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## **PUBLIC STATEMENT**

### **Amnesty International pays tribute to "Padre Chico"**

Amnesty International today paid tribute to the life of Father Francisco Reardon, Coordinator of Brazil's Bishops' Council's Prison Ministry [pastoral Carceraria da CNBB], and tireless campaigner for prisoners' basic human rights.

The US-born priest -- known in his adopted Brazil as "Padre Chico" -- died of a heart attack on 19 November 1999, aged 59.

"Padre Chico's death is a shock and a great loss," said Javier Zuñiga, Director of Amnesty International's Americas Regional Program. "His energy, compassion and generosity of spirit have been an inspiration to us. Above all, we will remember his profound sense of human dignity."

Padre Chico, a key figure in Brazilian human rights, collaborated closely with Amnesty International in a current campaign highlighting the sub-human conditions in Brazil's prisons and police stations. He also campaigned for prisoners' rights worldwide, and had just returned from a conference in Mexico, where he had been elected vice-president of Latin-America's Catholic Church's Prison Ministry.

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**For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on 44 171 413 5566 or visit our website at <http://www.amnesty.org>**