

EXTERNAL

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Death Threats/ Fear for Safety

1 November 1995

**BRAZIL** Caio FERRAZ, administrator, *Casa da Paz*, and his family  
Elias Lizardo DA CUNHA, 23-year-old shanty town resident  
Vigario Geral residents linked to *Casa de Paz*

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Amnesty International has received reports of death threats and harassment by members of the police against Caio Ferraz, the administrator of *Casa da Paz* (Peace House) in the Rio de Janeiro *favela* (shanty town) of Vigario Geral. There are also fears for the safety of Elias Lizardo da Cunha, another resident of Vigario Geral, following a reported attempt on his life on 28 October 1995.

According to reports, Caio Ferraz and other members of *Casa da Paz* have been repeatedly harassed and threatened by police in recent months. He has received anonymous telephone death threats and, on 24 October, he was followed by two cars which blocked his way. There are well-founded fears for his safety and that of his family.

The *Casa da Paz* is the house where eight people were killed by members of the military police during a massacre in Vigario Geral in August 1993, in which a total of 21 people died. It has now been converted into a meeting house for the relatives of the 21 victims killed that day. It has been reported that, on 28 October 1995, during a social gathering at the neighbourhood soccer field organized by members of *Casa da Paz*, armed military police, some wearing hoods, entered the shanty town, saying they were searching for a kidnap victim. The police forced people attending the gathering to lie face-down on the ground and accused them of being drug traffickers. Many of those attending the party were children.

On the same day, in a separate incident in the Vigario Geral, Elias Lizardo da Cunha was shot in the eye, allegedly by police. He has been hospitalized and may lose the sight in that eye.

Fears for the safety of residents of Vigario Geral, particularly members of *Casa de Paz*, have been heightened by reports that in recent months armed police have made several incursions into the *favela* and carried out searches in the *Casa da Paz*, for which no reason has been given.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Twenty-one residents of the *favela* Vigario Geral were killed between 29 and 30 August 1993 when approximately 30 men dressed in black, hooded and heavily armed, forced their way into Vigario Geral, firing indiscriminately. Following an investigation, charges were brought against 28 military policemen, three civil police and two members of the state Public Security Department. The relatives of the 21 victims have converted the house where the massacre occurred into a "peace house", *Casa da Paz*, from where they are trying to lobby for compensation and for those responsible for the massacre to be brought to justice. It is feared that the police want the *Casa da Paz* shut down. There are reports indicating that among the police entering the *favela* on 28 October 1995 were members of the same battalion which had allegedly carried out the 1993 massacre.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Caio Ferraz and his family following reports of death threats and incidents of harassment against him;

- expressing concern at the reported police shooting of Elias Lizardo da Cunha;
- requesting that the death threats to Caio Ferraz and shooting of Elias Lizardo da Cunha be thoroughly investigated and that those responsible brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate steps to guarantee the safety of Caio Ferraz, his family, other residents linked to Casa de Paz and that of Elias Lizardo da Cunha.

**APPEALS TO:**

President

Exmo. Sr. Presidente da República Federativa do Brasil  
Sr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso  
Gabinete do Presidente  
Palácio do Planalto,  
70.150 Brasília,DF,Brazil

**Faxes: +55 61 226 6241**

**Telegrams: Presidente Cardoso, Brasilia, Brazil**

**Salutation : Vossa Excelência / Your Excellency**

Governor of Rio de Janeiro

Exmo Sr Governador do Estado do Rio de Janeiro  
Sr Marcelo Alencar  
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22.231 Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil

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**Telegrams: Governador Rio de Janeiro, Brasil**

**Salutation: Vossa Excelência/ Your Excellency/Su Excelencia**

State Secretary for Public Security

Exmo Sr. Secretário de Segurança Pública  
do Estado de Rio de Janeiro  
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**Salutation: Sr Secretário / Mr Secretary**

**COPIES TO:**

Attorney General

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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 13 December 1995.