

URGENT ACTION

ACT NOW FOR COMMUNITY LEADER AT RISK IN BRAZIL

Alexandre Anderson de Souza, the president of the Associação dos Homens do Mar (AHOMAR, a fishermen's association), has received a series of threats related to his work as a community leader. He is not being provided adequate protection and is now at risk.

As president of AHOMAR, which represents over 700 fishermen, **Alexandre Anderson de Souza** has campaigned against the construction of a gas pipeline in the municipal of Magé, on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. AHOMAR argues that the pipeline will damage the environment and take away the livelihoods thousands of fishermen. Since April 2009, Alexandre Anderson and other members of AHOMAR have been threatened by police officers, security guards and alleged "milicianos" – parapolicing groups that operate as mafias in many part of Rio de Janeiro. On 30 April 2009 he was shot at four times. Three weeks later, on 22 May, the treasurer of AHOMAR, Paulo César dos Santos Souza, was beaten and shot in the head in front of his wife and children. The killing occurred six hours after construction of the gas line had been halted after a government inspection observed numerous irregularities. In August 2009, Alexandre Anderson and his wife were included in a federal programme providing protection for human rights defenders. However, the protection, which was meant to include regular police patrols and escorts, was only partially implemented, and Alexandre Anderson continued receiving threats. On 31 July, Alexandre Anderson and his wife saw two armed men looking into the windows of their house. They immediately informed police, who investigated and exchanged fire with the prospective intruders. After this incident, Alexandre Anderson and his wife were taken to the city of Brasília for five days by the federal programme for the protection of human rights defenders, where they discussed his security needs.

However, since they returned to Rio de Janeiro and Alexandre Anderson resumed his work, their police protection has continued to be inadequate. On 1 September, after receiving information that he was in imminent danger of kidnap, police took one hour to reach his residence. Later that day, police officers tried to arrest Alexandre Anderson without a warrant, but were prevented from doing so by other members of AHOMAR. The reason for the attempted arrest is not clear. One of the police officers told Alexandre Anderson that he was at risk, and that "if I was you, I would not go out into the bay any more, not to fish, not for leisure", adding that he should stay quiet, indoors." (se eu fosse você não ia mais para o mar, nem para pescar, nem para passear, que era para ficar quietinho,interno).

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Portuguese or your own language:

- Urge the authorities to fulfil their promises by immediately providing Alexandre Anderson de Souza with full protection in accordance with his needs and wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to thoroughly investigate all threats against Alexandre Anderson de Souza, bringing perpetrators to justice;
- Calling for more effective implementation of the requirements set out under the National Defenders' Programme.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 OCTOBER 2010 TO:

Federal Human Rights Secretary

Secretaria Especial de Direitos Humanos, Exmo. Secretário Especial

Sr. Paulo de Tarso Vannuchi

Esplanada dos Ministérios - Bloco "T" - 4º andar,
70064-900 - Brasília/DF BRASIL

Fax: + 55 61 2025- 9414

Salutation: Exmo. Sr. Secretário

State Secretary of Social Security and Human Rights

Secretaria de Estado de Assistência Social e Direitos Humanos

Secretário Ricardo Henriques

Praça Cristiano Ottoni, s/nº - 6º andar

Central do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro – RJ, 22.221-250,
BRASIL

Fax: + 55 21 2334-5515

Salutation: Prezado Sr. Secretário

COPIES TO: NGO Justiça Global, Av. Beira Mar, 406, sala 1207, Rio de Janeiro – RJ, 20021-900, BRASIL

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Brazil accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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