

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Please bring this action to the attention of the person in your section responsible for outreach work as it is felt that appeals from religious or children's organizations might be particularly useful.

UA 123/93 Fear for Physical Safety

21 April 1993

BRAZIL: Pedro Horácio CABALLERO, priest
Maria Cecília GARCEZ LEME (female), nun
Ademir SILVEIRA DOS SANTOS, aged 12, street child
Moisés SILVA DO NASCIMENTO, aged 12, street child

Amnesty International is concerned for the physical safety of two street children, Ademir Silveira dos Santos and Moisés Silva do Nascimento, who were beaten up by members of the military police on 13 April 1993 at Praça da Sé, São Paulo, Brazil. The organization is also concerned for the safety of Pedro Horácio Caballero and Maria Cecília Garcez Gómez who witnessed these beatings and who have been threatened by the military police.

According to the information received by Amnesty International, in the evening of 13 April, Father Pedro Horácio Caballero, a street educator, *educador de rua*, working with street children in Praça da Sé, a square in downtown São Paulo, saw two military police officers beating up 12-year-old Moisés Silva do Nascimento. In an attempt to stop the beating, Father Caballero addressed the police officers who in response verbally abused him, accusing him of "protecting delinquents". Father Caballero then sent another street child, Ademir Silveira dos Santos, also aged 12, to seek the assistance of Sister Maria Cecília Garcez Leme, another street educator, who was nearby. However one of the police officers grabbed Ademir Silveira dos Santos, shook him and pushed him to the ground. Both the police officers then pinned Ademir to the ground and beat him on his head, legs, arms and back with their truncheons, laughing and verbally humiliating him.

Father Caballero made a further attempt to stop the boys being beaten, telling the police officers that their actions were illegal. In response, Father Caballero was asked to identify himself and when he tried to look for his ID card they attempted to handcuff him. The police officers failed to restrain him and began to beat him up, hitting him in the face, back, arms and legs. Father Caballero then asked the police officers why was he being beaten up, since he was not armed, and told them that he was going to denounce them and began to read out loud their identification tags. The police officers then removed the tags from their uniforms and rubbed them in Father Caballero's face.

While this was going on, two other street educators arrived in the square. When the police officers realised that Father Caballero was a priest from the Church Pastoral of the Child, Pastoral do Menor, they attempted to justify

their actions by alleging that they had needed to act with force because sometimes when they ask people for their ID firearms are produced instead. When the street educators reiterated that they nonetheless intended to denounce them, one of the police officers threatened to detain the street educators each time they suspected street children of being involved in crimes and to "clean up" the square from street children.

The street educators and street children have denounced the threats and ill-treatment to the state civil and military police who have opened inquiries into the incident.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Thousands of children live in the streets of São Paulo and other Brazilian cities. Most of them earn a living by selling sweets and other merchandises to passers-by but are mistrusted by traders and the public who regard them as petty criminals. The police frequently beat up and arbitrarily detain the children to "clean up" certain areas of the cities. Thousands of children are also killed every year by death squads, often with the participation of off-duty police officers. According to official figures 390 children were killed between January and July 1992 in the state of São Paulo alone. Praça da Sé in downtown São Paulo, where tens of street children live temporarily or permanently, has frequently been the scene of confrontation between the police and street children. Street educators from the Church Pastoral of the Child and other organizations, who help and protect the children, have frequently been subjected to threats and ill-treatment when confronting the police in defence of the children.

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

- expressing concern at the beating of two 12-year-old boys, Ademir Silveira dos Santos and Moisés Silva do Nascimento, and of Father Pedro Horácio Caballero reportedly by members of the military police on 13 April 1993 at Praça da Sé, São Paulo;

- expressing concern at the reported threats made by the military police against the street educators who witnessed the above incident;

- requesting that the allegations of beatings and threats be thoroughly investigated and those found responsible be brought to justice;

- requesting that steps be taken to ensure the physical safety of street children and street educators in Praça da Sé, and in particular of those who witnessed the incidents of 13 April 1993.

APPEALS TO:

1) State Governor of São Paulo:
Sr Luiz Antônio Fleury
Palácio dos Bandeirantes
Av Morumbi s/n
05.598 São Paulo - SP
Brazil

**Salutation: Vossa Excelência /
Your Excellency**

Telegrams: Sr. Governador Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo - SP, Brazil

Faxes: + 55 11 8439271

2) State Secretary of Public Security:

Dr Michel Temer

Av. Higienópolis No 758

01238 São Paulo

Brazil

**Salutation: Sr. Secretario /
Dear Secretary**

Telegrams: Sr. Secretario Seguranca Publica, Sao Paulo, Brazil

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Pastoral do Menor

Praça da Sé 184, 10 andar

01001 São Paulo

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 2 June 1993.