

PUBLIC

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Fear for Safety 17 July 2002

BRAZIL: Hipãridi Top'tiro(m), Indigenous leader, and members of his family

Dr Mariana Ferrreira(f), Anthropologist

Anthropological and ethnological researchers working in Sangradouro indigenous territory

Death threats have been received by Hipãridi Top'tiro, an indigenous leader from the Sangradouro indigenous reserve in Primavera do Leste, Mato Grosso state, his family, and Dr Mariana Ferrreira, an anthropologist from the University of Tennessee who has been working in the area. Amnesty International is concerned for their safety, and for the safety of other researchers who have been working with Dr Ferrreira.

Both Hipãridi Top'tiro and Dr Mariana Ferrreira are working for the Xavante Warã Association in Primavera do Leste. They are working together on an environmental project called *Salve o Cerrado* (Save the Sierra), that is being developed by the Xavante Warã association in conjunction with the Brazilian federal government and the Universities of São Paulo and Tennessee. The death threats they have both received are believed to be connected to their work on this project, and therefore other researchers working on this project may also be in danger.

Hipãridi Top'tiro is the president of the Xavante Warã association, and a well-known environmental campaigner. He has been the target of death threats for some time, allegedly related both to his work on *Salve o Cerrado* and a legal action that he brought against local landowners for allegedly deforesting part of an indigenous area. According to reports, the regional administrator of the National Indigenous Foundation (*Fundação Nacional do Índio, FUNAI*) in Primavera do Leste, who has strong links to landowners in the region, has long been intimidating and threatening Hipãridi Top'tiro and his family. Although they have reported this behaviour to the national FUNAI Directive on several occasions, no action has been taken to address it.

Dr Mariana Ferrreira works as a consultant to the Xavante Warã and makes regular visits to Primavera do Leste. In June she spent 16 days there, carrying out research. The regional FUNAI administrator told Dr Mariana Ferrreira and her team, on numerous occasions during this period that Hipãridi Top'tiro and members of his family were in grave danger. Dr Ferrreira has also received what appear to be veiled death threats, or even attempts on her life. While driving in Sangradouro in June, a car tried to force her off the road. On another occasion the car she was travelling in nearly crashed into a boulder that had deliberately been moved onto the road into her path.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International is concerned that indigenous people face human rights violations ranging from assault to massacres during disputes over land rights. The organization believes that the authorities' failure to arbitrate promptly in disputes between the indigenous and non-indigenous community leaves indigenous groups vulnerable to attack.

Although the 1988 Constitution required all indigenous lands in Brazil to be demarcated by 1993, only half of the 555 identified territories have been demarcated so far. In January 1996, this process was slowed down further by Decree 1775/96, which introduced complicated procedures by which non-indigenous claimants can challenge the demarcation of indigenous areas.

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

- expressing serious concern for the safety of Hipãridi Top'tiro, his family, Dr Mariana Ferrreira and other anthropological and ethnological researchers working in Sangradouro indigenous reserve;
- asking the authorities to investigate the threats they have received and to bring those responsible to justice;

- calling on the authorities to provide federal protection, as deemed appropriate by those under threat, to guarantee their safety;
- expressing your concern that consistent reports of threatening behaviour by the regional administrator of the FUNAI in Primavera do Leste have not been investigated;
- should these reports be verified, calling on the authorities to implement all appropriate disciplinary and legal sanctions to address threatening behaviour by the regional administrator of the FUNAI in Primavera do Leste.

APPEALS TO:

Federal Secretary for Human Rights

Sr. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro
 Secretaria de Estado dos Direitos Humanos_
 Ministério da Justiça_
 Esplanada dos Ministérios,
 Bloco T, 4º andar, Sala 420_
 70064-900 Brasília - DF, Brazil

Telegrams: Secretario de Estado dos Direitos Humanos, Brasília - DF, Brazil

Fax: + 55 61 226 7980

Salutation: Exmo. Sr. Secretário/Dzar Federal Secretary

President: National Indian Foundation

Exmo. Sr. Presidente da
 Fundação Nacional do Índio - FUNAI
 Otacílio Antunes dos Reis Filho
 SCS Quadra 702/902 Projecção A, Ed. Lxx
 70390-025 Brasília - DF, Brazil

Telegrams: Presidente da Fundação Nacional do Índio, DF, Brazil

Fax: + 55 61 226 8782 (When someone answers say 'Me da tom de fax por favor')

Salutation: Exmo. Sr. Presidente/Dzar President

Federal Attorney General: Mato Grosso State

Dra Fabíola Dorr Kaly
 Procuradora da República - Mato Grosso
 Rua Osório Duque Estrada 107, Ed. Capital - Bairro Araçás
 78005-720 Cuiabá - MT, Brazil

Telegrams: Procuradora da República - Mato Grosso, DF, Brazil

Fax: + 55 65 612 5085

Salutation: Exma. Sra. Procuradora/Dzar Federal Prosecutor

COPIES TO:

Mato Grosso State Governor

Exmo. Sr. Governador do Mato Grosso
 Sr. José Rogério Sales
 Palácio Paiaguás, Centro Político Administrativo
 78050-970 Cuiabá - MT, Brazil

Telegrams: Governador do Mato Grosso, DF, Brazil

Fax: +55 65 613 4120

Salutation: Exmo. Sr. Governador/Dzar Governor

Indigenous Rights Organization

CIMI Regional Mato Grosso
 Rua dos Nambikuara, 32
 Santa Helena - Caixa Postal 147
 78005-970 Cuiabá - MT, 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 August 2002.