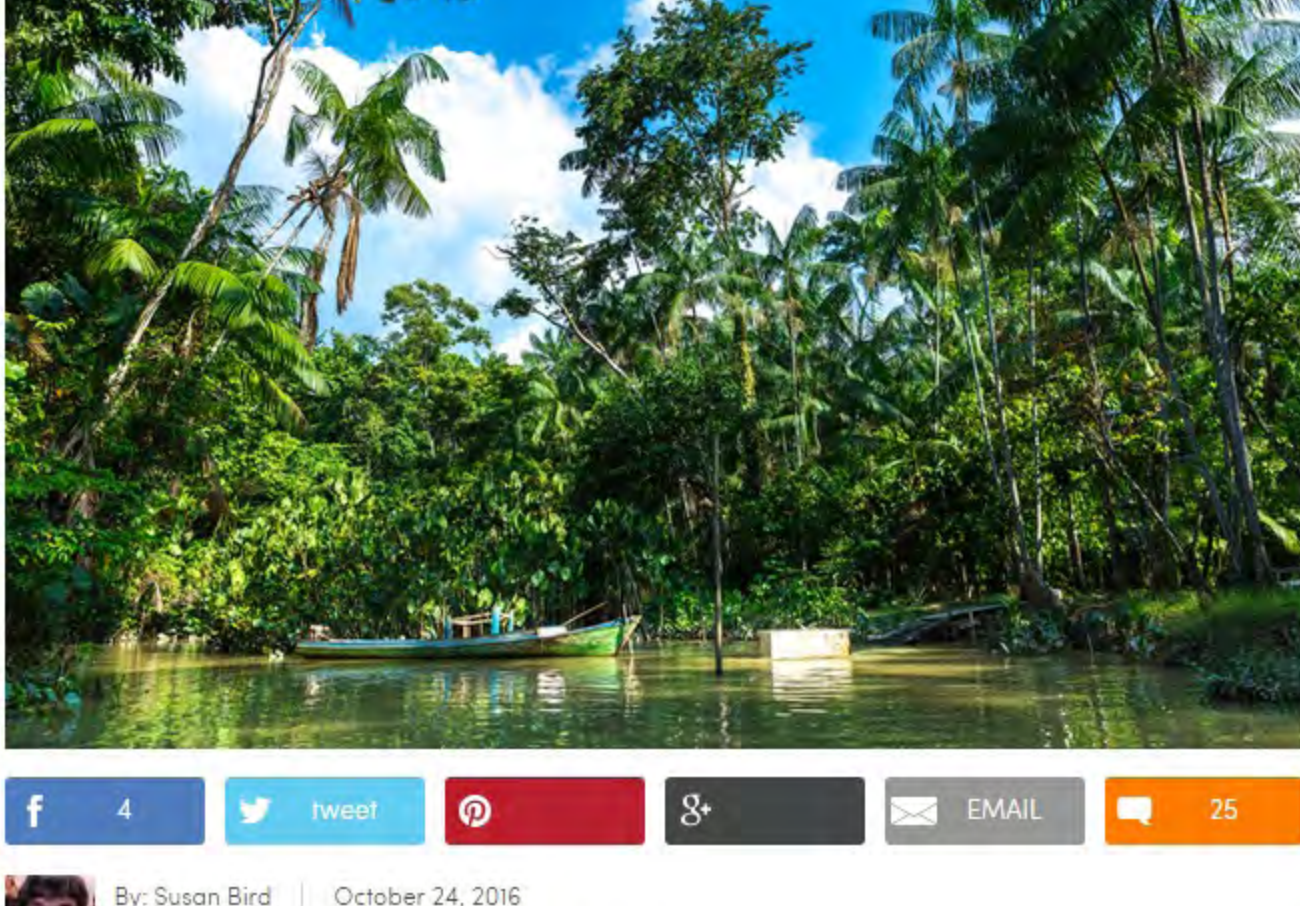
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Yet Another Environmental Hero Is Murdered in Brazil



By: Susan Bird | October 24, 2016
About Susan | Follow Susan at @ItsSusanBird

Luiz Araújo was an aggressive and effective environmental enforcement official in Pará, Brazil. Because of that dedication, two gunmen shot him dead in his home on October 13th as his family watched. In Brazil, this is what happens to some indigenous and environmental activists, and it's only getting worse.

Between August 2014 and July 2015, illegal deforestation wiped out about 2,300 square miles of rainforest in Brazil. A good third of that amount happened within the state of Pará, Brazil. Luiz Araújo worked hard to stop all that, and he died for it.

Araújo served as environmental secretary for the city of Altamira. During his time in that position, he accomplished impressive things:

- Araújo's work helped lead to the arrest of a major illegal logging kingpin and his son, who'd been running their operation for a decade. Their slave labor had been cutting timber, selling it for profit, and turning 113 square miles of forest into grazing land for cattle. Authorities arrested 24, and the kingpin ended up with a \$37 million fine.
- In February 2016, Araújo's team collected tons of dead fish secretly buried near a newly completed dam. The company operating the dam was fined \$11 million for the 16.2 tons of fish illegally killed there.

This fine work ensured Araújo caught the attention of dangerous people. Unfortunately, his luck ran out in October.

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"The government of Altamira has lost a dedicated servant and important figure in the fight for better environmental policies in the region," the Altamira city government said in a statement, according to the Los Angeles Times. "Since 2014, he has performed his duties with brilliance and enormous competence and intelligence. He was admired by all."

Brazil is well known as the most dangerous country to be an environmental activist. A shocking 448 environmental activists were assassinated in Brazil between 2002 and 2013. That accounts for half of all environmentalists killed worldwide. In 2015 alone, hired guns killed 50 Brazilian environmentalists, making it the most deadly year on record in Brazil for defenders of the natural world.

Think about that number for a minute. The killing of 50 activists works out to about one a week, all year long. That's outrageous and heartbreaking. Every one of those people had family and friends who worried that this terrible outcome might happen. Nevertheless, those activists pushed ever forward, battling issues like illegal logging and agricultural encroachment of the Amazon rainforest.

The good people of the world are being cut down, while the bad ones are raking in big money as they exploit the rainforest for profit.

"We may be seeing just the tip of a much larger iceberg," Bill Kovarik, Radford University professor of communications, told the Smithsonian. "The world needs to be aware of the people who are dying to save what's left of the natural environment."

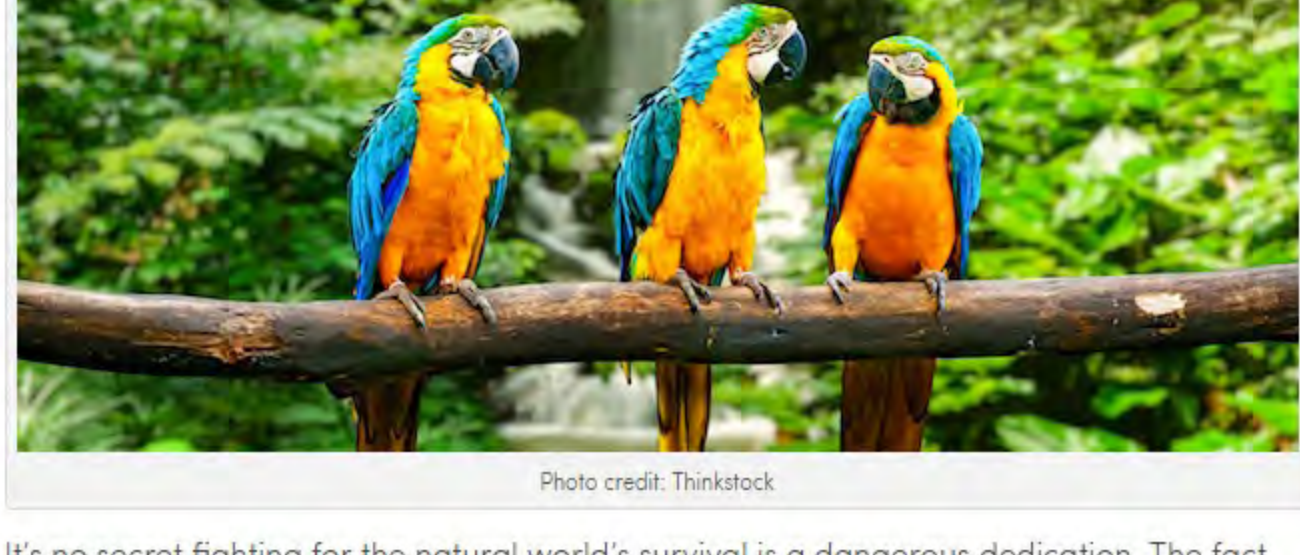


Photo credit: Thinkstock

It's no secret fighting for the natural world's survival is a dangerous dedication. The fact that so many are willing to fight anyway, especially in Brazil, is testament to their incredible courage. It's a kind of courage most of us will never have to dig into our souls to find.

Pause for a moment and honor Luiz Araújo's commitment and bravery. He undoubtedly knew full well the risk he was taking. He did his job exceedingly well and paid the ultimate price for protecting Brazil's precious rainforests.

Photo credit: Thinkstock

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Lenore Kudaka 4 hours ago
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Gina J. 5 hours ago
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JoAnn Paris 6 hours ago
Thank you for this very interesting article.

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Sandra Vito 6 hours ago
Thanks

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O.O. 7 hours ago
This is absolutely horrible and it affects everyone not just those who live in Brazil. These murders must be stopped now! What is the Brazilian Government doing about this?? If we all boycott doing business, vacationing, and buying their products until these murders are stopped and those involved ARE SEVERELY PUNISHED AND THOSE PUNISHMENTS ARE ENFORCED. THIS MAY BE THE ONLY WAY THAT JUSTICE IS GOTTEN FOR LUIZ ARAUJO AND OTHERS THAT WERE MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD TO PROTECT OTHERS, THE ENVIRONMENT AND ANIMALS.

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RIP LUIZ ARAUJO AND MAY YOU AND YOUR FAMILY GET THE JUSTICE YOU DESERVE FOR DOING WHAT WAS RIGHT BY THOSE WHO WISH TO DO OTHER WISE.

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Deborah S. 7 hours ago
Thank yo . It is a cruel world

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Ivana D. 8 hours ago
Tyfs

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Peggy B. 8 hours ago
Why isn't Brazil doing anything about it??

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JimmySITEISSUES L. 8 hours ago
Again, absolutely disturbing, unacceptable and immoral. Vile, self-serving and soulless creatures that roam this earth. Luiz Araújo the earth was honored to have you as one of its guardians. You have done well and may you rest at peace in an everlasting paradise. Thanks for sharing.

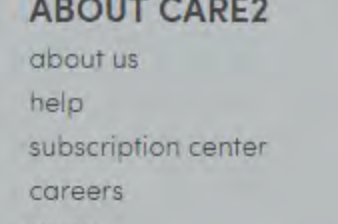
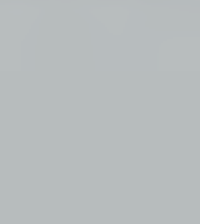
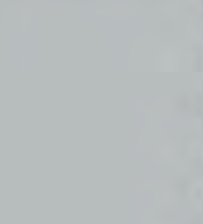
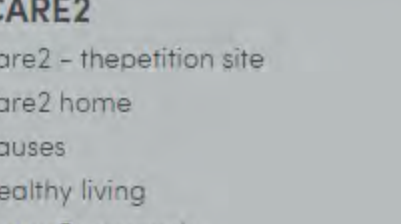
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