

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 317/92

Death Threats

14 October 1992

BRAZIL:

Carlos CABRAL PEREIRA (Trade Union Leader)

Roberto NETO DA SILVA (Trade Union Leader)

Orlando CANUTO (Trade Union Leader)

Sebastião VIEIRA (Local Councillor)

Amnesty International is concerned about reports that on 15 October 1992 Federal Police protection will be withdrawn from Carlos Cabral Pereira, president of the Rural Union Workers of Rio Maria, Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Rio Maria, Roberto Neto da Silva and Orlando Canuto, members of the Executive of the same union and Sebastião Vieira, a local councillor.

Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed its concern for the safety of the above-mentioned union leaders, who have been receiving repeated death threats (see UA 65/91, AMR 19/06/92 of 22 February 1991, and follow-ups AMR 19/08/91 of 8 March 1991, AMR 19/24/91 of 9 September 1991, AMR 19/27/91 of 8 October 1991, and AMR 19/32/91 of 25 November 1991). The organization's concern for their safety followed the assassination on 2 February 1991 of Expedito Ribeiro de Souza, president of the Rural Workers Union of Rio Maria. Three men were arrested for his killing. One of them, the person who allegedly ordered the crime, was later freed on bail.

Expedito Ribeiro de Souza was the fourth leader of the Rio Maria Union to be murdered since 1985. Among the murdered are the father and two brothers of Orlando Canuto, who was also wounded in the same attempt in which his brothers were killed. On 4 March 1991 Carlos Cabral Pereira and Roberto Neto da Silva were fired at by a gunman from outside the local cemetery wall. Carlos Cabral Pereira was wounded in the back (see AMR 19/08/91 of 8 March 1991). One person was charged with attempted murder but has been subsequently freed on bail awaiting trial.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Members and leaders of rural trade unions representing peasants and their families in Southern Pará have been the targets of death threats, assaults, abductions and killings often in the context of land disputes. While Amnesty International takes no position on competing claims in land disputes, it is concerned that gunmen allegedly acting on behalf of landowners have carried out intimidation and killings of peasants, their leaders and advisers with a high degree of impunity. Amnesty International considers that the persistent failure to prosecute the perpetrators of such abuses may be evidence of acquiescence in the crimes by state authorities concerned, and may encourage them to be repeated.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Carlos Cabral Pereira, Roberto Neto da Silva, Orlando Canuto and Sebastião Vieira, who have been receiving repeated death threats;

- requesting that the special police protection which has been provided for them be continued in view of the continuing threat against their physical safety.

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APPEALS TO:

1) Minister of Justice:

Sr Ministro de Justiça
Mauricio Correia
Ministério da Justiça
Esplanada dos Ministérios
Bloco 23
70.064 Brasília, DF
BRASIL

**Salutation: Vossa Excelência /
Your Excellency**

Telegrams: Ministro Justiça, Brasília, Brasil
Telexes: 611003 MNJU BR: 611088 MNJU BR;
Faxes: +55 61 2244357

2) Director General Federal Police:

Sr Romeo Tuma
Diretor Geral Departamento da Polícia Federal
SAS Q6, Lotes 9 e 10, ED. Sede DPF
70.070 Brasília DF
Brasil

**Salutation: Sr. Diretor /
Dear Sir**

Telegrams: Director Geral Policia Federal, Brasília, Brasil
Telexes: 611461 DPFE BR

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Parish of Father Rezende:

Father Ricardo Rezende
Parroquia Nossa Senhora da Aparecida
Av 04 No 357 Caixa Postal 07
68530 Rio Maria, PA,
Brasil

2) Attorney General's Office:

Procuradoria Geral da República
Av. L2 Sul Q 603
70.200 Brasília DF
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 25 November 1992.