



UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

21st Century

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BRAZIL: DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES IN A STRUGGLE FOR LAND

INTRO

In Brazil, descendants of slaves have lived for centuries on land occupied by their ancestors. But in recent years their right to the land has been challenged. Here's our story...

BRAZIL: DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES IN A STRUGGLE FOR LAND

VIDEO

AUDIO

(MUSIC)

PROF. HELIO SANTOS ON-CAM

PROF. HELIO SANTOS: (In Portuguese)
"Brazil was built by slaves//all of this was built by slave hands." (5")

INTRO SHOTS OF PROFESSOR SANTOS

NARRATION

Professor Helio Santos is President of the Foundation for Racial Equality, a non-governmental organization in Brazil. (6")

PROF. HELIO SANTOS ON-CAM

PROF. HELIO SANTOS: (In Portuguese)
"In total, around 10 million people were

kidnapped from Africa during the time of colonial slavery. We received four million of them.”(9”)

NARRATION

ECONOMY/SUGAR
PLANTATIONS

African slavery was big business in Brazil. Treated more as commodities than human beings – black slaves became a major part of international trade during colonialism and boosted the country’s economy. (11”)

PROF. HELIO SANTOS: (Portuguese)

PROF. HELIO SANTOS ON-CAM

“In Brazil we find “pelourinhos” in many places. It is a place where people were sold and tortured. // Black people were subjected to torture and even though the slave was punished individually, the pain was felt collectively by the people watching it.” (19”)

ARCHIVAL PHOTOS
SLAVE MARKETS
ARCHIVAL PHOTOS
TORTURE/PUNISHMENT
SPECTATORS

NARRATION

IMAGES OF SALVADOR DE
BAHIA

Salvador de Bahia, Brazil’s first capital city was one of the major slave markets during the colonial era. Its dark history has repercussions today (9”).

RICHARD TORSIANO: (In Portuguese)
“Bahia has a huge relevance in the history of the country, from the economical point of view.”(4”)

TORSIANO ON-CAM

TORSIANO INTRO SHOTS

NARRATION

Richard Torsiano is a director at INCRA, Brazil's National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform. (4")

TORSIANO ON-CAM

TORSIANO: (In Portuguese)

... In the 17th century, we had lots of farms producing sugar cane; and exploiting slave labor. It is one of the States with the biggest number of identified "quilombola" communities... (16)"

CANE FIELDS
ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES

NARRATION

Quilombolas were runaway slaves who escaped from plantations and established their own settlements on small areas of agricultural land. These settlements are known as "quilombos" and many exist to this day. (12")

PROF. HELIO SANTOS ON-CAM
SCENES OF QUILOMBOLAS

PROF. HELIO SANTOS: (Portuguese)

"The "quilombo" is a place where you could find black people who didn't accept slavery. Some "quilombos" had three people, and others like "Quilombo de Palmares" with 40 thousand people."

WORKING THE LAND

ARCHIVAL IMAGES
OF QUILOMBO DE PALMARES

PROF. HELIO SANTOS ON-CAM
BLACK PEOPLE IN STREETS
BAHIA

"Brazil was the last country in the Americas to abolish slavery. It lasted until 1888." (18)"

SANDRA ON CAM

SANDRA DE SANTOS: (In Portuguese)
“My great-grandfather who was known as Pilo Lopes escaped from a plantation. My grandfather, Samuel Lopes //established this Quilombo.” (17”)

LANDSCAPE – DANDA
LIFE IN DANDA

NARRATION

Thirty-four-year-old Sandra DeSantos is a quilombola and community leader. The quilombo where she’s always lived is called Danda. Her grandfather created it. But today, Sandra is involved in a bitter fight to preserve her family’s way of life. (16”)

SANDRA ON-CAM

SANDRA DE SANTOS: (In Portuguese)
“What really triggered all the problems was the moment a woman, claiming to be an heiress, came and told us to leave the land, that we didn’t belong here, that we could not live here anymore.” (22”)

LAND/CROPS

NARRATION

The woman told Sandra that she was the granddaughter of the landowner. (3”)

This kind of dispute has become more common in recent years as farmers have come forward to claim legal ownership of potentially profitable land. Over the past

century farming families occupied lands in rural areas, but often neglected them until real estate values started to surge. In some cases it has emerged that ownership documents have been forged. (22”)

PROF. HELIO SANTOS ON-CAM

PROF. HELIO SANTOS: (Portuguese)
“The landowners are an important force in Brazil.// There are thousands of quilombos and they are located in highly valued regions. Economic greed and modern capitalism give them an incentive. (18”)

INCRA

NARRATION

Sandra feared that tractors would come and destroy their crops. So she brought together members of her community and they appointed her to settle the dispute. (10”)

DISCUSSIONS

SANDRA DE SANTOS: (In Portuguese)
“ I always tell my people that the difficulties that we are experiencing - the struggle of the communities is no different from what we inherited during slavery.” (12”)

NARRATION

Sandra turned to Richard Torsiano at INCRA to find out more about a new clause that she stumbled upon while researching land laws – something that

could save the Quilombo. (11”)

RICHARD ON CAM

RICHARD TORSIANO: (In Portuguese)
“This new government Act allowed us to give these lands back to the quilombola communities and ensured justice to those who were historically victims of injustice and who were excluded from the history of the country.” (19”)

SOUZA STATUE

NARRATION
But the new law, passed under Brazil’s 1988 constitution, was not acted on for years. Then in 2009, former President Lula DaSilva took a bold step that favored the quilombolas such as Sandra and her community. (15”)

RICHARD ON CAM

RICHARD TORSIANO: (In Portuguese)
“President Lula signed here in the State of Bahia...thirty decrees naming the first thirty Quilombola territories. ” (12”)

WOMEN PEELING YUCA

NARRATION
This meant that the quilombolas were granted legal ownership of these territories. (4”)

A further symbolic recognition of the contribution of slaves to Brazil’s history,

has come from the United Nations which declared an international Decade for People of African Descent in January 2015. The theme of the decade is “Recognition, Justice and Development”. (16”)

PROF. SANTOS ON-CAM

PROF. HELIO SANTOS: (Portuguese)
“I believe this Decade of African Descent should be used, not only for the citizenship of African descent people, but also to show the rest of the world what black people did for Europe, what black people did for America, since we helped to build it.” (17”)

QUILOMBOS/LANDSCAPE

NARRATION

Professor Santos knows that even though slavery has ended, the struggle of the descendants of slaves continues - but Sandra is determined and confident that her community will stay. (11”)

SANDRA ON CAM

SANDRA DE SANTOS: (In Portuguese)
“The title is almost in our hands. It's in its final stage.” (6”)

PROF. SANTOS ON-CAM

PROF. HELIO SANTOS: (Portuguese)
“From a legal point of view, their rights are secured. The constitution secures that right. There is some bureaucracy in order

to get the titles of property but from a legal and moral point of view this is already secured.” (16”)

SANDRA ON-CAM

SANDRA DE SANTOS: (In Portuguese)
“That is a privilege for our community of Dandá, to be the first community that will receive land title here in Bahia.” (14”)

MUSIC
DANCE
(TRT 7’48”)