

UA 17/97 Fear for safety / possible extrajudicial executions

17 January 1997

BRAZIL Aldemir Ricardo Gomes - detained
José Marcos de Holanda Soares - detained

Witnesses to the possible extrajudicial execution of the five men
name below

Wilson Soares de Souza - possible extrajudicial execution
Walmir Barbosa da Silva - possible extrajudicial execution
José Alexandre da Silva - possible extrajudicial execution
Edmilson José de Oliveira - possible extrajudicial execution
Antônio Gerônimo da Silva Júnior - possible extrajudicial execution

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Aldemir Ricardo Gomes and José Marcos de Holanda Soares who were detained by civil police on 14 January 1997 in the town of Cavaleiro, in the northeastern state of Pernambuco. Amnesty International believes that they are at risk of torture or ill-treatment, a practice to which detainees are routinely submitted in Pernambuco.

Aldemir Ricardo Gomes and José Marcos de Holanda Soares were arrested in connection with the killing of a civil policeman on 12 January 1997. Civil police from the *Delegacia de Roubos e Furtos*, Cargo Theft Department, say that they were acting on information given by Aldemir Ricardo Gomes and José Marcos de Holanda Soares in undertaking a dawn raid on the neighbourhood of Alto São Sebastião, Cavaleiro, in which five criminal suspects were killed. Amnesty International believes that criminal suspects Wilson Soares de Souza, Walmir Barbosa da Silva, José Alexandre da Silva, Edmilson José de Oliveira and Antônio Gerônimo da Silva Júnior may have been extrajudicially executed.

Amnesty International is also concerned for the safety of witnesses to the killings. According to reports received by Amnesty International, at 4am on 14 January, about 20 civil police from the *Delegacia de Roubos e Furtos* entered Alto São Sebastião. The policemen were in search of men suspected of involvement in the murder on 12 January of one of their colleagues, Moisés Francisco de Melo Júnior, and a police informant, José Carlos Valdelino Passos. According to the police, the five men were members of a death squad under investigation by Moisés José da Silva, and were killed in an exchange of gunfire while resisting arrest. However, eye witnesses reported that the men were dragged from their houses, and that some of them were tied before being shot.

The incident is now being investigated by the *Delegacia de Homicídios*, Homicide Department, but members of the *Delegacia de Roubos e Furtos* are reported to be also participating in the investigation, and witnesses to the incident have said that they feel intimidated by their presence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the last decade, Amnesty International has registered increasing concern at the frequent use of excessive and sometimes lethal force by certain sectors of both the civil and military police in several states of Brazil. Police involved in fatal shootings enjoy almost total immunity from prosecution. The torture and ill-treatment in detention of criminal suspects is also widespread in Brazil.

Witnesses to human rights violations in Brazil are often too afraid to come forward to give evidence. Amnesty International has documented many cases throughout Brazil where witnesses have been threatened, and sometimes killed. This fear contributes to the climate of impunity in which human rights violations flourish.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in Portuguese or in your own language, including some or all of the following points:

- expressing concern for the safety of Aldemir Ricardo Gomes and José Marcos de Holanda Soares;
- calling for the authorities in Pernambuco to ensure that Aldemir Ricardo Gomes and José Marcos de Holanda Soares are treated in accordance with the United Nations *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*;
- expressing concern that witnesses to the killing of Wilson Soares de Souza, Walmir Barbosa da Silva, José Alexandre da Silva, Edmilson José de Oliveira and Antônio Gerônimo da Silva Júnior may be at risk and urging the authorities of Pernambuco to take immediate steps to ensure their safety;
- expressing grave concern at reports that Wilson Soares de Souza, Walmir Barbosa da Silva, José Alexandre da Silva, Edmilson José de Oliveira and Antônio Gerônimo da Silva Júnior may have been extrajudicially executed;
- calling for an immediate suspension from duty of the members of the *Delegacia de Roubos e Furtos* involved in the killings, pending a full and independent inquiry;
- urging that the findings of the inquiry be made public, and that those members of the police suspected of carrying out extrajudicial executions be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice

Exmo. Sr. Ministro da Justiça
 Dr. Nelson Azevedo Jobim
 Ministério da Justiça
 Esplanada dos Ministérios, Bloco 23
 70064-900 Brasília, DF, Brazil
Fax: +55 61 321 5172 /322 6817 / 226 7980
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Brasilia, Brazil
Salutation : Vossa Excelência / Dear Minister

State Governor, Pernambuco

Exmo. Sr. Governador do Estado de Pernambuco
 Sr. Miguel Arraes de Alencar
 Palácio do Campo das Princesas
 Praça de República, s/n
 Santo Antônio
 50.000-000 Recife, PE, Brazil
Fax: +55 81 424 4671
Telegrams: Governador PE, Recife, Brazil
Salutation: Vossa Excelência/ Your Excellency

Secretary of Public Security, Pernambuco

Exmo. Sr. Secretário da Segurança Pública
 Dr. Antonio Moraes Neto
 Rua da Aurora, 405

Boa Vista
50.050-000 Recife, PE, Brazil
Fax: +55 81 421 2070
Telegrams: Secretário Segurança PE, Recife, Brazil
Salutation: Vossa Excelência/ Your Excellency

State Attorney General, Pernambuco
Exmo. Sr. Procurador Geral de Justiça
Dr. José Tavares
Rua do Sol, 143
Santo Antonio
50.000-000 Recife, PE, Brazil
Fax: +55 81 224 1633
Telegrams: Procurador Geral PE, Recife, Brazil
Salutation: Vossa Excelência/ Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Non-governmental organization
Gajop - Gabinete Assessoria Jurídica às Organizações Populares
Rua do Apolo, N° 161, 1° andar
Bairro do Recife
50030-220 Recife, PE, Brazil

and to diplomatic representatives of Brazil accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 28 February 1997.