

The Exodus Road's Brazil Team Supports Major Trafficking Case Leading to Freedom for Two Brazilian Men in Myanmar

The two men escaped a labor trafficking scheme at a scamming compound in Myanmar

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- The Exodus Road's Brazil Country Director, Cintia Meirelles, supported the freedom and repatriation of two Brazilian men who were exploited in a human trafficking racket within cyberscamming compounds in Myanmar. Working in collaboration with numerous other nonprofits and anti-trafficking entities, The Exodus Road advocated for diplomatic involvement in securing the freedom and repatriation of the two survivors.

Brazilians Lucas Viana dos Santos, 31, and Phelipe de Moura Ferreira, 26, were separately lured to Myanmar in October and November 2024, respectively, with false job promises. The two were trafficked to a compound in a town on the border of Myanmar and Thailand. There, they were held and forced to work in support of a digital scamming operation for three months. Their roles were to gain the trust of unsuspecting victims around the world in an attempt to fool them and extort them for money. The crime, often referred to as "Pig Butchering," is believed to have defrauded victims of more than \$3T (USD), according to Interpol.

In this particular case, a prominent Chinese crime syndicate oversaw the scamming operation. Prisoners were subject to severe physical abuse if they protested the cyber scamming operations



Brazil cyber scamming trafficking survivors Lucas Viana dos Santos, 31, and Phelipe de Moura Ferreira, 26, with their families and Cintia Meirelles of The Exodus Road

they were required to perform.

Viana dos Santos and Moura Ferreira discovered each other while trapped in the compound, and they began planning an escape. They were able to establish limited contact with their families back in Brazil, who in turn contacted [The Exodus Road \(TER\)](#) in Brazil. Cintia Meirelles, TER's Brazilian Country Director, began fervently advocating for the men's release. Meirelles also started daily communications with the families of the victims, providing emotional support and solidarity throughout the months-long process leading to their escape.



Trafficking survivor Luckas Viana dos Santos is reunited with his mother

Global anti-trafficking organization The Exodus Road has operated in Brazil since 2021. The nonprofit combats human trafficking around the world by partnering with law enforcement to investigate human trafficking crime, equipping communities through prevention education

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Cintia Meirelles, The Exodus Road Brazil Country Director

curriculum, and empowering survivors on their journey to freedom. Their efforts in Brazil are strengthened by critical governmental, corporate, and private sector partnerships, and holds official agreements to provide training and technical assistance for Brazilian law enforcement in nine states throughout the country. Through its support of both national and transnational sex and labor trafficking cases, freedom for 485 survivors in Brazil have been secured, to date.

Viana dos Santos and Moura Ferreira attempted to escape

on two separate occasions before finally successfully extricating themselves from the compound on a third attempt. Initially, the pair was free of the compound but still stranded in Myanmar. The Exodus Road left into action to provide funds, logistical support, and diplomatic advocacy to bring them home to their families.

Reflecting on the weight of the situation, Meirelles says, “The rescue of the Brazilians in Myanmar was one of the most profound moments of my journey. Seeing Luckas and Phelipe finally free after everything they endured was both an immense relief and a powerful reminder of why this work is so essential. Restoring their freedom was priceless, but witnessing Luckas reunited with

his mother, Cleide, and Phelipe embraced by his father, Antonio, and his family was beyond words. Watching these reunions was a moment I will never forget.”

Luckas Viana dos Santos and Phelipe de Moura Ferreira landed at Guarulhos International Airport in São Paulo, Brazil on February 19, 2025. The moment was marked by an emotional reunion with their families, who had been eagerly awaiting their return alongside national and international media outlets present to mark the occasion.

"I am very happy and feeling very safe. I am grateful to everyone, the NGOs and the press. Now I want to rest everything that I haven't rested in these months," Phelipe de Moura Ferreira told the press.

In a public post to his Instagram, the survivor added, "I also express my deep gratitude to the NGO The Exodus Road, which was fundamental to my safety and rescue."

Now that both men are back in Brazil, they are each pursuing stable, non-exploitative jobs. A fundraiser has been established to help the men cover their expenses and support them as they restart their lives after the ordeal. You can learn more and contribute to the campaign at <https://voaa.me/jovensresgatados>.

Cintia Meirelles continues to lead The Exodus Road's Brazilian efforts in counter-trafficking cases like this one, supporting efforts to bring freedom to trafficked individuals who remain trapped in exploitation — both at home in Brazil and around the world.

"Every operation like this strengthens my commitment to fighting human trafficking—because every person deserves to come home," Meirelles firmly asserts.

To learn more about The Exodus Road's work around the world, visit theexodusroad.com. For further information about scamming compounds, like the 'pig butchering' scheme that targeted Viana dos Santos and Moura Ferreira, [visit this link](#).

About The Exodus Road

The Exodus Road is a global nonprofit disrupting the darkness of modern-day slavery by partnering with law enforcement to fight human trafficking crime, equipping communities to protect the vulnerable, and empowering survivors as they walk into freedom. Working side-by-side with local staff, NGO partners, and law enforcement around the world, The Exodus Road fights to liberate trafficked individuals, arrest traffickers, and provide restorative care for survivors. Since its founding in 2012, the organization has assisted police in the rescue of 5,600 survivors and the arrests of more than 1,700 offenders, numbers that grow almost daily. The Exodus Road's approach to freedom incorporates intervention, training and education, and aftercare efforts.

In training and education, The Exodus Road offers a suite of online and in-person curriculums, including: INFLUENCED, a curriculum equipping United States parents and teens to participate in the online world while avoiding the dangers of exploitation; TraffickWatch Academy: Brazil, an online training curriculum specifically designed for law enforcement partners; and Equip and Empower, a human trafficking prevention education curriculum for at-risk youth in Thailand. Cumulatively, the organization has trained more than 52,000 officers and citizens through its educational curriculums.

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