

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 19/06/93

Distr: UA/SC

UA 62/93 "Disappearances"

9 March 1993

BRAZIL: Antonio Inácio Faria
 Luis Rodrigues dos Santos (peasants)

Amnesty International is concerned about the alleged "disappearance", between 9 and 10 February 1993, of two peasants, Antônio Inácio Faria and Luis Rodrigues dos Santos, in the municipality of Conceição de Araguaia, Pará State, Northern Brazil.

According to information received by Amnesty International Antônio Inácio Faria and Luis Rodrigues dos Santos went missing on the eve of a planned meeting between local rural union representatives and a group of peasants, *posseiros*, including Faria and Rodrigues dos Santos, who had been occupying land in the Mata Azul estate. The Mata Azul estate is in a region where there are intense land disputes between peasants and landowners. As a consequence, there have been frequent episodes of violence between peasants and landowners in the past and there is a permanent police presence in the region.

According to reports, during the evening of 9 February a group of peasants went to meet Antônio Inácio Faria and Luis Rodrigues dos Santos to help them harvest their crop. They found Luis Rodrigues dos Santos' hut, *barraco*, empty and the uneaten remains of dinner inside. The visitors also found signs of struggle outside and prints of boots similar to those used by the military police. The visiting peasants then fled after allegedly being shot at by members of the police who were stationed nearby. The planned union meeting was later cancelled because of the police presence in the region.

The peasants reported the "disappearance" of Antônio Inácio Faria and Luis Rodrigues dos Santos to the military police who opened an internal inquiry. However, local human rights organizations claim that the inquiry has so far not been properly conducted and that the police has failed to interrogate police officers and local gunmen who may have been involved in the "disappearance". The same sources allege that several peasants have "disappeared" in the region since 1991 (see UA 55/92, AMR 19/03/92, 17 February 1992).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Peasants, members and leaders of rural trade unions representing peasants and their families in Pará State have been targets of death threats, assaults, abductions and killings in the context of disputes with local landowners. While Amnesty International takes no position on competing claims in land disputes, it is concerned that gunmen allegedly acting on behalf of landowners have carried out intimidation and killings of peasants, their leaders and advisers with a high degree of impunity. The Brazilian authorities on all levels have, in the vast majority of cases, failed to take effective action to prevent or investigate the killings or to bring those responsible to justice.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes and airmail letters either in Portuguese, English or in your own language:

- expressing concern at the possible "disappearance" of Antônio Inácio Faria and Luis Rodrigues dos Santos between 9-10 February 1993 in circumstances suggesting the involvement of security forces and requesting

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that their cases be thoroughly investigated and their whereabouts disclosed;
- requesting an inquiry into actions of military police stationed at the Mata Azul estate.

APPEALS TO

1) Minister of Justice

Exmo Sr Mauricio Corrêa

Ministro da Justiça

Esplanada dos Ministérios

Bloco 23

70.064 Brasilia DF, Brazil.

Telegrams: Ministro da Justiça, Brasilia, Brazil

Faxes: +55 61 224 4357

Telexes: 611003 MNJU BR, 611088 MNJU BR

Salutation: Vossa Excelência/Your Excellency

2) State Governor of Pará

Exmo Sr Jáder Barbalho

Governador do Estado do Pará

Palácio Lauro Sodre

Praça D. Pedro II

66.000 Belem- PA

Brazil.

Telegrams: Governador Para, Belem, Brazil

Telexes: 911012 GOPA HR or 916978 GOPA BR

Salutation: Vossa Excelência/Your Excellency

3) State Secretary of Public Security

Sr Secretario de Segurança Pública do Estado de Pará

Sr Alcides Alcântara

Rua 28 de Setembro 339

66.020 Belem, PA

Brazil

Telegrams: Secretario Segurança Pública, Belem, Brazil

Telexes: 911100 SSPB PR

Salutation: Vossa Excelência/Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Attorney General's Office

Dr Alvaro Ribeiro da Costa

Procuradoria Geral da República

Secretaria de Coordenação de Defesa

dos Direitos Individuais e dos Interesses Difusos
Avenida L2 Sul, SG AS 603, Lote 23 S.328

Father Ricardo Rezende
Paroquia Nossa Senhora Aparecida
Av 04 No. 357
Caixa Postal 07
68530 Rio Maria
Pará, Brazil
Dr Alvaro Ribeiro da Costa

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 April 1993.