

URGENT ACTION

WITNESSES ALLEGE PRESSURE BY POLICE IN BRAZIL

Two months since he was arrested by military police in Brazil, Amarildo Souza Lima remains missing. His family has been threatened and they have not been kept informed of the progress of the police investigation.

Amarildo Souza Lima was last seen on 14 July entering the Pacification Police Unit (Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora - UPP) in Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro when he was arrested for questioning by military police. The military police have initiated an internal investigation and the civil police have initiated a criminal investigation into his disappearance, but Amarildo Souza Lima's family and their lawyers have not been kept informed of the progress of the investigations. According to witnesses who have been interviewed particularly by the military police in the context of these investigations, the investigating police officers are attempting to associate the victim and his family with local criminal groups. Some witnesses have alleged that they were pressured by an officer of the Rocinha UPP to present a false statement, apparently with a view to laying blame on local criminals rather than police.

Of the 13thirteen police officers suspected of involvement in the disappearance, none have been suspended from their duties and some have been transferred to other units. In August the Human Rights State Council (Conselho Estadual de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos do Rio de Janeiro) reported on earlier allegations that UPP police officers in Rocinha had tortured and threatened people in the community. This and other information which Amnesty International Brazil has received, leads it and Amarildo Souza Lima's family to fear that he may have died after torture by police. Amarildo Souza Lima's family and in particular his wife, **Elizabeth Gomes da Silva**, have stated that since his disappearance they have been threatened by UPP police officers.

Please write immediately in Portuguese or your own language, calling on the authorities to:

- Ensure an independent, impartial, thorough investigation into the disappearance of Amarildo Souza Lima with a view to identifying those responsible and, if sufficient admissible evidence is found, bringing them to trial in civilian proceedings which meet international fair trial standards;
- Ensure that any police officers suspected of responsibility for any matters related to his disappearance are suspended during the investigation, and investigate the threats made against his wife and other family members and provide them with protection as needed;
- Urging the federal and state authorities to ensure prompt, independent, impartial and effective investigations into any other allegations of torture or other ill-treatment by military police officers in the UPP Rocinha.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 NOVEMBER 2013 TO:

State Secretary of Public Security

José Mariano Beltrame
Praça Cristiano Ottoni, s/nº
Prédio da Central do Brasil
CEP 20221-250
Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil
Fax: +55 21 2334 9329
Email:secretariodeseguranca@seguranc
a.rj.gov.br
Salutation: Dear Secretary

Minister of Justice

José Eduardo Cardoso
Esplanada dos Ministérios
Bloco T, Edifício sede
CEP 70064-900
Brasília, DF, Brazil
Fax: +55 61 2025 9556
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Instituto de Defensores de Direitos
Humanos DDH
João Tancredo
Avenida Presidente Vargas, 446 / Sala
1205, CEP: 20071-907
Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil
Fax: +55 21 2252 6042
(press send at voice recording)
Email: ddh@ddh.org.br

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 202/13. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR19/006/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora (UPP) is a community policing programme implemented in certain slums in Rio de Janeiro. Rocinha is one of the largest favelas (shanty towns) in Rio de Janeiro, with about 70,000 inhabitants. It is located on a steep hill in the upper-class southern neighbourhood of São Conrado. The UPP was implemented at Rocinha in September 2012.

Amarildo Souza Lima has lived in Rocinha all his life. He works as a bricklayer and has helped many of his neighbours build their homes.

In a recent media interview Elizabeth Gomes da Silva said: "The police did not like the attitude that the family took. How many Amarildos have died? How many people died in the Favelas and families did not say anything because of fear? We have blown whistles, protesting, occupying the streets, appearing on TV. We are screaming and calling for justice." (*Os policiais não gostaram da atitude que a gente tomou. Porque quantos Amarildos já morreram? Quantas pessoas não morreram dentro do morro, e a família não falou nada por medo? A gente botou a boca no trombone, protestou, fechou boca de túnel, entrou ao vivo na TV. Estamos gritando e pedindo justiça*).

Name: Amarildo Souza Lima (m) Elizabeth Gomes da Silva (f) and their family (both)

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 202/13 Index: AMR 19/009/2013 Issue Date: 27 September 2013