

PUBLIC

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UA 306/08 Fear for safety

BRAZIL **Katia Camargo (f)**
Her two children, aged 11 and 15

Investigative journalist Luiz Carlos Barbon, who had reported on official corruption, was murdered in May 2007. Local military police officers have been arrested, and are awaiting trial for his murder. His wife, Katia Camargo, is being threatened by people linked to her husband's killers, some of whom are still at liberty. She and her children are in grave danger.

Luiz Carlos Barbon wrote for local newspaper *Jornal do Porto* in the town of Porto Ferreira, in the state of São Paulo. He had investigated numerous cases of corruption and crime involving state officials, including police involvement in gangs stealing freight from trucks on the highway. He also uncovered a child prostitution ring run by Porto Ferreira town councillors and businessmen.

Four military police officers, including a captain, are in custody awaiting trial for his murder, along with a local businessman. However, Katia Camargo has been followed in the street by men she recognised as off-duty police officers, and cars and motorcycles are regularly driven round her house, which is in a very quiet part of town. In May she was nearly run over by a woman she recognised as the wife of one of the detained police officers.

She recently saw one police officer, who had been moved to another town after the investigation into the murder, standing outside a bar pointing and looking at her in a menacing way. Shots were fired outside her lawyer's offices during October. Katia Camargo has not reported any of this to the police, for fear of provoking further attacks.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Brazilian journalists, especially those who report on official corruption or criminal activity, face threats and attacks, sometimes lethal. Freelance journalist Ajuricaba Monassa de Paula, who had been reporting on financial irregularities by the municipal government, was beaten to death by a town councillor in Guapiririm, Rio de Janeiro state on 24 July 2006.

In May 2008, gangs controlling the Batan *favela* in the Rio district of Realengo, abducted and tortured three reporters from the newspaper *O Dia*. These gangs are made up of police officers, firemen, prison guards and soldiers. They dominate poor communities with violence, extorting money from residents.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Portuguese or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Katia Carmago and her two children, and urging the authorities to take immediate action to give them protection, in accordance with Katia Carmago's wishes;
- asking them to investigate the threats and intimidation that Katia Carmago has suffered, and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to publicly recognise the importance of the work of journalists, and to work with media organizations and journalists' unions to implement measures to protect journalists from corrupt state officials and gangs.

APPEALS TO:

State Secretary of Public Security

Exmo. Secretário de Segurança Pública do Estado de São Paulo
Sr. Ronaldo Augusto Bretas Marzagão, Rua Líbero Badaró, 39, 12º Andar
01009-000 - São Paulo – SP, Brazil

Fax: + 55 11 3291 6834

Salutation: Vossa Excelência

State Public Prosecutor

Exmo. Procurador-Geral de Justiça do Estado de São Paulo
Dr. Fernando Grella Vieira
Ministério Público do Estado de São Paulo - Procuradoria Geral de Justiça
Rua Riachuelo, nº. 115, Centro, São Paulo/SP - Brazil - CEP- 01007-904, Brazil

Fax: + 55 11 3372 6403

Salutation: Vossa Excelência

Federal Human Rights Secretary

Exmo. Ministro da Secretaria Especial de Direitos Humanos
Sr. Paulo Vannuchi, Esplanada dos Ministérios, Bloco T
70064-900 - Brasília – DF, Brazil

Fax: + 55 61 3226 7980

Salutation: Vossa Excelência

COPIES TO:

State council for the defence of human rights

Conselho Estadual de Defesa dos Direitos da Pessoa Humana
Pátio do Colégio, 148 / 184 - Centro
CEP: 01016-040 - São Paulo, SP, 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 17 December 2008.