

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Threats

30 July 1993

BRAZIL:

Raimundo Nonato SOUZA SANTOS, Human Rights Worker

Amnesty International is concerned for the physical safety of Raimundo Nonato Souza Santos, representative in Zumbi dos Palmares, Manaus, Amazonas State, of the Centro de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos, Centre for the Defence of Human Rights (CDDH), who has been subjected to death threats.

According to information received by Amnesty International, the death threats against Raimundo Nonato Souza Santos follow denunciations by the CDDH that the state civil and military police have been using over 300 children and adolescents to carry out police-style operations in the neighbourhood of Zumbi dos Palmares in the Eastern area of Manaus.

Reports indicate that on 24 July 1993, when a local newspaper published the CDDH denunciations, a meeting took place at the headquarters of the youths' police-like force to punish those involved in the denunciation. Raimundo Nonato Souza Santos's name was cited in this. Raimundo Nonato Souza Santos, his wife and 4-month-old baby have gone into hiding and a preventive writ of *habeas corpus* has been filed to a Manaus court of justice by the Brazilian Bishops Conference on his behalf.

Brazilian press reports indicate that the enlisting of children and adolescents between 8 and 18 years of age to carry out police-like operations has been confirmed by a military reserve lieutenant in charge of the military training of the youngsters, who are allegedly used as police informants and taken to night raids that may involve physical danger. The Amazonas state Secretary for Public Security is reported as stating that the Governor of Amazonas knew and approved of the existence of the youths police-style force but denied that they were involved in high risk operations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Human rights workers and people who denounce human rights violations have been subjected to death threats in Brazil. In July 1993, Jayme Benvenuto de Lima Jr, Valdenia Brito and Katia Costa Pereira, lawyers from Gabinete de Apoio Juridico as Organizações Populares, GAJOP, a human rights centre that gives legal advice to poor people and community organizations in Recife, Pernambuco state, received death threats after they denounced several cases of corruption within the state judiciary (see UA 244/93, AMR 19/23/93, 28 July 1993). Between April and June 1992, human rights workers from the Dom Máximo Bienes Human Rights Centre in the city of Cáceres, Mato Grosso, were allegedly subjected to death threats and intimidation. The centre was broken into and documents were stolen. Members of the centre were reportedly followed by armed people

in cars and then beaten and threatened.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Raimundo Nonato Souza Santos following alleged death threats for his human rights work;
- calling upon the authorities to take the necessary steps to investigate the threats and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to take all possible measures to ensure the safety of Raimundo Nonato Souza Santos and family;
- urging the authorities to investigate reports about the use of children and adolescents in police-like operations and ensure that these activities do not in any way put the physical safety of the children at risk.

APPEALS TO

1) State Governor of Amazonas:

Exmo. Sr Gilberto Mestrinho
Palácio Rio Negro
Av Sete de Setembro s/n
69.000 Manaus, Amazonas,
Brazil

Telegrams: Exmo. Sr Gilberto Mestrinho, Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil
Faxes: + 55 92 3215691

Salutation: Vossa Excelencia/Your Excellency

2) State Secretary of Public Security, Amazonas:

Mauro Campbell Marques
Rua Simão Bolívar No 245
69.010, Manaus, Amazonas,
Brazil

Telegrams: Mauro Campbell Marques, Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil
Faxes: + 55 92 6223725

Salutation: Vossa Excelencia/Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Centro de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos, (Human Rights Centre)
Avda Epaminondas 722

Caixa Postal 958
69010 Manaus, Amazonas
Brazil
Faxes: + 55 92 233 86 35

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 10 September 1993.