

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 19/24/99

15 September 1999

Further information on 213/99 (AMR 19/23/99, 15 September 1999) - Fear for safety/ Death threats

BRAZIL Valdecir Nicácio Lima, lawyer (note correct spelling)

Maria de Nazaré Gadelha Ferreira Fernandes (f), lawyer [new name]

Francisco Raimundo Custodia Pessoa (witness) [new name]

Emanuel Esphir Oppok (witness) [new name]

Naluh Gouveia (state deputy) [new name]

Lawyers and witnesses at risk due to role in investigation of death squad [new]

Amnesty International continues to be extremely concerned about the safety of lawyers and witnesses involved in exposing the activities of a brutal death squad operating in the Amazonian state of Acre. Ongoing investigations by a Parliamentary Inquiry Commission into the activities of the death squad implicate large numbers of Acre police, and have increased tension in the area.

Maria de Nazaré Gadelha Ferreira Fernandes, a lawyer working with the human rights organization *Centro de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos da Diocese do Rio Branco*, Rio Branco Diocese Human Rights Defence Centre, has suffered intimidation as a result of her public testimony before the inquiry. Three known death squad members circled her place of work on 10 September 1999. These same men have also been seen circling her house.

Threats and intimidation are also continuing against lawyer Valdecir Nicácio Lima, following the recent discovery of a clandestine cemetery where the remains of alleged death squad victims were exhumed. A number of police have been arrested following this discovery.

A number of other witnesses are also at risk, in particular Francisco Raimundo Custodia Pessoa and Emanuel Esphir Oppok. Although some witnesses have been offered a place on the Federal Government's new witness protection program, others are entirely without protection. Furthermore, although a federal police task force has been dispatched twice to the area, it has been withdrawn each time after only a few weeks. Human rights activists working in Acre believe that the constant presence of a federal police task force would provide some measure of protection to those at risk.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Portuguese or in your own language:

- Express concern for the safety of Valdecir Nicácio Lima, Maria de Nazaré Gadelha Ferreira Fernandes, Francisco Raimundo Custodia Pessoa, Emanuel Esphir Oppok, Naluh Gouveia and other lawyers and witnesses at risk due to their role in exposing the activities of a death squad operating in Acre state;
- Express concern that the withdrawal of a federal police task force from Acre may expose those involved in investigations to increased risk;
- Urge the government to deploy an independent federal police task force in the state of Acre as a measure of protection for those at risk;
- Call for protection for all individuals suffering death threats and intimidation;
- Call for any police implicated in death squad activity to be immediately suspended from duty and brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:Acre state Governor

Exmo. Sr. Governador do
Estado de Acre
Sr. Jorge Ney Viana Macedo Neves
Avenida Brasil No 297
69900-100 Rio Branco AC
Brazil

Telegrams: Governador do Acre, Rio Branco, Acre, Brazil

Fax: + 55 68 223 8355 (When the call is answered, say "Fax, por favor", and wait for the fax signal)

Salutation: Vossa Excelência / Your Excellency

Acre State Public Security Secretary

Sra. Secretária de Justiça e Segurança Pública do Estado de Acre,
Sra Maria Salete da Costa Maia
Prédio Banacre, (3 andar)
Rua Marechal Deodoro
69900-000 Rio Branco AC
Brazil

Telegrams: Secretária de Justiça e Segurança Pública do Acre, Rio Branco, Acre, Brazil

Fax: + 55 68 224 1183 (When the call is answered, say "Fax, por favor", and wait for the fax signal)

Salutation: Exmo. Sra. / Dear Madam

Secretary of State for Human Rights

Exmo. Sr Secretário de Estado dos Direitos Humanos
Sr. José Gregori
Secretaria de Estado dos Direitos Humanos_
Ministério da Justiça_
Esplanada dos Ministérios,
Bloco T, Ed Sede, Sala 420_
70064-901 Brasília DF
Brazil

Telegrams: Secretaria de Estado dos Direitos Humanos, Rio Branco, Acre, Brazil

Fax: + 55 61 223 2260_

Salutation: Exmo. Sr./ Dear Sir

COPIES TO:Human Rights Organization

Centro de Defesa dos Direito Humanos da Diocese do Rio Branco
Praça do Catedral s/n°, Centro
66990-150 Rio Branco Acre Brazil

Chamber of Deputies Constitution and Justice Commission

Secretária da Comissão de Constituição e Justiça da Câmara dos Deputados
Câmara dos Deputados
Anexo 2, Sala T 21
70160-900 Brasília DF
Brazil

Chamber of Deputies Human Rights Commission

Comissão de Direitos Humanos da Câmara dos Deputados

Câmara dos Deputados
Anexo 2
70160-900 Brasília DF
Brazil

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