

EXTERNAL

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Possible Extrajudicial Executions /
Fear for safety

19 April 1996

BRAZILLandless peasants in Para state

A confrontation between Pará state military police and a demonstration of around 2,000 landless peasants is reported to have left at least 20 peasants dead and 40 people wounded, including five military policemen. The full death toll is not known and reports indicate that it may be higher. Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of those demonstrators who remain unaccounted for, and who may be wounded.

On Wednesday 17 April landless peasants connected to the *Movimento de Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST), Movement for Landless Rural Workers, began blockading a road near the town of Eldorado do Carajas, about 692km south of Belem, the capital of Pará state. About 200 military police were sent to disperse the demonstrators and clear the road. It is not clear if the police or the peasants initiated the confrontation. Some reports indicate that the peasants began throwing stones and sticks at the police, and some are reported to have been carrying handguns. According to reports military police began to fire indiscriminately with machine guns, then at a second stage, returned and are reported to have targeted individuals in circumstances suggesting extrajudicial execution.

Twenty bodies have been recovered; however the full toll of dead and wounded is not yet confirmed as the whereabouts of a number of demonstrators are still unknown. These missing people may include dead and wounded. On 19 April one body, believed to have been that of a demonstrator, was reportedly found 2km from the site of the demonstration.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Movimento de Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra campaigns for land reform by organizing demonstrations and land occupations in many states throughout Brazil. This has frequently resulted in violent confrontations between peasants and military police officers and there are frequent reports of excessive use of force, ill-treatment, torture and extrajudicial executions by military police in Brazil against squatter peasants trying to obtain land to farm.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Portuguese, Spanish or your own language:

- expressing serious concern at reports of the killing of 20 demonstrators in Pará state in circumstances suggesting possible extrajudicial execution;
- seeking a full and independent investigation, led by federal investigators, including independent forensic examination of the dead and wounded, by a body which is separate from the police force involved, the results of which should be made public, and those responsible for abuses brought to justice;
- urging that all possible attempts be made to locate those peasants who are still missing and ensure their safety, and medical treatment if necessary.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice

Exmo. Sr. Ministro da Justiça do Brasil

Dr. Nelson Azevedo Jobim

Ministério da Justiça

Esplanada dos Ministérios, Bloco 23
 Brasília, DF
 CEP 70064-900 Brazil
Faxes: +55 61 321 5172 / 224 2448
322 6817 / 226 7980
Telegrams: Ministro Justica, Brasilia, Brasil

Attorney General

Exmo Sr. Procurador Geral da República
 Dr. Geraldo Brindeiro
 Procuradoria Geral da República
 Ed. Sede da PGR
 Av. L2 Sul, Q. 603, lote 23
 Brasília, DF
 CEP 70200-901 Brazil
Faxes: +55 61 313 5197 / 313 5444
Telegrams: Procurado Geral da Republica, Brasilia, Brasil
Salutation: Vossa Excelência/ Your Excellency

Governor of Pará State

Exmo. Sr. Governador de Estado do Pará
 Sr. Almir Gabriel
 Palácio Lauro Sodré
 Praça Dom Pedro II, s/nº
 Belem PA
 CEP 66000 Brazil
Faxes: +55 91 222 3910
Telegrams: Governador do Pará, Belem, Brasil
Salutation: Vossa Excelência/ Your Excellency

Secretary of State for Public Security, Pará State

Exmo. Sr. Secretário de Segurança Pública do Estado de Pará
 Sr. Paulo Celso Pinheiro Sete Câmara
 Secretaria de Segurança Publica
 Rua Acipreste Manoel Teodoro, N°305
 Belém PA, CEP 66023-700 Brazil
Faxes: +55 91 225 2644
Telegrams: Secretario de Seguranca Publica, Belem, Para
Salutation: Sr. Secretário de Segurança Pública

COPIES TO:

Pastoral Land Commission

Comissão Pastoral da Terra
 Caixa Postal 07
 Rio Maria
 Pará, 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 31 May 1996.