

UA 10/02

Fear for**BRAZIL** Zito Augusto Correia (m)
Members of the SINTEPP trade union

Local councillor (*vereador*) Zito Augusto Correia, also known as 'Zitinho', was shot and wounded on 12 December 2001, in his house in Canãa dos Carajás, Pará state. Zito Augusto is a leader of the *Sindicato dos Trabalhadores em Educação Pública do estado de Pará* (SINTEPP), Pará state Teachers' Union. Amnesty International fears that further attempts will be made to kill him or other members of the union who worked alongside him investigating and publicising local political corruption.

Zito Augusto had been sitting at a table feeding his one-year-old son when he was attacked. At around 7.30pm the power to his house was cut off: after about three minutes the lights came on again, and a man with a pistol appeared in the doorway, shouting that he was going to rob them and then started to shoot. Zito Augusto was reportedly hit in the left arm and in the chest, piercing his lung and his liver. He managed to get up from the table to try to escape, but was then shot again in the hand and the leg. His son was not hurt in the attack.

Zito Augusto was rushed to a hospital in Paraupébas, 80km away, where he has made a steady recovery. Police investigating the incident have dismissed the possibility that the attack was part of a robbery, since there was no evidence of theft at the scene. Instead, the attack is believed to have been the work of a hired gunman.

Amnesty International has already documented the increasing number of killings by hired gunmen in the state of Pará (See UA 303/01, AMR 19/030/2001, of 29 November 2001, and UA 326/01, AMR 19/031/2001, of 19 December 2001). Zito Augusto had been sent several death threats following his activity as a union leader and since he began to investigate local corruption in his region. The threats increased following his discovery of alleged incidents of fraud relating to the distribution of public funds, and his call for a public inquiry into certain members of the town council (*câmara municipal*).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Violence has reached critical levels in recent months in Pará. Killings of land activists and trade unionists are rarely investigated properly and those responsible are rarely if ever punished, often because witnesses are intimidated or killed. Amnesty International has been campaigning against the widespread impunity in the region for over 10 years. An investigative commission of Federal deputies traveled to Pará in October 2001 and recommended that a Federal police team be immediately sent to the area to investigate and bring to justice those involved in perpetuating the cycle of violence in the state.

On 6 December 2001 members of the Federal Commission of Human Rights presented the Minister of Justice with a report detailing the killings and attacks against politicians or political activists in Brazil over the last three years. According to the commission, since 1998 there have been 12 killings, 15 attempted killings and 52 cases of death threats.

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

- urging the authorities to guarantee the safety of town councillor and union leader Zito Augusto Correia as well as other members of the SINTEPP union, and provide them with the protection they need to continue their work;
- calling for an immediate full and impartial investigation into the shooting of Zito Augusto Correia, and for all those responsible to be brought to justice;
- reminding the authorities of recommendations made by the Federal Commission of Human Rights, following their visit to Pará in October 2001, especially those calling for a federal police investigation into violence in the region and an end to impunity;
- urging the Brazilian government to investigate allegations of widespread attacks against politicians or political activists, especially those investigating reported incidents of corruption.

APPEALS TO:Governor of Pará State

Exmo. Sr. Governador do Estado do Pará
 Sr. Almir José de Oliveira Gabriel
 Palácio dos Despachos
 Rodovia Augusto Montenegro KM 9
 66823-010 Belém, PA, Brazil
Fax: + 55 91 248 0133

Salutation:Vossa Excêlencia/Your Excellency

Pará State Secretary for Public Security

Secretário de Segurança Pública do Estado do Pará
 Sr. Paulo Celso P. Sette Câmara
 Rua Arcipreste Manoel Teodoro 305
 66023-700 Belém, PA, Brazil
Fax: + 55 91 225 2644

Salutation:Sr Secretário/ Dear Secretary

Federal Minister of Justice

Exmo. Sr. Ministro da Justiça do Brasil
 Dr. Aloysio Nunes Ferreira
 Ministério da Justiça
 Esplanada dos Ministérios
 Bloco 'T', 4º andar, Sala 400
 70064-900 Brasília, DF, Brazil
Fax: + 55 61 322 6817/225 0289

Salutation:Vossa Excêlencia/Your Excellency

Secretary of State for Human Rights

Exmo. Sr. Secretário de Estado dos Direitos Humanos
 Paulo Sergio Pinheiro
 Secretaria de Estado dos Direitos Humanos
 Ministério da Justiça
 Esplanada dos Ministérios
 Bloco T, 4º andar, Sala 420
 70064-900 Brasília, DF, Brazil
Fax: + 55 61 223 2260/226 7980

Salutation:Sr Secretário/ Dear Secretary

COPIES TO:

SINTEPP

Av. Conselheiro Furtado,
Passagem do Sol n° 87
66040-440, Belém - PA
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 20 February 2002.