



Workshop: Toxic trade and toxic legacies - The cases of Brazil and Vietnam

Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ
Thursday, 6 April 2023, 1- 8 PM
KUBUS Leipzig, Hall 1 CD

On 6 April 2021, environmental researcher Larissa Mies Bombardi and her children fled Brazil after several attempts to silence her with intimidations and threats. Ms Bombardi's work to expose the health consequences of the use of pesticides in Brazil brought her into conflict with powerful agribusiness interests. Her publications have attracted the attention of those that would prefer the data on poisoning and mortality linked to agricultural chemicals remain hidden.

Germany belongs to the largest EU exporters of pesticides not approved for use within the EU due to health hazards and environmental risks. Brazil belongs to the main importers of relevant active ingredients. At the same time, Germany is among the major buyers of agricultural products exported by Brazil, such as soy, fruits and coffee. Investigations have revealed devastating health effects of the enormous use of pesticides in Brazil such as genetic defects, infertility and deformities in newborns.

The *UN Human Rights Council* urges wealthy States to stop exporting toxic chemicals banned in their own legislations to poorer nations lacking the capacity to control the risks. In this context, the PIC Regulation (649/2012) needs to be reviewed. On the national level, a draft regulation by the *Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture* (BMEL), its entry into force and effectiveness also remain to be seen. Moreover, the European Green Deal and the negotiations regarding the *EU-Mercosur Trade Agreement* highlight the relevance of the issue.

In Vietnam, the US Military deployed herbicides such as Agent Orange in the 1960s as a weapon. The circumstances and magnitude of the use are of different nature to Brazil. Nevertheless, the components 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T were also used in countries like Brazil under product names like Tordon for deforestation and agriculture. Moreover, there are similarities when it comes to grave adverse health effects and questions of legal liability for the production of hazardous pesticides. There were a number of lawsuits in the US, South Korea and France on compensation claims by those affected. The required remediation has continued for a long time because the decontamination of poisoned soils has been uncompleted.

On 6 April 2023, we will welcome Prof. Dr. Larissa Mies Bombardi as a new member of the UFZ, owing to her parallel *PAUSE Fellowship* for scientists in exile at the *Research Institute for Development* (IRD) in Paris. The case of Ms Bombardi triggers several questions: What is the potential for institutes like the UFZ to contribute to scientific freedom worldwide? Is the use of hazardous pesticides inevitable to provide food security? How could coherence between trade policy and health as well as environmental protection be achieved? Furthermore, what are the lessons learned from repercussions of the use of hazardous pesticides in Vietnam? Is the current remediation in Vietnam sufficient? The workshop will provide the opportunity to discuss these and more highly topical issues.

Programme

6 April 2023, 1 – 8 PM, moderation: Alina Seelig and Felix Klickermann (UFZ)

13:15 **Opening: Prof. Dr. Rolf Altenburger (UFZ - Scientific Director)**

Block 1: Brazil

- 13:30 **Keynote Speaker, Prof. Dr. Larissa Mies Bombardi (IRD-CESSMA, PAUSE Fellow)**
"Geography of Asymmetries: molecular colonialism and the poisoning circle in global pesticide use"
- 14:00 **Fernando Palazzo (Erasmus University Rotterdam)**
"Amazon 451: an environmental Brazilian dystopia."
- 14:30 **Susan Haffmans (PAN Germany)**
"Double Standards in pesticide trade: current developments towards a uniform level of protection."
- 15:00 **pause**

Block 2: Vietnam

- 15:30 **Felix Klickermann (UPR | TB6)**
"Legal liability for Agent Orange-related illnesses: a reassessment of the 2005 VAVA case and current developments"
- 16:00 **Prof. Dr. Lorenz Adrian (UBT | TB4)**
"From Bitterfeld to Biên Hòa: effective soil remediation and decontamination"
- 16:30 **Birgit Grau (Vietnam Friendship Village)**
"Establishment and running of a reconciliation project in Vietnam."
- 17:00 **pause**

Block 3: Film Screening

- 17:45 ***Lighter Than Orange – The Legacy of Dioxin in Vietnam***
(Documentary Film Screening, 72 Min.)
- 19:00 **Q & A with filmmaker Prof. Matthias Leupold**
(University of Europe for Applied Sciences)
- 19:30 **Closing, Alina Seelig (ANA | TB3)**

Registration

The number of participants is limited.
We therefore ask you to register before 1 April 2023 at:

www.ufz.de/pesticideworkshop

There will be catering on site.

Please address questions about registration to:

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Organiser

Research Unit 3: Chemicals in the Environment
Research Unit 4: Environmental Engineering and Biotechnology
Research Unit 6: Environment and Society

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Venue

The workshop will take place at the UFZ conference centre KUBUS (Hall 1CD) of the

Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ, Permoserstr. 15, 04318.

From Leipzig main station, you can get to the UFZ in 15 minutes by tram no. 3, direction "Taucha or Sommerfeld".

Get off at the stop "Permoser-/Torgauer Straße".

