

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Please bring this action to the attention of the person responsible for outreach work in your section to encourage appeals from youth or children's groups

UA 241/93 Extrajudicial Execution/Fear for safety

26 July 1993

BRAZIL: Street children in Brazil's main cities including:
Paulo Roberto DE OLIVEIRA (aged 11)
Marcelo Candido DE JESUS (aged 14)
and at least five others killed in Rio de Janeiro

Amnesty International is deeply concerned for the safety of street children in Brazil's main cities following the killing of at least seven street children and the wounding of another one in the early hours of 23 July 1993. The circumstances of their killing in downtown Rio de Janeiro suggest that they were extrajudicially executed.

According to the information received by Amnesty International, Paulo Roberto de Oliveira and Marcelo Candido de Jesus were part of a large group of about 50 street children sleeping rough beside Candelaria Church in the heart of Rio de Janeiro when a group of gunmen, some of them hooded, opened fire on them. Four boys died instantly and a fifth was shot and killed as he ran from in front of the church. Two more boys were shot in the nearby gardens of the Museum of Modern Art. An eighth teenager is in a coma in hospital and a young adult was critically wounded in the same incident. Other children are reported to have also been wounded.

According to reports, survivors of the massacre alleged that the gunmen identified themselves as members of the police. It is also reported that the day before the killing one youth was detained for glue sniffing and in response the children had stoned a military police car, injuring a police officer. The children alleged that they were threatened by the military police officers.

Immediately after receiving news of these killings, Amnesty International wrote to the Minister of Justice and the Governor of Rio de Janeiro requesting that all necessary steps be taken to investigate the killings and bring those responsible to justice, and urging the authorities to provide all necessary safeguards to protect the life and physical integrity of all witnesses of the crime and the street children of Rio de Janeiro. In reply, the acting Minister of External Relations expressed President Itamar Franco's repudiation of the crime and the President's determination that the Minister of Justice should use all available means to make sure that the perpetrators are brought to justice. Four military police officers have been arrested after being identified by one of the survivors of the killings.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to the Federal Police 4,611 children and adolescents were killed between 1988

and 1990 in Brazil's main cities. It is reported that during the first half of this year, 320 children were killed in Rio de Janeiro alone. A report published in February 1992 by a Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry of the Federal Chamber of Deputies stated that the involvement of civil and military police in the killing of children and adolescents was "far from exceptional" and that police killings was the third largest cause of the murder of children and adolescents.

Extrajudicial executions of adults as well as children are carried out by "death squads" or vigilante groups. These are often composed of off-duty police officers who are funded by local businessmen allegedly to "clean up" their neighbourhoods of social undesirables, robbers and petty thieves, and street children who may themselves have been drawn into crime.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters in Portuguese, English or your own language:

- expressing concern at the killing of seven street children and the wounding of several others in Rio de Janeiro on 23 July 1993;
- requesting that, in accordance with the assurances made by President Itamar Franco, a prompt and thorough investigation into all the circumstances of the killings is conducted and that those responsible are brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to provide all necessary safeguards to protect the life and physical integrity of all witnesses of these killings and the street children of Rio de Janeiro;
- requesting that specific measures be taken to ensure the physical safety of street children in Brazil's main cities and to end the impunity enjoyed by most perpetrators of grave human rights abuses against street children.

APPEALS TO:

1) Minister of Justice:

Exmo Sr Mauricio Correa
Ministro da Justiça
Esplanada dos Ministerios, Bloco 23
70.064 Brasilia, D.F. Brazil

**Salutation: Vossa Excelência /
Your Excellency**

Telegrams: Ministro Justiça, Brasilia, Brazil
Telexes: 611003 MNJU BR, 611088 MNJU BR or 612313 MNJU BR
Faxes: + 55 61 321 5145, + 55 61 224 2448

2) State Governor:

Exmo Sr Governador do Estado
de Rio de Janeiro
Sr Leonel Brizola
Palacio Guanabara
Rua Pinheiro Machado s/n
22.231 Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

**Salutation: Vossa Excelência /
Your Excellency**

Telegrams: Governador Estado Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Telexes: 2131111 GERJ BR; 2123437 SGRJ BR; 2121272 PLG BR
Faxes: + 55 21 552 8743, + 55 21 552 8390

3) State Secretary of Justice:

Sr Secretario de Estado de Justiça do
Estado de Rio de Janeiro
Dr Nilo Batista
Rua da Relação No 42, 12 Andar
Centro
20031 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

**Salutation: Vossa Excelência /
Your Excellency**

Telegrams: Secretario de Justiça Estado Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Faxes: + 55 21 240 9159

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Centre for the Mobilization of Marginalized Populations:

Centro de Articulação de Populações Marginalizadas
Rua da Lapa N 200, Sala 809
Centro
Rio de Janeiro
CEP 20021
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 6 September 1993.