

PUBLIC

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UA 174/03

Fear for safety

18 June 2003

BRAZIL

**Brother Henri Burin des Roziers (m)  
Members of the *Comissão Pastoral de Terra (CPT)*, Pastoral Land Commission  
*Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Redenção*, Rural Workers Union in Redençã**

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Brother Henri Burin des Roziers, members of the *Comissão Pastoral de Terra (CPT)*, Pastoral Land Commission and the *Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Redenção*, Rural Workers Union in Redençã, have for many years been fighting against impunity for those who commit serious human rights violations in the Pará region. Amnesty International is concerned for their safety, as they have worked on a number of high profile cases and have repeatedly received death threats.

On 6 June, unknown individuals broke into the headquarters of *Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Redenção*, Rural Workers Union, in Redençã. Strictly confidential documents, including research on slavery in Pará State were reportedly stolen. The burglars, however, did not take other valuable objects.

Following the conviction in May 2003 of the landowner responsible for ordering the 1985 killing of João Canuto de Oliveira, intimidation and threats against human rights defenders, civil society leaders and critics of the government has intensified in the past month. Brother Henri Burin des Roziers in particular has been subjected to a defamation campaign in the local press.

The landowner is one of the first in the southern part of Pará State to be convicted in what was hailed as a breakthrough in the struggle against impunity. Such was the significance of the trial that national and international observers, including an Amnesty International delegation, attended.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Pará State is afflicted by endemic violence, corruption and impunity. Slave labour is common and much of the violence in the region is generated by conflicts over land ownership. Over the years Amnesty International has documented hundred of killings of land activists, such as the 1996 massacre of 19 landless peasants by military police in El Dorado dos Cárajas. In the vast majority of cases, those responsible for ordering and executing such killings go unpunished. (See UA 307/02, AMR 19/027/2002, 14 October 2002; UA 303/01, AMR 19/030/2001, 29 November 2001; UA 134/00 AMR 19/13/00, 25 May 2000 and follow-up AMR 19/19/00, 25 July 2000)

In June 1999, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted a resolution stating their intention to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which the UN passed on 9 December 1998.

In this resolution the UN agreed to "recognize and support the work carried out by Human Rights Defenders and their valuable contribution to the promotion, observance, and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms in the Americas". The resolution called on state members to provide "Human Rights Defenders with the necessary guarantees and facilities to continue freely carrying out their work of promoting and protecting human rights", as well as to adopt "the necessary steps to guarantee their life, liberty, and integrity".

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible in Portuguese or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Brother Henri Burin des Roziers, members of the *Comissão Pastoral de Terra* (CPT), Pastoral Land Commission and the *Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Redenção*, Rural Workers Union in Redenção;
- requesting a prompt and effective investigation into the break in of the office of the Rural Workers Union de Redenção, Pará State, for the findings be made public and those responsible be brought to justice;
- expressing your concern at the recent defamation campaign in the Pará state press aimed at human rights defenders working in the state;
- calling for the authorities to take steps to protect those at risk, in accordance with their wishes;
- urging the Brazilian government to adhere to its obligations regarding human rights defenders, as laid out in the UN Declaration of Rights and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups, and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Organisation of American States (OAS) Human Rights Defenders in the Americas resolution.

**APPEALS TO: (for all numbers, if voice answers, say “fax, por favor,” and wait for the tone)**

Special Human Rights Secretary

Exmo. Sr. Secretario Especial dos Direitos Humanos

Sr. Nilmário Miranda

Secretaria Especial dos Direitos Humanos

Esplanada dos Ministérios - Bl. - T

70721-902 – Brasília D.F, Brasil

**Telegram: Secretaria Especial dos Direitos Humanos, Brasília D.F, Brasil**

**Fax: + 55 61 223 2260**

**Salutation: Vossa Excelência/Your Excellency**

Governor Pará State

Exmo. Sr. Governador do Estado do Pará

Sr. Simão Robson Oliveira Jatene

Palácio dos Despachos

Rod. Montenegro KM 9

66823-010 - Belém – PA, Brasil

**Telegram: Governador do Estado do Para, Belem PA, Brasil**

**Fax: + 55 91 248 0133**

**Salutation: Vossa Excelência/Your Excellency**

Pará State Public Security Secretary

Secretário de Segurança Pública do Estado do Pará

Dr. Ivanildo Ferreira Alves

Rua Arcipreste M. Teodoro 305

66023-700 - Belém – PA, Brasil

**Telegram: Secretario de Seguranca Pública do Estado do Para , Belem PA, Brasil**

**Fax: + 55 91 225 2644**

**Salutation: Vossa Excelência/ Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

Pastoral Land Commission

Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT)

Rua Pau Brasil 40

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Xinguara, 68555-000, Para

Brasil

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 30 July 2003.