



Serra da Moeda

Minas Gerais, Brazil

Serra da Moeda is an imposing mountain range and cultural landscape that extends through eight municipalities in the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil. Occupied for many centuries, the area contains diverse cultural resources and historic sites dating to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many communities of descendants of runaway slaves, called *quilombos*, are scattered throughout the site; their traditional harvest festivals and dance ceremonies still take place and are part of the site's intangible heritage. The mountains are also the backdrop for important heritage sites in the neighboring municipalities, including the Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Matosinhos, a World Heritage Site where the iconic baroque sculptures by Aleijadinho face Serra da Moeda.

Serra da Moeda has a long history of gold, iron ore, and manganese mining; *moeda*, which means coin, derives from the illegal mint that operated in the town of Sao Caetano between 1729 and 1731. The abandoned ruins of the Brumadinho Fort include seventeenth-century vestiges of the gold mining industry. Despite the importance of Serra de Moeda, pressure from urban development and increasing mining activities in the mountain range endanger its natural and cultural heritage. The current practice of open-pit mining without environmental regulation has significant social and environmental impacts on the natural and cultural landscape, and on the local communities. The inclusion of Serra da Moeda on the 2014 Watch will help advocate for more sustainable mining practices that better protect the natural and cultural heritage of the area.