

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear for safety after attempted killing

29 October 1993

BRAZIL

Sister Cecilia PETRINA DE CARVALHO, nun and lawyer

Analdino LARANJEIRA, town councillor

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Sister (*Irma*) Cecilia Petrina de Carvalho following a recent attempt on her life. On 22 October she was driving with town councillor Analdino Laranjeira from the town of Itiúba to the village of Cacimbas in the interior of Bahia state. Some 10 kilometres from Cacimbas a hooded man shot at her from the side of the road. She was hit by a bullet that went straight through her right leg. Sister Cecilia had been receiving death threats in the context of her work as a lawyer representing peasants involved in land disputes in the region.

The Secretary of Public Security has designated the regional police chief of Senhor do Bonfim to investigate the incident. Lawyers acting on her behalf have been concerned by police delays in undertaking a scene-of-the-crime inspection, and ballistic testing.

Sister Cecilia is trained as a lawyer and has worked in this capacity for the Church Land Commission (*Comissão Pastoral da Terra*) for the Diocese of Senhor do Bonfim in the state of Bahia for over eight years. In her work she represents peasants in legal disputes with landowners and land claimants. There has been a history of violent land disputes in the Bonfim region, related to land claimants trying to fence off communal land used by peasants for grazing livestock and for gathering sisal to make crafts. Six rural workers have been killed by gunmen in such disputes in the Diocese of Senhor do Bonfim in the last ten years. Sister Cecilia, local trade unionists and a priest, Father Luis Tonetto, had been receiving death threats in connection with a dispute on the Fazenda Jabuticaba in the municipality of Andorinha. In this case the peasants had gained a preliminary ruling in their favour for the demarcation of communal lands. However the land claimant in dispute with them had allegedly continued to destroy vegetation and intimidate peasants. In July 1990 during what trade unionists believe was a failed attack on the community leader Petronildo Feitosa da Silva, a 19 year-old rural worker Carlos Augusto Lima da Silva, was fatally shot by an employee of the land claimant.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Land disputes between peasant smallholders and landowners and conflicts over rural workers' conditions are an endemic source of violence in Brazil. Over 1,000 peasants and their supporters are reported to have been killed since 1980, the vast majority of them by hired gunmen, known as *pistoleiros*, employed by landowners or aspiring landowners (See: Brazil: Authorized Violence in Rural Areas, AI Index: AMR 19/16/88, September 1988). Very rarely have the killers been detained or brought to justice. The Assistant Attorney General of the Republic is reported to have stated in June 1993 that of the 173 cases of rural

murders being investigated by the Attorney's General Department, in which gunmen were paid to commit crime, 72 proved to have the direct participation of military policemen, while 8 others involved members of the civil police.

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

- Expressing concern about the shooting of Irma Cecilia Petrina de Carvalho in Itiúba, Bahia on 22 October;
- Calling for a full investigation into the attempt on her life, including a scene-of-the-crime inspection, ballistic testing and an investigation of previous death threats made against her and others in the region;
- Calling for those found responsible to be brought to justice;
- Urging that all the necessary steps are taken to safeguard the physical integrity of Sister Cecilia Petrina de Carvalho and others receiving death threats in the region.

APPEALS TO

1) Police chief in charge of investigation

Ilmo. Delegado Regional

Dr Edivaldo Cerqueira

Delegacia de Polícia de Senhor do Bonfim

48.960-000 Senhor do Bonfim, BA, Brazil

Telegrams: Delgado Regional Senhor do Bonfim, BA, Brazil

Salutation: Ilmo. Senhor / Dear Sir

2) State Governor

Exmo Sr Antônio Carlos Magalhães

Governador do Estado da Bahia

Av Tancredo Neves, 776

Caminho das Arvores

41.820-020 Salvador, BA, Brazil

Faxes: +55 71 359 89 65

Telegrams: Governador Bahia, Salvador, BA, Brazil

Salutation: Vossa Excelência / Your Excellency

3) State Police Chief

Ilmo. Secretario de Segurança Pública

Dr Francisco Neto

Secretaria de Segurança Pública

Praça da Peidade S/N

40.070-010 Salvador, BA, Brazil

Telegrams: Segurança Pública, Salvador, BA, Brazil

Salutation: Ilmo. Senhor / Dear Sir

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Church Land Commission

Comissão Pastoral da Terra

Rua General Labatut 78

BARRIS

40.070-100 Salvador, BA, Brazil

2) State Attorney General

Dr José Augusto Dantas

Procurador Geral do Estado da Bahia
Procuradoria Geral do Estado
Largo do Campo Grande 382
40.070-120 Salvador, BA, Brazil
Faxes : +55 71 245 2997

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 December 1993.