

URGENT ACTION

NINE PEOPLE KILLED IN POLICE OPERATIONS

At least nine people were killed after repeated Military Police operations in the community of Acari, in Rio de Janeiro, in a period of 20 days. Community members say operations started after the World Cup ended.

Nine men were killed between 15 July and 4 August in the community of Acari, Rio de Janeiro, as a result of Military Police operations. The latest killing happened on 4 August between 4pm and 5pm when a man in his thirties, who was the organizer of a local music and dancing event, went out to buy ice and was shot dead. Residents of Acari say that after the World Cup ended, Military Police operations were intensified in the community. They also report that police operations and incursion in the community happened almost on a daily basis and sometimes lasted for over 12 hours. The operations were carried out by different Military Police units, such as the 41st Battalion troops, the Riot Police unit, and the Special Operations Battalion (BOPE). The operations usually take place without notice and at different hours (early morning, late at night), sometimes they are led by an armored vehicle called *caveirão* ("big skull").

Over 80 community residents reported several abuses made by the police. They claim the police use "master keys" to enter houses with no prior warning, enter houses without any search warrants, destroy people's belongings and steal objects and money. Residents also claim that the police officers use offensive language, especially with women, calling them "sluts" (*piranha* or *vagabunda*), sometimes physically assaulting them, and often slapping their faces. The use of firearms unnecessarily or indiscriminately during the police operations is putting all residents' lives at risk and is also impacting the community broadly. Schools and day-care facilities remain closed during operations. On several occasions mothers risked holding children in their arms while looking for a safe place but had nowhere to go.

Please write immediately in Portuguese, English or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to ensure a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation by ordinary civilian prosecutorial authorities of these killings that resulted from Military Police operations in the community of Acari;
- Urging them to ensure a prompt and thorough investigation into allegations of other alleged abuses during Military Police operations, such as verbal offences, physical assault, house invasions without proper search warrants, and to ensure that any officers suspected of criminal responsibility for such alleged abuses are brought to trial;
- Urging the Military Police to ensure that all Military Police operations in the community are in compliance with international standards, such as the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 SEPTEMBER 2014 TO:

General Commander of the Militar
Police of Rio de Janeiro

Coronel José Luís Castro Menezes
Rua Evaristo da Veiga, 78, 2º andar,
Centro – Rio de Janeiro – RJ.
CEP: 20.031-040, Brasil
Email: gcgchefe@pmerj.org
Salutation: Dear Colonel

Commander of the 41st Military Police
Battalion

Tenente-coronel Luiz Carlos Leal Gomes
Av. Pastor Martin Luther King Jr, s/nº
Colégio – Rio de Janeiro – RJ
CEP: 21.530-013, Brasil
Fax: + 55 21 2333-8423
Email:
secretaria_41bpm@pmerj.rj.gov.br
Salutation: Dear Lieutenant-Colonel

And copies to:

Attorney General of the Public
Prosecution's Office in Rio de Janeiro
(Procurador Geral do Ministério Público
Estadual do Rio de Janeiro)
Marfan Martins Vieira
Av. Marechal Câmara, nº 370, 8º andar
Centro - Rio de Janeiro - RJ
CEP 20020-080, Brasil
Email: assessoria-pgj@mprj.mp.br

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Community leaders from Acari say they counted around 30 deaths caused by Military Police operations in 2014. They report that some of the killings are extrajudicial executions of people who had already been surrendered. On 24 February, a 31 years-old man called Rafael Lopes Otoni, was killed by the police early in the morning (between 4am and 5am) with at least four gun shots. A witness says that after he surrendered he said "I lost, I lost" (*Perdi, perdi*) and raised both arms. A police officer approached him and said "No you didn't lose. I want your soul" (*Perdeu nada. Eu quero a tua alma!*) and then shot and killed him.

The mention to "taking the souls" of residents of favelas is not new. Loud-speakers are usually mounted on the outside of the vehicle repeatedly announcing the *caveirão's* arrival through expressions such as "We have come to take your souls". This is also reported on Amnesty International's publication *We have come to take your souls: the caveirão and policing in Rio de Janeiro* (AMR 19/007/2006) that on 1 September 2005, the *favela* of Acari had a day of terror, when the BOPE (Special Operations Police Battalion) mounted a blitz, led by the *caveirão*. According to members of the community, during the blitz a 17-year-old was shot in the head. His body was then hoisted onto a hook on the *caveirão* which drove around the community, showing his corpse and demanding money for the return of the body. On that same day, a 46-year old woman was also shot dead.

In the meeting held with Amnesty International and other human rights organizations, a woman from Acari said "We just don't want to see any other mum crying. We are tired of watching mums crying" (*A gente só não quer mais ver nenhuma mãe chorando. A gente tá cansado de ver mãe chorar*).

Acari was also the place of a massive killing which originated the movement Mothers of Acari (*Mães de Acari*). On 26 July 1990, eleven boys from Acari were kidnapped and disappeared. Their bodies were never found. The group of mothers were mobilized for justice. One of the mothers, Edméia da Silva, was murdered on 20 July 1993, allegedly as a revenge.

Name: Community of Acari

Gender m/f: both

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