

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Possible Extrajudicial Execution

22 March 1993

BRAZIL: Renildo José DOS SANTOS (Local councillor/gay person)

Amnesty International is concerned that the abduction and killing of Renildo José dos Santos, a homosexual local councillor from the municipality of Coqueiro Sêco, State of Alagoas, may have been carried out by members of the security forces because he was a homosexual.

According to information received by Amnesty International, on the evening of Sunday 14 March 1993, Renildo José dos Santos was violently abducted from his home in Coqueiro Sêco, Alagoas, by a group of unidentified heavily armed men. Relatives of Renildo José dos Santos who witnessed the abduction believe that some of the men were plain clothes police officers. Renildo José dos Santos' head was found the following day on waste ground bearing apparent marks of torture. His body was found two days later in another area of waste ground also bearing apparent marks of torture.

Renildo José dos Santos had repeatedly denounced death threats which he had been receiving since 1989 which had come from the local mayor and the mayor's father, also a local political leader. He also accused a local police officer of making an attempt on his life. According to written testimony which he made in September 1991, he reported the death threats to a local judge but no steps were reportedly taken to ensure his physical safety. On 27 November 1991 Renildo José dos Santos was shot and wounded three times, allegedly by a local police officer whom he named in the testimony. Renildo José dos Santos attributed the death threats and the attempt against his life to political differences with the mayor and his father and to his homosexuality which he had publicly acknowledged. He claimed that the local police had not conducted a proper investigation into the attempt against his life and that the state Secretary of Public Security had refused his request to suspend the police officer from duty, pending the outcome of the investigation.

In January 1993 the local council of Coqueiro Sêco set up a parliamentary commission of inquiry to investigate the conduct of councillor Dos Santos under accusations of him committing acts "incompatible with Parliamentary [i.e. the local council] decorum and bringing the House into disrepute.", "*atos incompatíveis com o decôro Parlamentar, o que está denegrindo a reputação desta Casa Legislativa.*" Among the reasons given for the accusation was that councillor dos Santos had publicly admitted his homosexuality in a radio program. As a result of the inquiry councillor dos Santos was stripped of his local council seat by the Council. He was subsequently reinstated, pending a Judicial appeal.

On 25 February several human rights organizations in Alagoas wrote to the State Secretary for Public Security denouncing the death threats and attempts

against the life of councillor dos Santos and the alleged involvement of military police officers in the attempts. The organizations also denounced the smear campaign against him. To Amnesty International's knowledge, no protection was granted to councillor dos Santos.

In a statement to the newspaper "Jornal de Alagoas", a few days before his assassination, councillor dos Santos reiterated his denunciations of death threats and [sexual] discrimination against him from the local mayor, and attributed the smear campaign to his public acknowledgment of his homosexuality. He said that he was frightened and desperate and that he

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feared a new attempt on his life or an abduction.

To Amnesty International's knowledge, nobody has been detained in relation to the abduction and killing of councillor dos Santos.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Alagoas, in North East Brazil has a tradition of political violence. One of the poorest states of Brazil, politics and society in Alagoas are dominated by large landowners, *coroneis*, and their accomplices who often resort to violence against anybody who challenges their interests.

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

- demanding a thorough and impartial investigation into the abduction, torture and killing of councillor Renildo José dos Santos and urging that the culprits be brought to justice.

- expressing concern that his killing might have been carried out because of his fundamental right to his sexual orientation.

APPEALS TO

1) State Governor of Alagoas

Exmo. Sr. Governador do Estado de Alagoas

Sr. Geraldo Bulhões

Palácio Marechal Floriano s/n

47.000 Maceió - AL

Brasil

Telegrams: Sr. Governador Alagoas, Maceió - AL, Brasil

Faxes: +55 82 221 7484

Salutation: Exmo. Sr. Governador / Your Excellency

2) Secretary of State for Public Security

Exmo. Sr. Secretário de Segurança Pública

Estado de Alagoas

Dr. Wilson Perpétuo

Rua Senador Mendoça 148

Edifício Walmape

Centro

57.000 Maceió - AL

Brasil

Telegrams: Sr. Secretário Segurança Pública, Maceió - AL, Brasil
Faxes: +55 82 221 4718

Salutation: Sr. Secretário / Dear Sir

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Local Human Rights Organization:

Fórum Permanente contra a Violência em Alagoas
Edif. Sta. Terezinha s/105
Rua do Comercio No. 41, Centro
57.000 Maceió -AL
Brazil

Newspaper

Jornal de Alagoas
Rua Cons. Lourenço de Albuquerque 1115
57.000 Maceió -AL
Brasil

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 3 May 1993.