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Brazil: Secretary General brings concerns to Lula

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Amnesty International's Secretary General, Irene Khan, visits Brazil between 7th and 14th November in order to establish a dialogue with the authorities on the human rights situation in the country and the government's role in the international arena.

Amnesty International's delegation includes Nicolas Guigou (Director, Amnesty International Uruguay), and staff from the International Secretariat in London, including Susan Lee (Director of the Americas Program), Tim Cahill and Damian Platt (researchers on Brazil) and Judit Arenas (External Relations advisor to the Secretary General).

Considering Brazil's economic importance in the region, and at a time when it is becoming a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Brazil has an important role to play in the defence and promotion of human rights. The proposals made by the national authorities at the international level must be reflected in real commitment when it comes to local affairs, especially in the protection of human rights.

The delegation will meet government authorities, representatives of civil society and victims of human rights violations in Sao Paulo, Brasilia and Rio de Janeiro.

Among the issues that the delegation will be addressing during this visit is the false dichotomy between security and human rights. Amnesty International has found around the world, and in Brazil, that security measures that do not include human rights principles have failed to bring long term peace and protection for all members of society.

Amnesty International recognizes and welcomes President Lula's actions and commitment to the respect of economic, social and cultural rights. However, in order to provide long term economic, social and cultural rights, effective policy on civil and political rights is needed, as all human rights are indivisible.

As part of her visit to the country, Irene Khan will launch the organization's latest report "'Essential actors of our time': Human Rights defenders in the Americas", which highlights Amnesty International concerns around the situation of Human Rights defenders in the region.

In Brazil, as well as in the rest of the continent, human rights defenders are in increasing

danger. Discredited by authorities and parts of the media, often being called "defenders of criminals", human right activists -- who are journalists, lawyers, relatives of victims of human rights violations -- face intimidations and threats and in some cases, targets of extra judicial executions. Impunity is common in most of these cases and governments are paying little, if any, attention to the reports of violations against human rights defenders.

Agenda:

7th, 8th and 9th November -- Sao Paulo

During these three days the delegation will be focused on the human rights situation at the national level and the actions the government is taking towards this. Amnesty International will also highlight its concerns on human rights violations committed within the detention system, violence in rural areas and the impunity surrounding them. On the 9th, the delegation will be visiting Sapopemba, a community that suffers high rates of violence and lack of public policy.

10th and 11th -- Rio de Janeiro.

On the 10th, Irene Khan will host the international launch of Amnesty International's new report on human rights defenders in the Americas.

The conference will take place at 11Hs (13Hs GMT) at the Hotel Florida, R Ferreira Viana 81, Flamengo, Rio de Janeiro.

In the evening, the delegation will be conducting two public meeting at the PUC University. One of those will be on the issue of security and human rights in which Irene Khan will be presenting Amnesty International's new campaign "Control Arms", the other will discuss the current situation of Human Rights defenders.

On the 11th, the delegation will be visiting Borelos, a local community where human rights violations often occur. Irene Khan will also be meeting local authorities, such as the governor of Rio de Janeiro and the Secretaries of Security and Human Rights.

12th and 13th - Brasilia

During these days, Amnesty International will be conducting meetings with indigenous communities, international agencies, members of the national congress, members of the diplomatic community and with the President (still pending confirmation).

14th -- Sao Paulo

During the last day of its visit, Irene Khan will be meeting the Governor of Sao Pablo. A closing press conference will be conducted on this same day. **Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, na Rua Álvares Penteado, 112, centro, 12 hs.**

For more information on this visit or to arrange interviews with the delegation (in English, Portuguese, Spanish and French), please contact:

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For more information, please see:

<http://web.amnesty.org/pages/bra-051103-summary-por> (potuguese)

<http://web.amnesty.org/pages/bra-051103-summary-eng> (English)

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

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