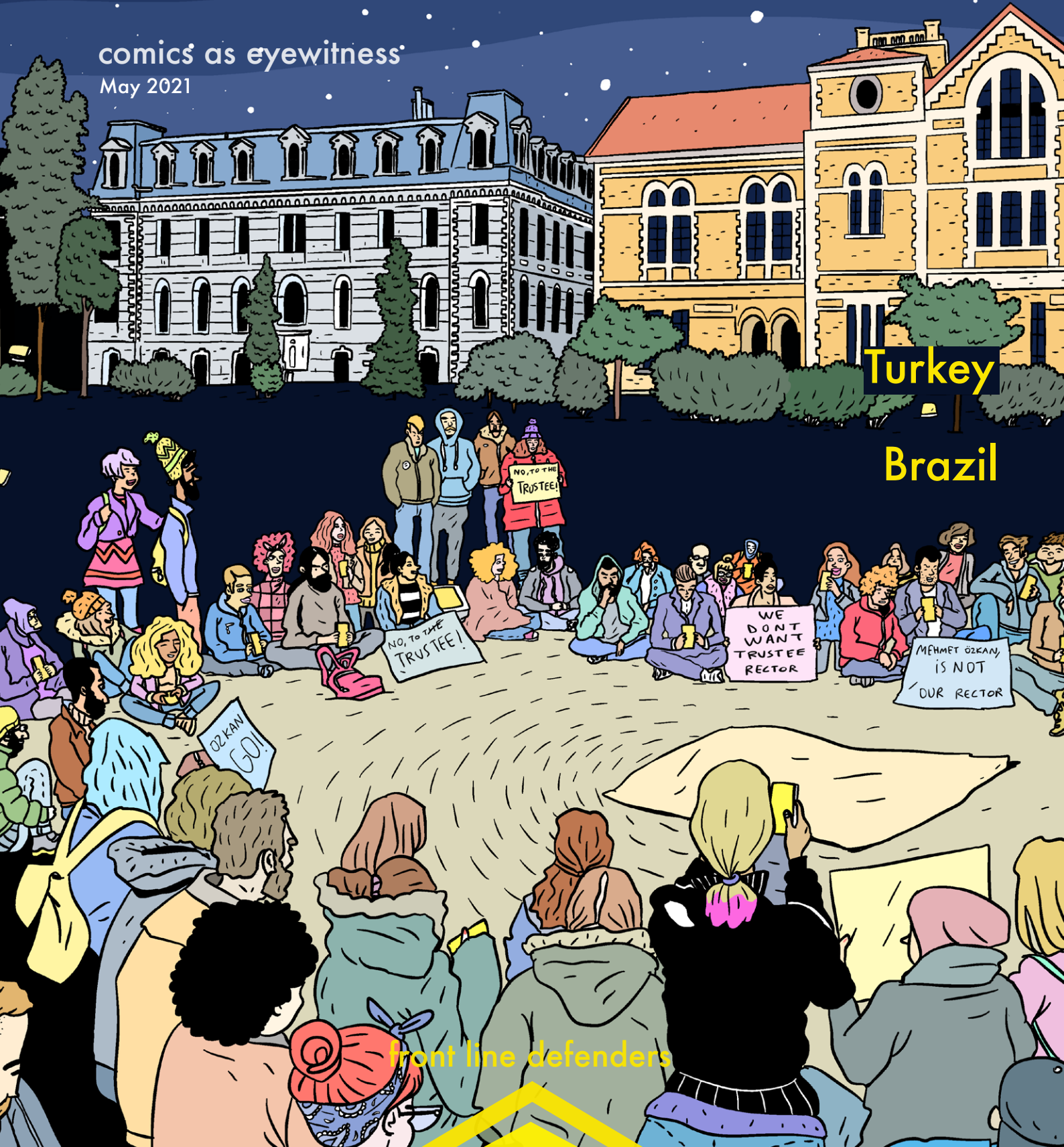


# CY, D'HER

comics as eyewitness

May 2021



Turkey

Brazil

front line defenders

## cypher

/ˈsaɪfər/

The dictionary definition of cypher is 'a secret or disguised way of writing'. In many ways, this is the essence of comics storytelling – the image, rather than the word, is a disguise for many words, that can convey meaning, emotion, and can re/frame an entire narrative.

Rap and hip hop culture has taken the word and ascribed a new meaning: 'an informal gathering of rappers, beatboxers and/or breakdancers in a circle, in order to jam musically together.' This, too, we find relevant to this project, in that we are bringing together artists and HRDs in freestyle collaboration of activism and art with the aim of informing, elevating and inspiring.

For us, this captures the spirit of why we are working in comics and guides how we facilitate the process of creative production.

Edited and published by:  
Beldan Sezen and Adam Shapiro

Cover art by Betül Yılmaz

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[frontlinedefenders.org/cypher](http://frontlinedefenders.org/cypher)



Usually Cypher focuses on Human Rights Defenders as a single person or a group. With the recent protests in Turkey and Colombia, the uprising against the putsch in Myanmar and the ongoing resistance to occupation in Palestine, often unaffiliated people in large masses take to the streets to collectively defend their rights, freely express themselves and defend freedom. All have in common their resistance against autocratic and corrupt administrations that continue to undermine human rights. The next two issues of Cypher will put the focus on this social unrest instead of one specific Human Rights Defender.

The protest movements and resistance we have witnessed in these and other countries is the context in which human rights defenders work. They are often the first to document and share, the first to rush to help, and the first to be targeted by 'security' forces and other actors who aim to disrupt or break up protest movements.

May 2021



**adam shapiro**



**beldan sezen**

# Turkey

The fight at Bogazici University, one of Turkey's most well-known institutions, is a struggle over free speech and the upholding of academic freedom. Erdogan's appointment of former politician Melih Bulu, a party loyalist, as the head of the University, is a direct attempt to break the remaining academic autonomy, which is under attack since 2016, to ensure nationalist and religious instructors. Erdogan, by once again labeling the opposition as "terrorists" and with a heavily armed police presence on campus, continues the overall crackdown on lesbian, gay and trans people; on women rights and intellectuals.

With daily silent protests, students and professors at Bogazici University have refused to accept President Erdogan's government meddling by the appointment of a new rector. It's been 148 days so far.

Artist: [Betül Yılmaz](#)  
[Instagram](#)

# A STORY OF BOĞAZIÇI RESISTANCE

*What if they are not plainclothes police officers!?*





01.01.21

With an announcement in an well known official newspaper, the President appointed Professor Doctor Melih Bulu as the Rector of Boğaziçi University.



05. Jan. 21

Students took up protesting in front of the south campus demanding the respect of the elections. Police violently tried to disperse the protesters.



B.U. Students and faculty members protested the handover ceremony by turning their backs to the rectorate building.



The door was broken, so they used handcuffs to fix the door, tehee, they found such a practical solution...



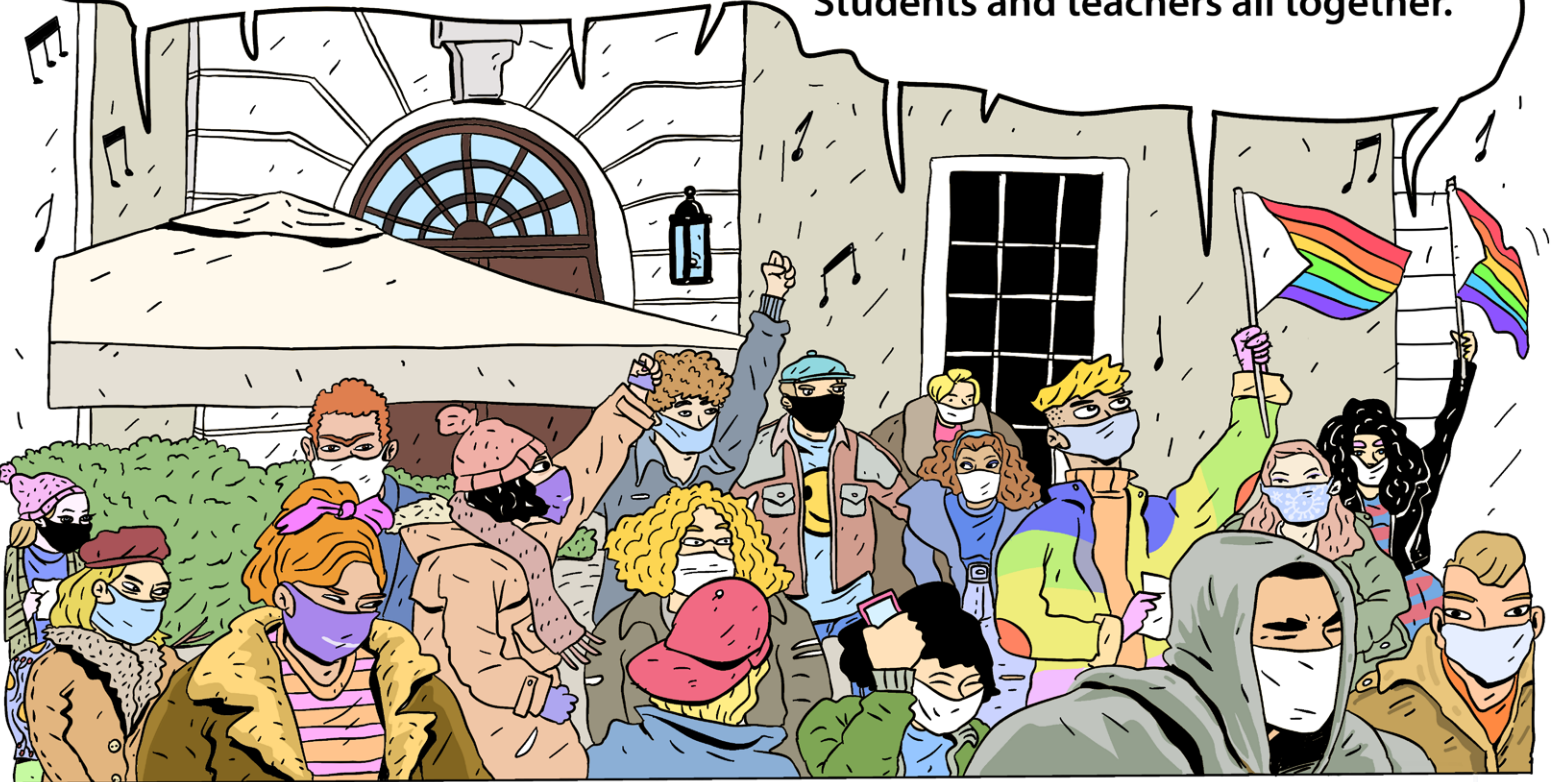
I'm a rector who listens to hard rock!

Metallica is my favorite... We'll get along well with the students, he he he

Students arranged and gifted Melih Bulu Metallica's song "For Whom the Bell Tolls".

In Boğaziçiii, with a banner in their hands, who is struggling? Ba dum Tss, north to south now everywhere.

Students and teachers all together.



That news came in the middle of the night, a blow to democracy! Will it stop, the whole Bosphorus cries out. Get ready, this word is for you, now look and listen:

We don't give up. RESIGN!

We will not bow down to the trustees!

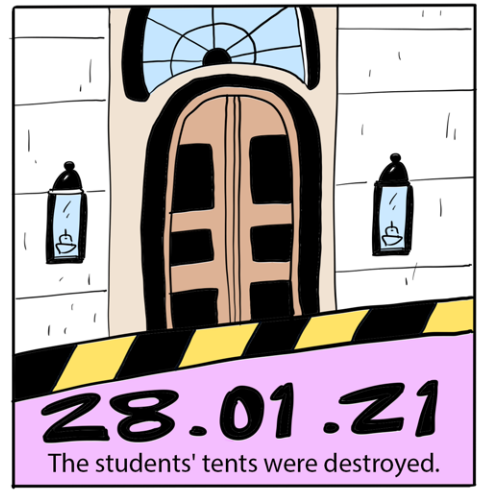


DI BUD/  
DIH  
DI BUDI  
DIHIN

İSTİFA!

# 21. JAN. 21

Students from various universities protested in Istanbul's Kadıköy neighborhood.



20  
01  
21

# METÜ

Two METU\* students were detained in Ankara.

\* Middle East Technical University

## 30 JANUARY 2021

Two of the 4 people who were detained on 30 January due to the exhibition in which the Kaaba photograph was exhibited were referred to the court with a request for arrest.

We detained  
4 LGBT  
deviants.

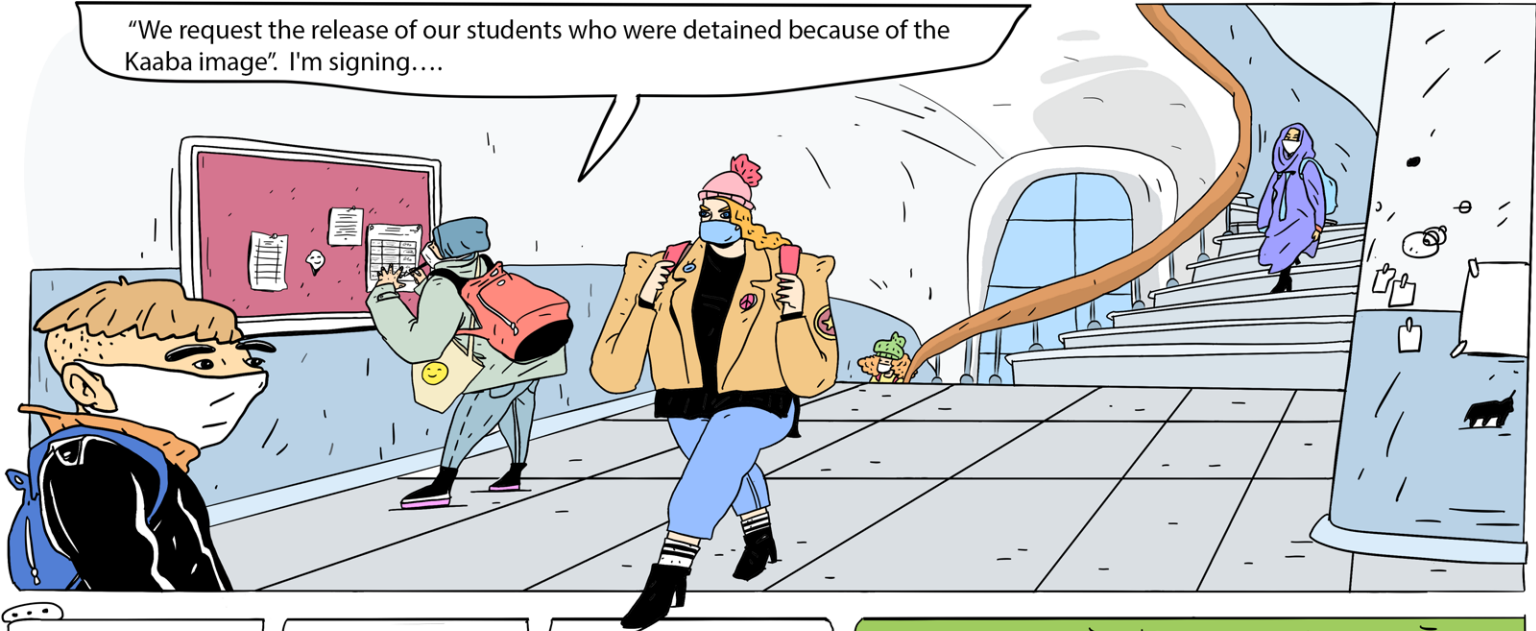


Twitter restricted Süleyman Soylu's account in which he posted hateful comments towards students, on the grounds that it contained hate content.





"We request the release of our students who were detained because of the Kaaba image". I'm signing....



Have you ever seen these types before?

I think it could be plainclothes police.

What if they are not plainclothes police officers!?



They are pretty much following us, brother... I'm calling the police!



Come to the police station, then sigh...

Now, police officers, two people are following us inside the school.... We have to go to the police station.

Maybe WE ARE POLICE OFFICERS TOO...



I think we'll drive you home guys.

No, we will file a complaint. We have to go to the police station!!

Well then, where is the closest one...?

Besiktas region.



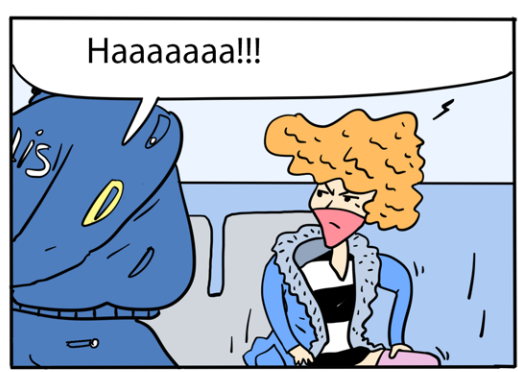
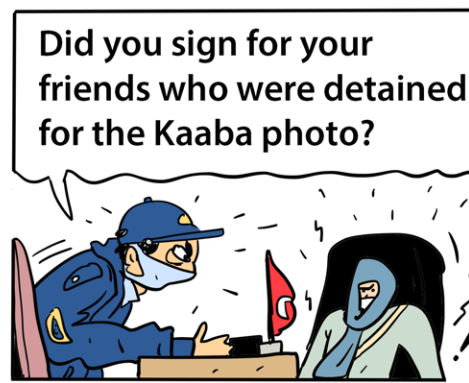
Oh brother, we've been waiting for two hours, no one is paying attention, I'm going outside for a smoke.

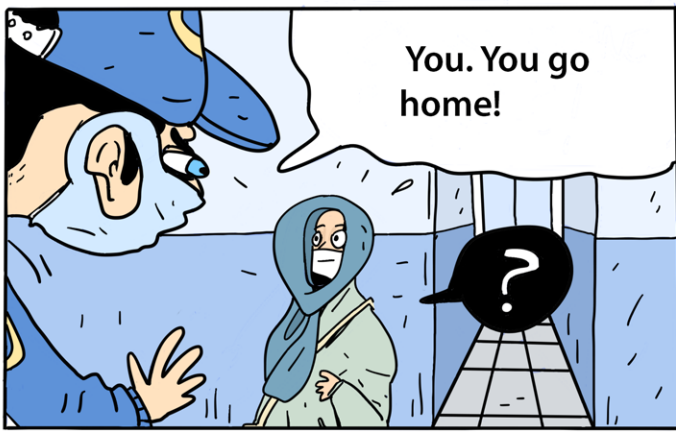
**SIT DOWN !!!**



While driving towards the Vatan police headquarters in the police car, the song "My Heart's Spirit is Wounded" from Suavi was on the radio and I couldn't keep quiet.

"my heart'ssssss spirit is wounded"





We were separated from each other as we rose higher and higher like capsules launched into the space. We were disappearing in this universe without knowing who was right and who was wrong.

# 1 FEBRUARY 2021

Rude boy!

Lower your eyes!!



## 01. FEBRUARY. 21

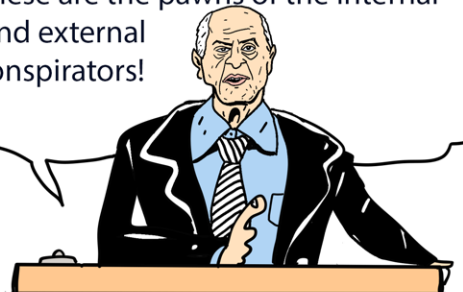
The police intervened harshly against the students who wanted to come to the protest. The chant "We won't look down" took its place among the slogans of the resistance.



Students was detained.

MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli made a statement full of insults and conspiracy theories.

These are the pawns of the internal and external conspirators!



# 02. JANUARY 2021

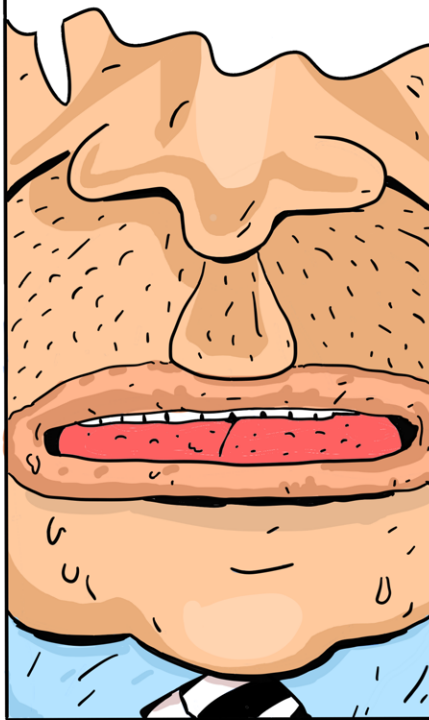
Bosphorus academics this time turned their backs to the rectorate building with banners that said "159"



03. 01. 21

ARE YOU STUDENTS,  
ARE YOU EDUCATORS,  
OR ARE YOU THE  
**TERRORISTS** WHO  
ATTEMPTED TO RAID  
AND OCCUPY THE  
RECTOR'S CHAMBER!

COWARDS!!!  
IF YOU DARED YOU  
WILL SAY  
"PRESIDENT  
RESIGN!"



06  
01  
21



## 9 JANUARY 21

Photographer Ozan Acidere, who was detained while following the Boğaziçi University protests, is under house arrest.

# 94

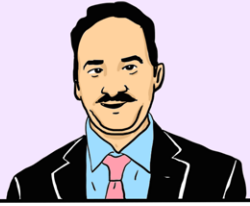
DETENTIONS

## 18 JANUARY 2021

B.U. students were abducted by people claiming to be police officers and put in unofficial cars. They were later released.

**01. MAR. 21**

Melih Bulu appointed Vice Rector Professor Doctor Naci İnci, who works in the physics department, to the Institute of Social Sciences.



**3. MAR. 21**

262 theater actors. supported B.U. resistance.



**05. 03. 21**

Murat CAN DEMİRCİ, one of the Boğaziçi detainees, was released.

The number of arrested students dropped to 8.

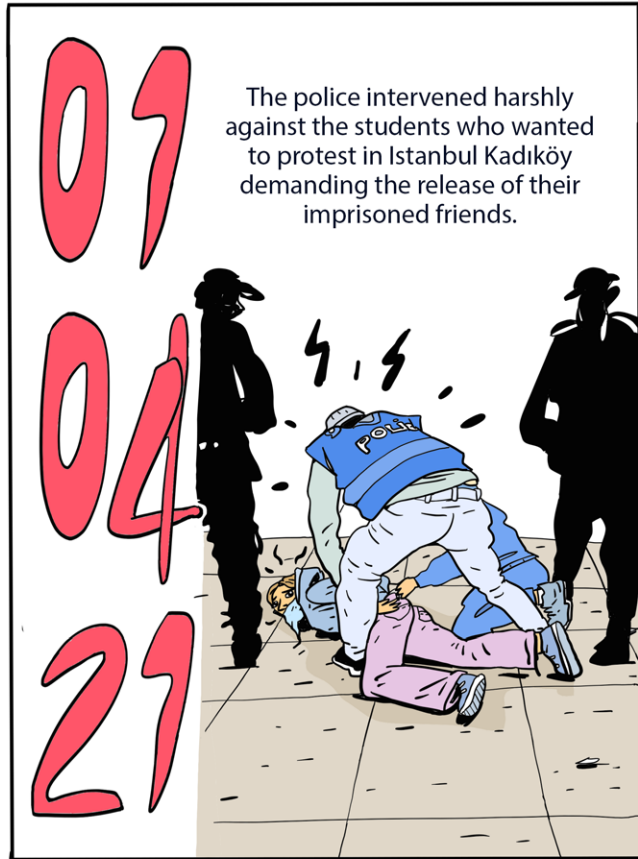
**08. 03. 21**

Boğaziçi University female academics held a vigil on March 8th.



**25. MAR. 21**

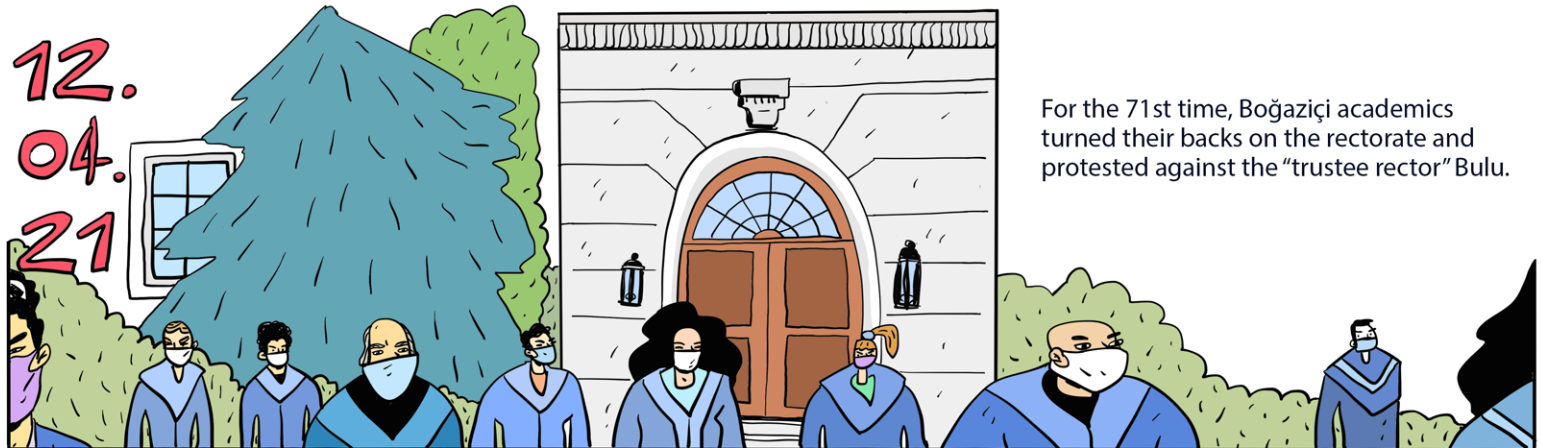
4 students trying to cross from the south campus to the north campus were arbitrarily detained by the police for carrying the LGBTI flag. The number of detentions increased to 12.



The police intervened harshly against the students who wanted to protest in Istanbul Kadıköy demanding the release of their imprisoned friends.

Many arrests, detentions and releases continued.

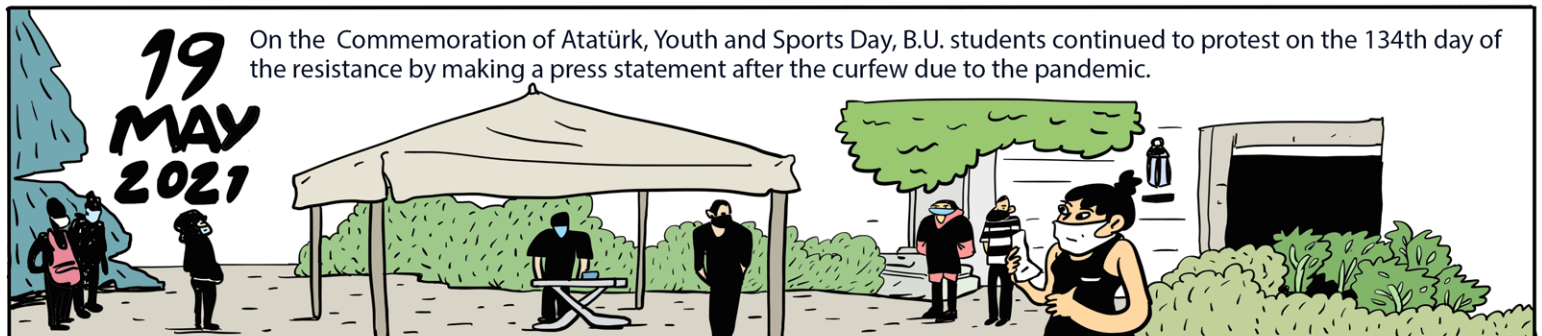
**12. 04. 21**



For the 71st time, Boğaziçi academics turned their backs on the rectorate and protested against the "trustee rector" Bulu.

**19 MAY 2021**

On the Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day, B.U. students continued to protest on the 134th day of the resistance by making a press statement after the curfew due to the pandemic.



# Brazil

Brazil is one of the most lethal countries in the world for environmental activists and human rights defenders. Historically, the state of Pará has registered the highest rates of violence related to agrarian issues in Brazil; located in the Amazon region, it is the most violent state for land rights defenders. The episodes vary from evictions of rural workers, riverside communities or quilombolas; illegal mining, logging and occupation of indigenous areas; destruction of property and assets; physical attacks; arbitrary detention, criminalisation and killings.

This week marked four years since the Pau d'Arco massacre in which 10 rural workers were murdered and four months since the killing of Fernando dos Santos Araujo, a survivor and key witness of the Pau d'Arco massacre case.

On 24 May 2017, in what is now widely known as the Pau D'Arco massacre, 10 rural workers and land rights defenders associated with Liga dos Camponeses Pobres – LCP were murdered on the Santa Lúcia farm by police officers. On 26 January 2021, land rights defender Fernando dos Santos Araújo was killed in his house on the Santa Lúcia farm. He was a survivor and one of the key witnesses against the 17 police officers in the Pau d'Arco criminal case. While investigations into the Pau D'Arco massacre saw some progress, no charges have been brought against those who ordered the operation, while the accused police officers were allowed to wait for the trial in freedom and return to active duty, some of them in the region of Pau D'Arco city. In addition, human rights defender José Vargas Sobrinho Junior, who is the lawyer of Pau D'Arco victims, has been facing a criminal investigation against him, considered by those who accompany the case to be an attempt to prevent justice for the Pau D'Arco Massacre.

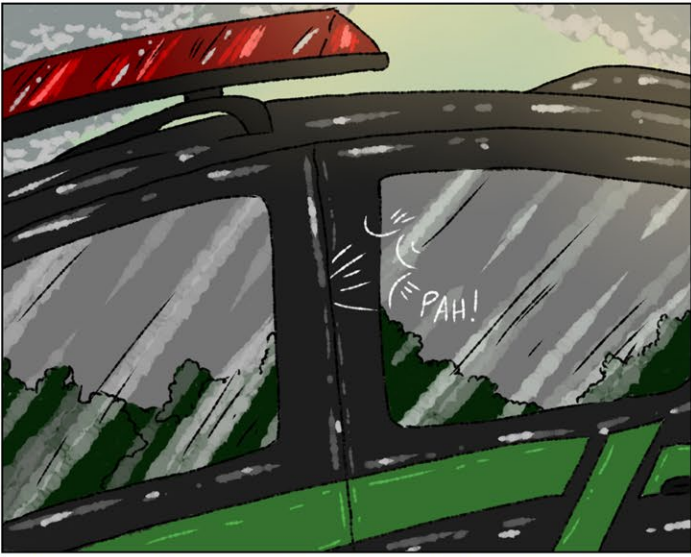
Impunity in these notorious cases, among others, fuels the targeted violence against land and environmental rights defenders in Pará. The threats and murders of human rights defenders in Pará are endemic to the business practices of mining, logging and cattle ranching in this region, and indeed across the country, because resource extraction and agribusiness are prioritised over the lives of rural populations, indigenous communities and quilombolas.

Artist: Mandy Barros  
[Instagram](#)

Santa Lúcia Farm,  
Pau D'Arco Municipality,  
Pará State, Amazônia, Brazil.  
24.05.2017.









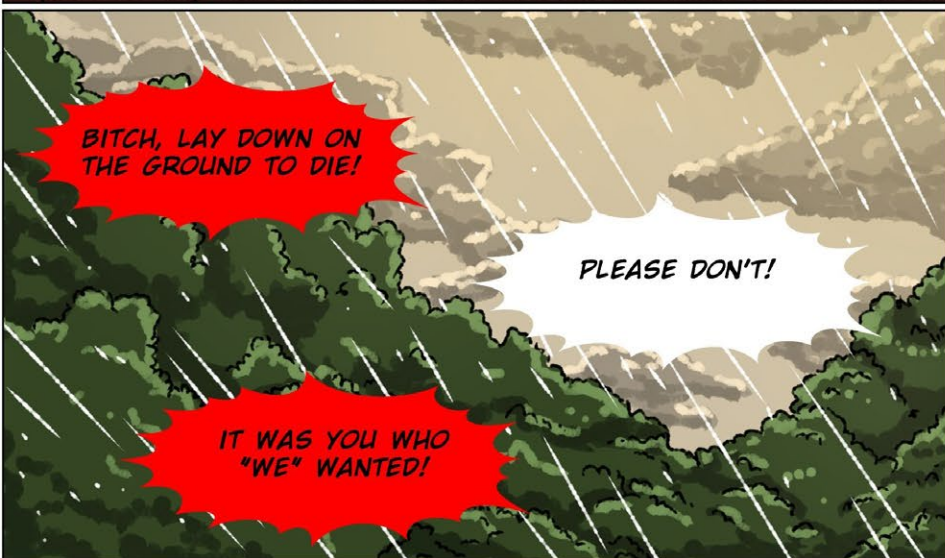
They did not realise that they were surrounded...

There were 8 officers from the Civil Police and 21 from the Military Police.

**IT'S THE FUCKING POLICE!  
WHOEVER RUNS,  
DIES!**

The incident became known as the Pau D'Arco Massacre. It was the biggest massacre of rural landless workers since the massacre of Eldorado dos Carajás in 1996

Of the 25 Landless Rural Workers who were camped out, 10 were killed by the Military and Civil Police.



**BITCH, LAY DOWN ON THE GROUND TO DIE!**

PLEASE DON'T!

**IT WAS YOU WHO "WE" WANTED!**



They all died hungry...

Fernando Araújo, 39, landless rural worker, gay man and human rights defender.



He survived under the body of his beloved, Bruno Gomes.



And despite the tragedy, he had the strength to tell this story and fight for land and for justice.



The bodies were removed by the police and were piled up in pickup trucks, thereby tampering with the crime scene.



Redenção Military Police Headquarters, 29 May 2017.



Landowners and congressmen from Belém organized a demonstration in defence of the police officers.



And they even had a barbecue for the police officers who took part in the massacre!

The Secretary of Public Security justified the legitimacy of the operation, claiming that the victims had shot first.



The relatives and friends of the victims did not even manage to hold a proper wake, as the bodies were only returned in an advanced state of putrefaction. In addition, the relatives faced intense public harassment.



Unknown Location, 24 December 2020.

Fernando became the main eyewitness and spokesperson for the survivors of the massacre. He never gave up fighting for justice, even with constant threats.

Vargas, the threats are increasing. I don't know what to do...

(...)



José Vargas, lawyer, human rights defender, was a friend of Jane's and worked on the case for land rights on the Santa Lúcia Farm.

We can meet for a chat.

Yes, please, let's meet up in the new year...

New Year's Day,  
1 January 2021.



Fernando and Vargas never met. The police suddenly appeared at Vargas' house.

MAY I ASK WHAT THE CHARGE IS?

YOU ARE CONSIDERED A SUSPECT IN THE DISAPPEARANCE OF A LOCAL LEADER IN THE CITY OF REDENÇÃO.

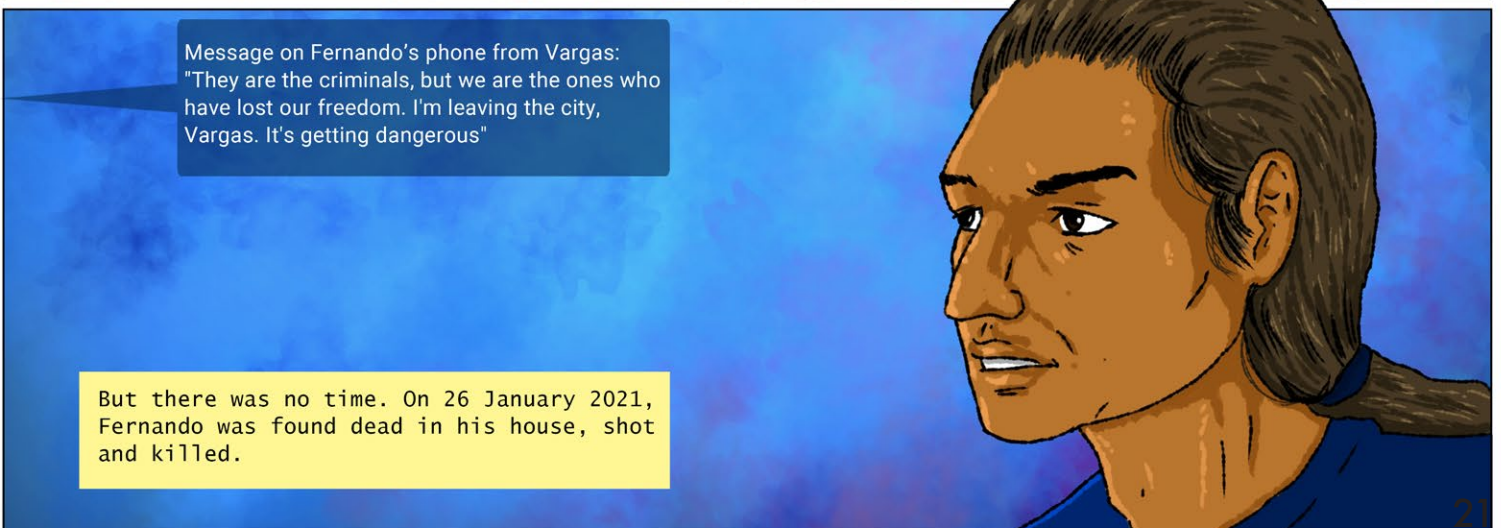


Several human rights organisations have denounced the illegitimacy of this arrest. Because of the weakness of the evidence, Vargas was released to home detention on 25 January 2021.



Message on Fernando's phone from Vargas:  
"They are the criminals, but we are the ones who have lost our freedom. I'm leaving the city, Vargas. It's getting dangerous"

But there was no time. On 26 January 2021, Fernando was found dead in his house, shot and killed.



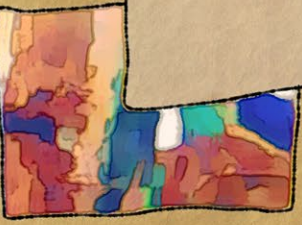


26.01. 2021 -  
Fernando dos Santos  
Araújo,  
main eyewitness of  
the massacre  
is killed.

Another defender  
included in the  
list of those  
"marked for death"

JANE JULIA CAMP

Another murder of a landless  
rural worker:  
Pará is the most violent state  
in Brazil for those who  
defend their rights to the land



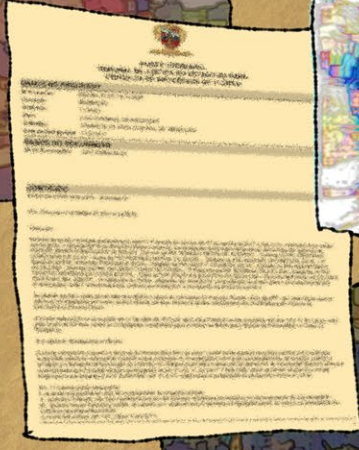
Those accused of  
taking part in the  
Pau D'Arco Massacre  
return to work as  
police officers in  
the region,  
without restrictions.

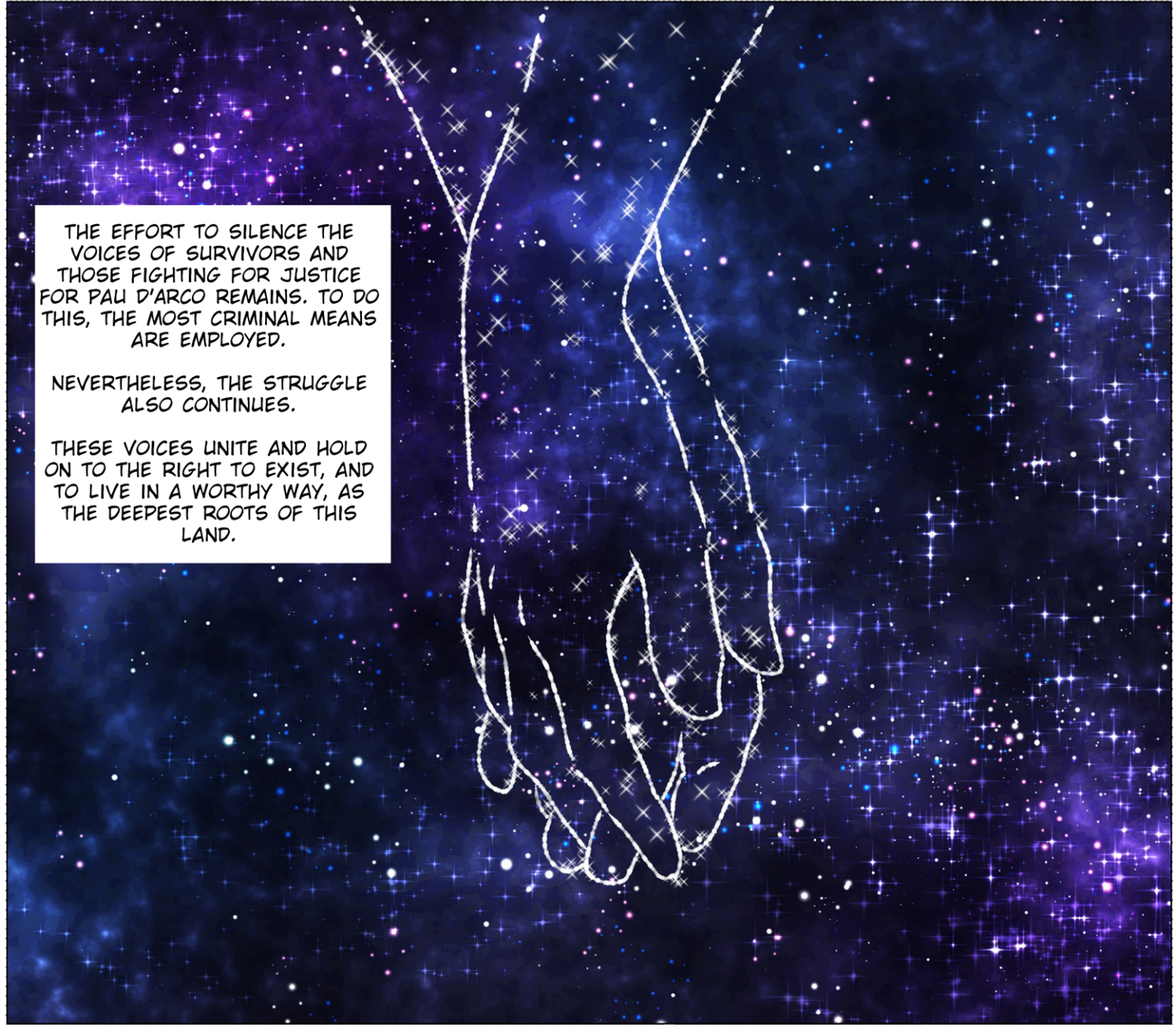


Santa Lucia farm sale  
and purchase  
process is closed:  
200 families living  
in the camp are  
threatened with eviction.

July, 2017- Leader of the  
Santa Lucia camp,  
Rosenildo Pereira  
de Almeida,  
is executed

May, 2018 - Lawyer who  
accompanied convictions  
of Pau D'Arco Massacre  
perpetrators is threatened





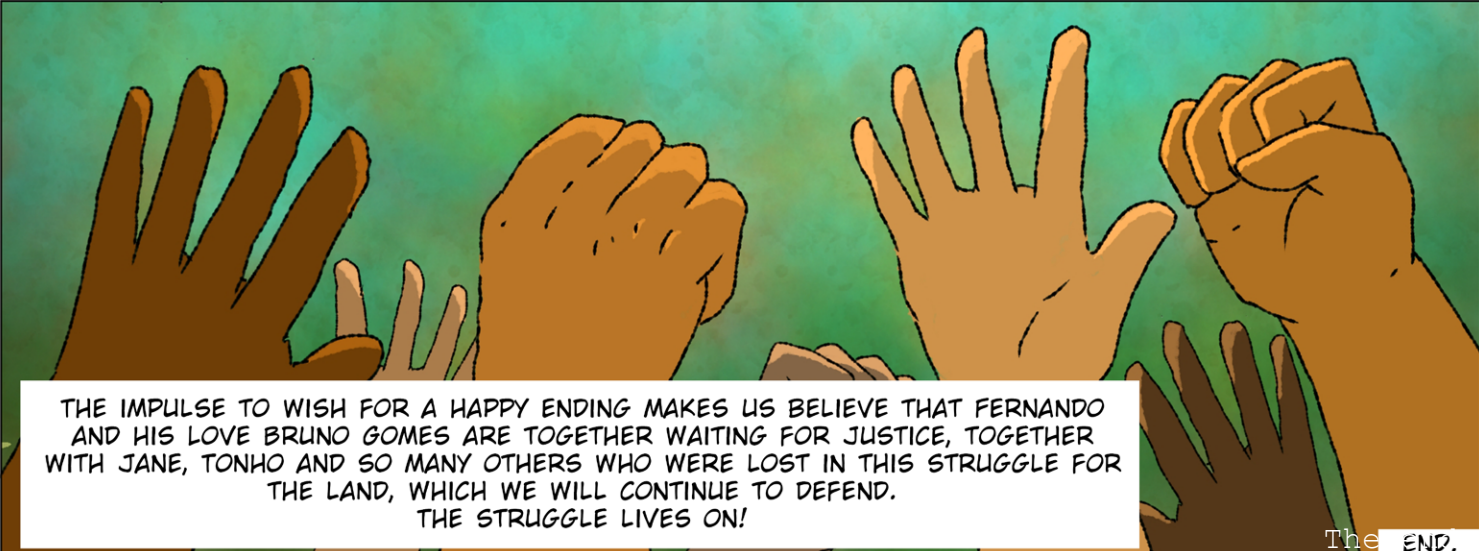
THE EFFORT TO SILENCE THE VOICES OF SURVIVORS AND THOSE FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE FOR PAU D'ARCO REMAINS. TO DO THIS, THE MOST CRIMINAL MEANS ARE EMPLOYED.

NEVERTHELESS, THE STRUGGLE ALSO CONTINUES.

THESE VOICES UNITE AND HOLD ON TO THE RIGHT TO EXIST, AND TO LIVE IN A WORTHY WAY, AS THE DEEPEST ROOTS OF THIS LAND.

"WE HAVE ALREADY PAID FOR THIS LAND WITH OUR BLOOD"

- FERNANDO DOS SANTOS ARAÚJO, DURING COURT HEARING FOR THE DISPUTE OVER THE SANTA LÚCIA FARM, 2020.



THE IMPULSE TO WISH FOR A HAPPY ENDING MAKES US BELIEVE THAT FERNANDO AND HIS LOVE BRUNO GOMES ARE TOGETHER WAITING FOR JUSTICE, TOGETHER WITH JANE, TONHO AND SO MANY OTHERS WHO WERE LOST IN THIS STRUGGLE FOR THE LAND, WHICH WE WILL CONTINUE TO DEFEND.  
THE STRUGGLE LIVES ON!

The END.



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