

Alleged perpetrator of the murders of Bruno Pereira and Dom Phillips arrested

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Last month Jeferson da Silva Lima and the brothers Amarildo and Oseney da Costa de Oliveira confessed their participation in the murder. | Photo: El Sol de Mexico

Brasilia, July 10 (RHC)-- The alleged mastermind of the murder of indigenist leader Bruno Pereira and British journalist Dom Phillips was arrested this Friday, as reported by the Brazilian Federal Police (PF).

The suspect, identified as Rubens Villar Coelho "vehemently denies any involvement in the crime," said the superintendent of the PF in Amazonas, Alexandre Fontes, at a press conference. Villar Coelho assured that he only had a "commercial relationship" with the fishermen of Atalaya do Norte, where the two victims operated.

One of the victims, Pereira, was leading a process of denunciation against the illegal mafias operating in the area, which, according to the police, could have been a mitigating factor for Villa, who was involved in illegal fishing in the Javari Valley, to silence him.

Last month, the individuals Jeferson da Silva Lima and the brothers Amarildo and Oseney da Costa de Oliveira confessed their participation in the murder. The Federal Police are currently investigating the case to confirm that those involved, together with the five people in charge of hiding the corpse, are Villar's employees.

Bruno Pereira was general coordinator of the area of the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) for Isolated and Recently-contacted Indians and was threatened with death several times for his surveillance and activism work against illegal mining and fishing.

Meanwhile, Dom Phillips was a journalist interested in the Amazon and Brazil who reported on the environmental crisis of the territory and the problems of the indigenous community.

The PF took advantage of Villa's arrest for false documents to speed up the investigation and prove that he used the fishing drug trade to launder drugs.

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