

**PUBLIC**      **AI Index: AMR 19/027/2002**

**UA 307/02**                      **Fear for Safety 14 October 2002**

**BRAZIL**                      **Dr Cristiano Arantes e Silva (m) and his wife**

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Dr Cristiano Arantes e Silva, and his wife. Dr Cristiano Arantes e Silva is the judge for the judicial district of Xinguara in the south of Pará state, in the Amazonian region of Brazil. In recent weeks he and his wife have been the target of an elaborate campaign of threats and intimidation.

Early on the morning of 25 September, four shots were fired at their house, causing serious damage to the front door. Dr Arantes e Silva's wife has been subjected to numerous anonymous telephone calls insulting her husband. At the same time anonymous letters defaming him have been posted throughout the town.

Dr Cristiano Arantes e Silva was appointed as the sole district judge for Xinguara in April 2002. Since he took up this position he has made judicial decisions combatting the corruption that has afflicted this district for many years. These have included a decision to suspend the mayor of Rio Maria, the principal town in Xinguara, while he is investigated for corruption charges.

The campaign of intimidation aimed at Dr Cristiano Arantes e Silva and his wife appears to be directly related to his anti-corruption standpoint. In Xinguara, powerful political and economic groups have traditionally maintained a stranglehold over activities of the local judiciary and police forces. The firm stance that Dr Arantes e Silva has adopted in relation to cases linked to these groups threatens to undermine the impunity which they have enjoyed for so long.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The state of Pará is afflicted by endemic violence, corruption and impunity. Slave labour is common. Much of the violence in the region is generated by conflicts over land ownership. Over the years Amnesty International has documented hundreds of killings of land activists, such as the massacre of 19 landless peasants by military police in El Dorado dos Cárajas in 1996. In the vast majority of cases, those responsible for ordering and executing such killings go unpunished. The municipality of Xinguara, in the south of the state, has long been a focus

for these problems (see 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).

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

- expressing your concern for the safety of Dr Cristiano Arantes e Silva, judge in the district of Xinguara, and his wife;
- stating that it appears they are the targets of an intimidation and hate campaign that aims to drive Dr Cristiano Arantes e Silva from his position as district judge in Xinguara;
- expressing your concern that this campaign appears to result from the impartial and independent position that Dr Cristiano Arantes e Silva has taken with regard to corruption in Xinguara;
- calling on the authorities to take immediate steps to investigate the threats against Dr Cristiano Arantes e Silva and his wife, and to bring to justice those responsible;
- calling on the authorities to take all steps deemed necessary by Dr Cristiano Arantes e Silva and his wife to protect them;
- reminding the authorities of their duty to uphold and protect the independence and impartiality of the judiciary at all times, as set out in the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, which state that “it is the duty of all governmental and other institutions to respect and observe the independence of the judiciary”.

**APPEALS TO:**

Pará State Governor

Exmo. Sr. Governador do Estado do Pará  
Sr. Almir José de Oliveira Gabriel  
Palácio dos Despachos  
Rod. Augusto Montenegro KM 9  
66823-010 Belém - PA, Brazil

**Telegrams: Governador do Estado do Pará, Belém-PA, Brazil**

**Fax: + 55 91 248 0133**

**Salutation: Vossa Excelência/Your Excellency**

Pará State Attorney General

Geraldo de Mendonça Rocha  
Procurador Geral de Justiça  
Procuradoria Geral de Justiça  
Rua João Diogo 100  
CEP: 66015-160  
Belém - PA, Brazil

**Telegrams: Procurador Geral de Justiça do Estado do Pará, Belém-PA, Brazil**

**Fax:** + 55 91 224 7198 (if someone answers, say

**Salutation:** Vossa Excelência/Your Excellency

**COPIES TO:**

President of Pará State Justice Tribunal

Exma. Sra. Desembargadora Climenie Bernadette de Araújo Pontes

Presidente do Tribunal de Justiça do Pará

Largo de São João, s/n

Cidade Velha

66015-260 Belém PA

**Fax:** + 55 91 218 2454 / 212 2922

Pastoral Land Commission

Comissão Pastoral da Terra

Rua Pau Brasil 40

Caixa Postal 57

Xinguara, 68555-000, Pará

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 25 November 2002.