

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 19/007/2003

22 April 2003

Further Information on UA 216/02 (AMR 19/012/2002, 17 July 2002) and follow-up (AMR 19/017/2002, 16 August 2002) - Fear for Safety

BRAZIL

Xavante Indigenous people living in the

Sangradouro territory

Hipãridi Top'tiro (m), indigenous Leader and President of the Xavante Warã Association

Dr Mariana Ferreira (f), Anthropologist

Disappeared: Joaquim Maredezuro (m), aged 72

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Xavante indigenous people living in the Sangradouro territory in Primavera do Leste, Mato Grosso state, following the disappearance of 72-year-old Xavante Indian, Joaquim Maredezuro. Tension between Xavante indians and landowners in the region has reached critical levels, and Amnesty International has received information that young Xavante men are on a "war footing".

Joaquim Maredezuro is the uncle of Hipãridi Top'tiro, President of the Xavante Warã association, who has been forced to leave the region due to repeated death threats against him. Joaquim Maredezuro has not been seen since 2 April, when he left the Volta Grande village to go hunting. According to reports, several days after his disappearance, a Xavante youth searching for him found his body parts hidden in a pipeline. When the youth returned to the village to seek help with recovering the parts, they were removed. No other traces of Joaquim Maredezuro have been found.

A federal police investigation into the disappearance has stated that it is the result of an internal dispute between Xavante indians. FUNAI officials, including the regional administrator who has repeatedly made threats against Hipãridi Top'tiro, his family, anthropologists working in the territory, and other indians, have reportedly asked relatives of Joaquim Maredezuro to accept financial compensation for his disappearance.

The disappearance of Joaquim Maredezuro has taken place following the publication and wide circulation of the most recent report of the Xavante Warã association. The report uses satellite mapping to argue that physical landmarks used by FUNAI officials to map out the Sangradouro territory are fraudulent, and have resulted in the loss of hundreds of acres of land for the Xavante.

Dr. Mariana Ferreira is currently in the USA, but often travels to Brazil to conduct her work as an anthropologist.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There has been an alarming escalation in violence against indigenous people across Brazil in 2003. On 6 January a defenceless 77 year old Kaingang indian, Leopoldo Crespo, was beaten to death by a group of youths in an apparently motiveless attack in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil's southernmost state. On 10 January, in the far north of the country, in Roraima state, the body of 52 year old Macuxi Aldo da Silva was found in suspicious circumstances in the Raposa Serra do Sol indigenous territory, an area which was the subject of a decision in favour of the Macuxi by Brazil's highest court. An autopsy conducted by federal experts showed that he had been executed and then buried in a shallow grave. Also in January 72-year-old Guarani-kaiová leader Marcos Verón, was beaten to death during a violent confrontation between indians and landowners in

Mato Grosso do Sul, western Brazil. On 7 February an attack on Xucuru indians in Pesquiera, Bahia state, left two dead, (see AMR 19/003/2003, 11 February 2003).

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

- calling for immediate and impartial investigations into the disappearance of Joaquim Maredezuro, a 72-year-old Xavante indian, in the Sangradouro indigenous territory;
- urging that the results of these investigations be made public and that those believed responsible be brought to justice;
- expressing concern that his disappearance has taken place despite repeated calls for protection for indigenous leader Hiparidi Top'Tiro and members of his family;
- expressing concern at reports that the regional administrator of the FUNAI, who has repeatedly been denounced for making death threats, has been allowed to negotiate with the family of Joaquim Maredezuro;
- urging the authorities to provide Hipãridi Top'Tiro, his family and all others at risk with immediate protection in accordance with their wishes;
- expressing your concern at the recent escalation in violence and attacks on indigenous people throughout Brazil;
- urging the federal and state governments to make public declarations stating that attacks on indigenous Brazilians will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice

Ministro da Justiça
Márcio Thomaz Bastos
Ministério da Justiça, Esplanada dos Ministérios
Bloco T, Edifício Sede
70712-902 - Brasília / DF Brasil
Telegram: Ministro da Justiça, Brasília / DF Brasil
Fax: + 55 61 322 6817
Salutation: Vossa Excelência/ Your Excellency

Federal Secretary of State for Human Rights

Exmo. Sr. Secretário de Estado dos Direitos Humanos
Sr. Nilmaro Miranda
Secretaria de Estado dos Direitos Humanos
Ministério da Justiça, Esplanada dos Ministérios
Bloco T, 41 andar, Sala 420
70064-900 Brasília-DF, Brasil
Telegram: Sr. Secretário de Estado dos Direitos Humanos, Brasília-DF, Brasil
Fax: + 55 61 226 7980
Salutation: Exmo. Sr Secretário / Dear Secretary

FUNAI President

Presidente da Funai
Eduardo Aguiar de Almeida
SEPS Quadra 702/902 Projeção A, Ed. Lex
70390-025 – Brasília – DF - Brasil
Telegrams: Presidente da FUNAI, Brasília – DF, Brasil
Fax: + 55 61 226 8782 (If someone answers say “Fax, por favor.”)
Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Dear President

Mato Grosso State Governor

Exmo. Sr. Governador do Estado de Mato Grosso
Blairo Borges Maggi
Palácio Paiaguás
Centro Político Administrativo
78050-970 Cuiabá – MT, Brasil

Telegram: Governador do Estado de Mato Grosso, Cuiabá – MT, Brasil

Fax: + 55 65 613 4120

Salutation: Vossa Excêlencia/ Your Excellency

Please send copies 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 3 June 2003.