

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVISTS AT RISK IN BRAZIL AFTER OTHERS KILLED

Alexandre Anderson de Souza, the president of the Associação Homens e Mulheres do Mar (AHOMAR), a fishermen's association on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro and his wife Daize Menezes de Souza have been repeatedly threatened because of their work as environmental activists. After the killing of two members of the association in late June, Alexandre and his wife are at risk. They are not receiving adequate protection.

In late June 2012, the bodies of two fishermen and active members of AHOMAR Almir Nogueira de Amorim and João Luiz Telles Penetra were found in Rio de Janeiro's Guanabara Bay. They disappeared after setting out on a fishing expedition on 22 June, 2012. Preliminary investigations by the Civil Police's homicide division indicate that both men had been tied up before being drowned.

The killings come after sustained threats against **Alexandre Anderson de Souza** and his wife **Daize Menezes de Souza**, and other members of the association. The threats relate to complaints the group have made against the construction of gas pipeline in the bay, and environmental damage that is threatening traditional fishermen's livelihoods. On 22 May 2009, the treasurer of AHOMAR, Paulo César dos Santos Souza, was beaten and shot in the head in front of his wife and children; the following year Márcio Amaro, a founding member of the association, was also shot dead in his house. Both cases remain unresolved. Alexandre Anderson says that over the past three years he has survived six attempts on his life.

In August 2009, Alexandre Anderson and his wife were included in a federal programme providing protection for human rights defenders. However, the protection has only been partially implemented. He has formally complained to the authorities on numerous occasions that the officers provided have been poorly trained and inadequately equipped; he has also said that some officers had worked as security guards on the pipeline and had been previously involved in clashes with members of AHOMAR. His wife, Daize Menezes de Souza, who works as an activist for AHOMAR, is not receiving protection despite having received threats.

Please write immediately in Portuguese or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to fulfil their promises by immediately providing Alexandre Anderson de Souza and his wife Daize Menezes de Souza with full protection in accordance with their needs and wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to thoroughly investigate all threats against association members and launch a joint investigation into the four killings that have occurred over the past five years;
- Urging the authorities to fully implement the State Programme for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and reinstate a permanent police presence in Praia de Mauá, near AHOMAR's headquarters.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 AUGUST 2012 TO:

Federal Human Rights Secretary

Exma Sra. Ministra Maria do Rosário Nunes
Setor Comercial Sul-B, Quadra 9, Lote C
Edifício Parque Cidade Corporate,
Torre "A", 10º andar,
70308-200 – Brasília/DF, Brazil
Fax: + 55 61 2025 9414

Salutation: Exma. Sra. Ministra

State Secretary for Public Security

Exmo. Sr. José Mariano Beltrame
Pç. Cristiano Ottoni, s/nº
Ed. Pedro II - 4º andar
Centro 20.221-250
Rio de Janeiro/RJ, Brazil
Fax: + 55 21 2334 9329

Salutation: Prezado Sr. Secretário

And copies to:

Associação Homens e Mulheres do Mar da
Baía de Guanabara - AHOMAR
Av. do Imperador, nº 41 Praia de Mauá
Município de Magé
Rio de Janeiro/RJ, Brazil
Cep.: 25930-000

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

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

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

AHOMAR, created in 2003, now represents over 1800 traditional fishermen and women living and working in Rio de Janeiro. Led by Alexandre Anderson de Souza, the organisation was set up to denounce the increasing environmental damage to the Guanabara bay, which was threatening their livelihoods. Since 2007 it has been campaigning against Comperj (Complexo Petroquímico do Rio de Janeiro), a consortium constructing gas pipelines in Guanabara bay. In 2009 they halted work on the pipeline during a 38-day protest, when they anchored their boats along the pipeline site in the bay. Since the protest, Alexandre Anderson has complained of threats, and an Urgent Action was issued on his behalf in September 2010 (see UA 192/10, Index: AMR 19/011/2010, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR19/011/2010/en>). In December 2010, an Amnesty International delegation visited AHOMAR's headquarters in Magé where delegates received numerous denunciations of violence and harassment against the association.

Implementation of the Federal Human Rights Programme has been inconsistent in Rio de Janeiro state, which is awaiting the signing of a decree to create a state-level Human Rights Defenders protection body. Alexandre Anderson de Souza has received protection of varying quality in a series of ad hoc arrangements; despite being included in the programme, his wife has not received protection. In the case of AHOMAR, the situation has been compounded by the withdrawal of the Mauá beach police post [Destacamento de Policiamento Ostensivo (DPO) da Praia de Mauá] near the Association's headquarters in February this year.

Name: Alexandre Anderson de Souza and Daize Menezes de Souza

Gender m/f: male and female, respectively

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