

An extract from Tor's Final Assignment

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Assignment Title / Question: Evaluate the judgement of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in *The Hacienda Brasil Verde Workers V. Brazil* case

Brazil failed in many of its obligations to protect workers and the court ordered Brazil to make changes to protect people in the future by making getting rid of time limits on cases of slavery being brought before the courts so that they wouldn't be time barred, by ensuring that anyone suspected of modern day slavery would be investigated and prosecuted where necessary even by reopening cases that had previously been closed and making compensation payments to the victims in the case. Brazil was also supposed to monitor and attempt to prevent the use of forced labour in the country.

There were positives and negatives to the judgement in this case. Negatively, it was a long time coming, some of the abuse of the enslaved people dated all the way back to the 1990's and it was a long wait for the victims to get justice. The individual people who committed the crimes weren't held accountable, only the state as a whole was which meant that there was no punishment for those that had exploited vulnerable people. The judgement of the court is 158 pages long but this alone cannot change deep rooted prejudice against vulnerable people and communities or change racial discrimination in the country.

Positively, the court re-defined and modernised the definition of slavery to include debt bondage, coercion and exploitation beyond traditional ownership. Although individuals weren't held accountable, this case proved that states and countries can be held accountable when they fail to protect their citizens or allow their human rights to be violated by their inaction or failure to follow their own policies and guidelines. The courts also recognised that historical, economic and racial inequality within the country was directly linked to the conditions that allowed so many people to be exploited.

