

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear for Safety

13 December 1994

BRAZILWagner DOS SANTOS, aged 23, witness to the "Candelária Massacre"

Amnesty International is deeply concerned for the safety of Wagner dos Santos, a key witness to the killings of eight street children in Rio de Janeiro in July 1993, who has been shot and seriously wounded.

On the night of 9 December 1994 Wagner dos Santos was found unconscious near Rio de Janeiro's main railway station, *Central do Brasil*, with several bullet wounds. He was taken to hospital where he remains seriously ill in the Intensive Care Unit. On recovering consciousness, Wagner Dos Santos told the authorities that he had been abducted by a group of plainclothes policemen near the Witness' House, *Casa da Testemunha*, a safe house where he was living under state protection. He says that the policemen handcuffed him and took him near to the railway station, where after beating him, they shot him several times and left him for dead. Wagner told a human rights worker from the Brazilian Centre for the Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents, *Centro Brasileiro de Defesa dos Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente*, CBDDCA, that the policemen made it clear they were shooting him for having identified their colleagues in the 1993 killings.

On 23 July 1993, in what has become known as the "Candelária Massacre", seven children and one youth were killed as a group of about 50 slept rough outside the Candelária church in downtown Rio de Janeiro. The killings sparked a national and international outcry (see UA 241/93, AMR 19/03/93, 26 July 1993 and follow-ups). Wagner dos Santos, one of the survivors of the massacre, was able to identify three members of the Military Police as being among the perpetrators of the killings. Based mainly on his testimony, the officers were charged and are awaiting trial for the killings.

Although Wagner dos Santos was one of the few survivors of the massacre who was under police protection, the fact that he was abducted and shot while walking unprotected through the streets of Rio de Janeiro and that his assailants, allegedly police officers, apparently knew his identity shows that his protection was inadequate.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed concern for the safety of the survivors of the Candelária massacre, and has specifically called on the authorities to provide all necessary protection for all witnesses to the killings. In July 1994, Amnesty International received information that about 40 children thought to have witnessed the massacre were still sleeping rough throughout Rio de Janeiro, where they have been subjected to death and bomb threats allegedly by members of the military police. Amnesty International has repeatedly submitted the names of these children to the Rio de Janeiro authorities but has received no response about their safety and welfare.

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

- expressing serious concern for the safety of Wagner dos Santos, following his abduction and shooting on 9 December 1994;
- requesting that the attempt against the life of Wagner dos Santos be thoroughly investigated and those found responsible be brought to justice;

- urging the authorities to provide all necessary protection for Wagner dos Santos and other child witnesses to the case, including the provision of alternative means of shelter for the children.

APPEALS TO

Minister of Justice

Exmo Sr Ministro da Justiça
Sr Alexandre Dupreyrat
Ministério da Justiça
Esplanada dos Ministérios
Bloco 23, 70.064 Brasilia, DF, Brasil

Faxes + 55 61 321 5145/5172

Telegrams: Ministro da Justiça Dupreyrat, Brasilia, Brazil

Salutation Vossa Excelência / Your Excellency / Su Excelencia

Governor of Rio de Janeiro

Exmo Sr Governador do Estado de Rio de Janeiro
Dr Nilo Batista
Palácio Guanabara
Rua Pinheiro Machado s/n, Rio de Janeiro -RJ, Brasil

Faxes: + 55 21 5528390/5536090

Telegrams: Governador Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Salutation: Vossa Excelência / Your Excellency / Su Excelencia

Attorney General for Rio de Janeiro State

Procurador Geral do Estado do Rio de Janeiro
Dr Antonio Carlos Biscaia
Procuradoria Geral da Justiça
Av Nilo Pessanha 12, 2 andar
22-020 Centro, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

Telegrams: Procurador Geral de Justica, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

Salutation: Vossa Excelência / Your Excellency / Su Excelencia

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

(Local non-governmental organization)

Centro Brasileiro de Defesa dos Direitos da Criança e do Adolescente
Caixa Postal 4884, 20100 Agencia Central, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

Faxes: +55 21 2274029

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 27 January 1995.