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**BRAZIL: FOLLOWING CONTROVERSY OVER MILITARY ATTACHÉ IN LONDON,
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PASSES COPIES OF TORTURE TESTIMONIES TO
PRESIDENT CARDOSO**

Allegations that Colonel Armando Avolio Filho -- currently serving as military attaché in the Brazilian Embassy in London -- participated in the torture of political prisoners at an army barracks in Rio de Janeiro in the 1970s have been published by the London based Guardian Newspaper today.

According to the allegations -- previously reported by the Brazilian press -- Colonel Armando Avolio Filho was the officer stationed at the Criminal Investigations Platoon (Pelotão de Investigações Criminais) (PIC) of the First Battalion of the Army Police (1 Batalhão da Polícia do Exército) (PE) Barracks at Rua Barão de Mesquita, Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro, in the early 1970s, and the man cited in several previously published testimonies related to the torture and disappearance of political prisoners.

Testimonies from former political prisoners and former members of the Army Police allege that a Lieutenant Avolio directly participated in torture sessions (including administering electric shocks) and that specially designed torture cells were installed in the PIC during this period. It is alleged that, as Commander, he was fully aware of everything that occurred in the PIC. Evidence also suggests he had information on the death and burial of political prisoners detained and tortured there, who remain among the 144 "disappeared".

In addition, a Lieutenant Avolio was named in three separate testimonies published in Amnesty International's 1972 "Report on Allegations of Torture in Brazil" as an alleged torturer at the First Army Barracks at Rua Barão de Mesquita. Two of the former prisoners who gave these testimonies in 1972 this week confirmed their earlier allegations. A further three people, listed in the 1972 testimonies as witnesses to their torture, have this week reaffirmed that they witnessed a Lieutenant Avolio allegedly torturing other political prisoners. One of the victims named a Lieutenant Avolio as "one of my own main torturers".

Amnesty International is not in a position to confirm whether the Military Attaché, Colonel Armando Avolio Filho, serving in the Brazilian Embassy in London, is the same individual as the Lieutenant Avolio mentioned in the testimonies. However, the organization has forwarded the testimonies to the Brazilian Government.

In a letter sent to President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Amnesty International calls for a full investigation into the grave allegations of serious crimes committed at the 1st Battalion of the Army Police Barracks at Rua Barão de Mesquita between 1970-1972. The organization also submitted a list of some 15 political prisoners who passed through the barracks in 1970-72 and

remain "disappeared", and some 8 other political prisoners who were detained at the barracks and whose subsequent deaths have never been properly clarified.

Following the resurfacing of these allegations, the need to establish a Commission of Inquiry into the fate of the "Disappeared" -- with full powers to call witnesses -- is all the more imperative, said Amnesty International in the letter.

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