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02/15/2006



Indians damage tracks and leave Carajás railway

Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD) informs that:

1) About 500 Indians from the Guajajara, Krikati, Canela, Awa Guja and Urubu Ka'Apor communities damaged Monday (Feb 14) the rail line of the Carajás railway (Carajás Railroad), removing 13 meters of tracks. They also set fire to the line, forcing the company to replace 98 sleepers and 123 fast clips. Such acts consist of another crime (destruction of public assets) the Indians have been doing repeatedly since Feb 7th, when they blocked the EFC for the first time. This act of vandalism prejudiced the daily transport of about 1,000 passengers and the link between Brazil's biggest mineral province - the Carajás mines in Pará state - and the Ponta da Madeira port in Maranhão state.

2) The EFC passenger train will resume running Thursday (Feb 16) as of 8 am (Brazilian time), leaving the São Luís station in Maranhão state to Parauapebas in Pará state. The company made repairs today (Feb 14) and released the railway at 4 pm (Brazilian time);

3) A São Luís judge, from the 6th Vara Federal do Maranhão, also determined late Monday (Feb 13th) that the Indians should clear the Carajás railway. But they did not obey the court order, insisting on the dismissal of the regional coordinator of the National Health Foundation (Funasa). The Indians continued to obstruct the railway, interrupting the daily transport of about 1,000 passengers and tonnes of cargo;

4) So far the Indians have committed the following crimes:

- a. Kidnapping for two days of four CVRD employees
- b. Disobedience to court orders determining the release of the railway
- c. Destruction of public assets

5) Only today (Feb 15) a decree with the dismissal was published in the Official Gazette and was presented to the Indian community leaders by representatives of the National Indian Foundation and Funasa, with the presence of the federal police. After long discussions, the Indians agreed to free the EFC.

6) With the Indians out of the railway, CVRD will be able to have a detailed assessment of the damages and work on the necessary repairs for the resumption of the traffic under EFC's highest safety standards;

7) It is important to stress that EFC does not cross Indian land in the state of Maranhão and the support CVRD voluntarily offers to the Indian communities in the region is given in partnership with Funai as stated in a agreement set up years ago;

8) In his decision, the São Luis judge wrote: "rights and duties are guaranteed to all, but within the limits imposed by the law". The universal declaration of human rights and the Federal Constitution secure everybody's rights. Everyone has the right for health care, including the indigenous communities. Third parties' rights to come and go, the right for offering

transport services of cargo and passengers are also rights to be preserved. However, it is not at the expense of the sacrifice of the third parties' rights should the claims of the indigenous communities be made possible."

9) The EFC is a federal concession operated by CVRD. This is one of the railroads with the best performance indicators in the world and is responsible for the daily transport of iron ore, manganese, pig iron and soy, which are exported from the Ponta da Madeira port, also belonging to CVRD and with a key participation in Brazil's trade balance.

10) The transport of passengers is made with comfort and safety at the EFC trains, which is an important means of transportation for the residents of the region. Besides, the supply of fuel in the region also depends on the Carajás railroad;

11) CVRD, the private company which invests most in Brazil with an investment plan of 11.8 billion reais this year, hopes the government agencies in charge of indigenous issues will be able to tackle those issues in order to avoid such events, allowing the continuity of the company's operations, which are so relevant to Brazil and, in particular for that region. Such operations cannot be hurt by conflicts and interests unrelated to CVRD.

More information



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