

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 112/93      Fear for Safety

15 April 1993

BRAZIL:      Reinaldo CABRAL (journalist)

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Amnesty International is concerned for the physical safety of Reinaldo Cabral, a journalist in Maceió, Alagoas, Brazil, following his publication of an article denouncing police violence in the state.

Following the killing on 14 March 1993 of local councillor Renildo José dos Santos (see UA 78/93, AMR 19/07/93, 22 March 1993), Reinaldo Cabral, correspondent in Alagoas for the Rio de Janeiro newspaper Jornal do Brasil, published an article denouncing police violence in the state. Headed "MP [i.e. Military Police] leads violence in Alagoas", "*PM lidera a violência em Alagoas*", the article, published on 23 March, accused the state Military Police of being responsible for most of the 600 homicides recorded in Alagoas over the previous two years. The report noted that there were currently 708 military police officers awaiting trial in the state military courts for homicide and other related crimes. The report alleged that, within the last 15 months, 180 people had been killed or were under death threats in rural areas and that several gunmen, *pistoleiros*, had been identified as police officers. The report accused the commander of the state military police of protecting military police officers believed to be responsible for the murder of a civil police chief, *delegado*, in October 1991. The article quoted the state secretary for public security as advising two relatives of murdered councillor Renildo dos Santos, themselves under death threats, "to leave the municipality immediately, because only God could guarantee their safety", "*Deixen imediatamente o município porque vida só quem garante é Deus*".

In a radio interview that followed the publication of the report the commander of the state military police verbally attacked Reinaldo Cabral. He said that Cabral was slandering Alagoas and that he would like to see him outside the state boundaries. In the early hours of the morning of 8 April two unknown persons entered the front garden of Reinaldo Cabral's home, and while one of them held a gun, the other poured petrol over Cabral's car and set it on fire. The two men fled after a neighbourhood security guard saw them jumping over Reinaldo Cabral's garden wall and blew a whistle to alert other security guards.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Alagoas, in North East Brazil has a tradition of political violence. One of the poorest states of Brazil, politics and society in Alagoas are dominated by large landowners, *coroneis*, and their accomplices who often resort to violence against anybody who challenges their interests. Police officers have frequently been accused of carrying out the killings. On 14 March 1993 Renildo José dos Santos, a homosexual local councillor from Coqueiro Seco was violently abducted from his home by three heavily armed men who were later reportedly

identified as members of the state military police. José Renildo dos Santos' headless body was found two days later in an area of waste ground bearing marks of torture.

Page 2 of UA 112/93

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

- requesting that the invasion of Reinaldo Cabral's home and the attempt to set his car on fire be properly investigated and the culprits brought to justice;

-requesting that all necessary steps be taken to protect the physical safety of Reinaldo Cabral.

**APPEALS TO**

1) Minister of Justice

Exmo Sr Mauricio Corrêa

Ministro da Justiça

Esplanada dos Ministérios

Bloco 23

70.064 Brasilia DF, Brazil.

**Telegrams: Ministro da Justiça, Brasilia, Brazil**

**Faxes: +55 61 224 4357**

**Telexes: 611003 MNJU BR, 611088 MNJU BR**

**Salutation: Vossa Excelência/Your Excellency**

2) State Governor of Alagoas

Exmo. Sr. Governador do Estado de Alagoas

Sr. Geraldo Bulhões

Palácio Marechal Floriano s/n

47.000 Maceió - AL

Brasil

**Telegrams: Sr. Governador Alagoas, Maceió - AL, Brasil**

**Faxes: +55 82 221 7484**

**Salutation: Exmo. Sr. Governador / Your Excellency**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Newspapers:

Jornal de Alagoas

Rua Cons. Lourenço de Albuquerque 1115

57.000 Maceió -AL

Brasil

Newspaper

Jornal do Brasil

Av. Brasil 500  
20.940 Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil

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 26 May 1993.