

URGENT ACTION

TWELVE PEOPLE KILLED BY MILITARY POLICE OFFICERS

Twelve people were shot dead and four others injured by military police officers during an operation in the neighbourhood of Cabula in Salvador, north-east Brazil. Residents report feeling threatened and afraid as the military police have maintained their presence in the neighbourhood ever since.

In the early hours of 6 February an operation of the Special Operations Unit of the Military Police (RONDESP) in the neighborhood of Cabula in Salvador, Bahia State resulted in 12 residents of the community being shot dead and four others injured. All victims were male, and most of them were young and black. According to residents of Cabula who spoke to Amnesty International, the boys had given themselves up but were deliberately killed by military police officers. There is evidence that there was no proper forensic analysis of the crime scene, and there are indications that the crime scene might have been altered. Residents say they are afraid and feel threatened, as ever since there has been a constant and intimidating presence of military police officers in the neighbourhood. The residents are afraid to identify themselves and report that police violence in the neighbourhood is frequent. Members of the "React or you'll be killed" campaign (Campanha Reaja ou sera morto/a), an important movement acting to condemn police violence in Salvador, including active member Hamilton Borges Walê, have also reported being intimidated by the military police.

The governor of Bahia State told the press there is no evidence that the police conduct in this case was outside the law. In an official communication, the Bahia Public Security Secretary stated that the police operation took place in response to reports regarding a bank robbery in the neighborhood and that the operation resulted in the seizure of drugs and weapons. The statement also asserts that there was a confrontation between the military police officers and 30 people in the neighborhood. A police officer is reported to have been wounded, but only slightly. Initially, the Government of Bahia had stated that nine of the boys had criminal records, although they later withdrew that claim.

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

- Calling on the authorities to conduct a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation into the killings in Cabula by the Military Police and ensure that anyone found responsible for participating in unlawful killings is brought to justice, and that the victims' families receive reparation, including compensation;
- Urging them to ensure that the investigative body obtains all the necessary information and in particular seeks and accepts information from all witnesses, who should be protected from violence, threats of violence or any other form of intimidation;
- Urging them to ensure effective protection for the residents of Cabula who have mobilized to demand action from the authorities, as well as members of the "React or you'll be killed" campaign and Hamilton Borges Walê.

SEND YOUR APPEALS BEFORE 15 APRIL 2015 TO:

Governor of the State of Bahia

Rui Costa
3ª Avenida, nº 390, Plataforma IV, 3º andar, CAB
Centro Administrativo da Bahia
Sussuarana - CEP: 41745-005
Salvador, Bahia, Brazil
Fax: +55 71 31159220
Email:
governador@governadoria.ba.gov.br
Salutation: Dear Governor

Public Security Secretary of the State of Bahia

Maurício Teles Barbosa
Avenida 4, nº 430
Centro Administrativo da Bahia
CEP: 41745-002
Salvador, Bahia, Brazil
Fax: +55 71 31151823
Email:
gabinete.secretariosp@ssp.ba.gov.br
Salutation: Dear Secretary

And copies to:

Presidency of Bahia BAR association
Luiz Viana Queiroz
OAB / Bahia
Rua Portão da Piedade, nº 16
Antiga Praça Teixeira de Freitas - Barris
CEP: 40070-045
Salvador, Bahia, Brazil
Fax: +55 71 33295639
Email: presidencia@oab-ba.org.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

There are reports that two weeks before these 12 killings by military police officers in Cabula, two other boys were killed by the military police in the same neighborhood. Instead of ordering the immediate investigation of the 12 killings, the initial reaction of the Governor and the Public Security Secretary was to confirm the version of events as told by the military police, and to criminalize the boys killed, portraying them as criminals, implicitly justifying their being killed by the police. The Governor also compared the action of the military police to that of a football player "It is like a player in front of the goal that has to decide in a few seconds how he will try to put the ball inside the goal and score it" (*É como um artilheiro em frente ao gol que tem que decidir em alguns segundos como é que ele tenta botar a bola para dentro do gol e fazer o gol*). A resident reported to Amnesty International that "After the police approached, all young boys surrendered. They were obliged to put their hands behind their back, were put on their knees in a football field and executed" (*Após a abordagem policial, todos os jovens se renderam. Foram obrigados a colocar as mãos na cabeça, colocados de joelho em um campo de futebol e executados*). Another resident and relative of one of the victims said that she is scared, that she feels threatened by the intense presence of police officers after the killings and that she has not been able to sleep or eat properly.

On 11 February, human rights organizations and local civil society groups organized a march in Cabula to protest against the killings and call for investigation and justice. During the protest, residents and protesters were verbally intimidated and threatened by military police officers who were present. Since that day, Hamilton Borges Walê, a member of the "React or you'll be killed" campaign (*Campanha Reaja ou Será Morto/a*), one of the main movements condemning police violence in Bahia State, has been subjected to intimidation by military police officers. An electronic communication that circulated amongst military police officers mentions Hamilton by name and suggests that the police officers should "counter-attack people who call for a reaction against the State" (*contra atacar pessoas que pregam reação contra um Estado*).

The outskirts of the city of Salvador are known for violence and for being an area where there is frequent action by death squads formed of police officers. Also on 6 February, three other young people were killed by the Special Operations Unit of the Military Police (RONDESP) in the neighborhood of Cosme de Farias, Salvador. In the past months, Amnesty International has received several reports of abuses, executions and enforced disappearances by the military police in the State of Bahia, particularly by RONDESP officers. Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action about the enforced disappearance of Davi Fiuza, a 16-year-old boy who allegedly disappeared after being approached by the military police on 24 October 2014 in Salvador (see: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR19/014/2014/en). The case of Davi Fiuza was presented to the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances. To this date, there is no official information about his whereabouts.

International law and standards require that states ensure thorough, prompt and impartial investigation of all suspected cases of extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions. The investigating body must collect and analyze all physical and documentary evidence and statements from witnesses and must have powers to compel witnesses and to demand the production of evidence, and in particular to oblige officials allegedly involved to appear and testify. Anyone identified by the investigation as having participated in such killings must be brought to justice. Superior orders may not be invoked as a justification for such killings, and superiors, officers or other public officials may be held responsible for acts committed by those under their authority if they had a reasonable opportunity to prevent such acts. The families of those who have been killed must receive reparations, including fair and adequate compensation within a reasonable period of time.

Name: Residents of Cabula in the city of Salvador
Gender m/f: both

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