

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 301/93 Massacre of 21 shanty-town dwellers in
Rio de Janeiro

2 September 1993

BRAZIL: Gilberto Cardoso dos Santos, 61, retired, father of 12
Jane da Silva Santos, 56, housewife, mother of 12
Lúcia Silva Santos, 34, seamstress,
Lucinete Silva Santos, 27, dentists receptionist
Luzinete Silva Santos, 26, metal worker
Luciano Silva Santos, 24, print worker
Rubia Santos, 18, printworker, mother of 3
Luciene Santos, 15, student

Joacir Medeiros, 60, bar owner, father of 7
Guaracy de Oliveira Rodrigues, 33, nursing auxiliary
José dos Santos, 47, locksmith
Paulo Roberto dos Santos Ferreira, 44, bus driver, father of 1
~~Adalberto de Souza, 40, rail worker,~~
Luis Cláudio Feliciano, 28, metalworker
Paulo Cesar Gomes, 35, furniture restorer

Cleber Alves Marro, 24, printworker
Helio de Souza Santos, 38, unemployed
Amarildo Bahiense, 31, unemployed print worker
Clodoaldo Pereira, 23 food processing worker
Edmilson Jose da Costa, 23, mechanic
Fabio Pinheiro Lau, 18, porter

Amnesty International is deeply concerned at the massacre on 30 August of 21 residents of the shanty town (*favela*) of Vigário Geral, in the city of Rio de Janeiro, and at allegations that it was carried out by members of the state military police. The Governor of Rio de Janeiro has publicly stated that he believes the killings to have been "an inadmissible act of revenge" by military police for the killing of four military policemen allegedly by drugs traffickers based in the *favela* on Saturday 28 August.

According to information received by Amnesty International, approximately 30 men dressed in black, hooded and heavily armed with revolvers, pistols and AR 15 rifles carried out a two-hour assault on the shanty town of Vigário Geral from around 11pm on Sunday 29 to 1am on Monday 30 August, indiscriminately firing at and killing any residents they encountered. According to witnesses the group of approximately 30 men arrived in several cars at the Corségo square beneath the *favela* and killed Fabio Pinheiro Lau, aged 18 and set fire to his motorbike. The group then invaded another square, Praça Catolé da Rocha, at the entrance to the *favela*, where four military police had been killed on 28 August. The hooded men poured petrol on four trailers, used to serve drinks in the square, and set fire to them.

In what was clearly a planned operation, the hooded men then divided into three different

assault groups and entered the *favela*. One of the groups reached a bar at no.12 Rua Antonio Mendes where several men were playing cards. They identified themselves as police, demanded the men's identity cards, hurled them on to the floor, threw a stun grenade into the bar and started firing at the men, killing seven of them. The group then broke into the house of a family of Assembly of God worshippers, killing 8 of the 13 family members. Among those killed were the head of the household, Gilberto Cardoso dos Santos, aged 61, his wife, Jane dos Santos, their 18 year-old daughter-in-law, Rubia Santos, who had given birth a month previously. Four of their daughters and one son were also killed. Five children between the ages of one month and 10 years escaped alive.

Two other assault groups continued to fire indiscriminately at anyone they encountered on the paths of the *favela*, killings five other men. Witnesses allege that the assailants claimed they would kill 40 people, 10 for each of the dead military policemen. At about 1 am the three groups of hooded men reportedly joined forces and left the *favela*. The massacre was clearly intended to terrorize the entire *favela* population.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The involvement of military and civil police in "death squad" killings of criminal suspects and 'social undesirables' has been well documented in Rio de Janeiro. Widespread corruption in the Rio de Janeiro police force has also been reported and police implicated in criminal activities.

Rio de Janeiro has a high crime rate and violent deaths are reported to have increased as a result of rivalry between drugs traffickers. In some instances drugs traffickers may wield considerable influence inside shanty towns, providing 'protection' in police 'no-go' areas. Law-abiding citizens in these areas, have become the victims of violence both by drug gangs and by the police in punitive raids. None of the 21 people killed in Vigario Geral had any criminal record, and most were ordinary workers. The current administration of Rio de Janeiro has repeatedly condemned violence by its police forces.

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

- expressing concern at the massacre of 21 residents of the Vigario Geral *favela* in Rio de Janeiro and at allegations of state military police involvement in the killings;
- calling for a full investigation into the massacre and into the scale of military police involvement, and for all those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to provide all necessary safeguards to protect the life and physical integrity of all witnesses to the massacre;
- calling for a full review of the operation of civil and military police in Brazil with a view to radically reforming police structures.

APPEALS TO

1) Minister of Justice

Exmo Sr Mauricio Corrêa

Ministro da Justiça

Esplanada dos Ministerios, Bloco 23

70.064 Brasilia, D.F. Brazil

Telegrams: Ministro Justiça, Brasilia, Brazil

Telexes: 611003 MNJU BR, 611088 MNJU BR or 612313 MNJU BR

Salutation: Vossa Excelência/Your Excellency

2) State Governor

Exmo Sr Governador do Estado de Rio de Janeiro

Sr Leonel Brizola

Palacio Guanabara

Rua Pinheiro Machado s/n

22.231 Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

Telegrams: Governador Estado Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Telexes: 2131111 GERJ BR; 2123437 SGRJ BR; 2121272 PLG BR

Salutation: Vossa Excelência/Your Excellency

3) State Secretary of Justice

Sr Secretario de Estado de Justiça do Estado de Rio de Janeiro

Dr Nilo Batista

Rua da Relação No 42, 12 Andar

Centro

20031 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

**Telegrams: Secretario de Justiça Estado Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro,
Brazil**

Salutation: Vossa Excelência/Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Local non-governmental organization:

Centro de Articulação de

Populações Marginalizadas

Rua da Lapa N 200, Sala 809,

20.021 Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

O Dia Newspaper

Rua Riachuelo 359

20.235-900 Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 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 14 October 1993.