

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Threats

21 November 1990

**BRAZIL:Osmarino Amâncio Rodrigues
+ other rubbertappers' trade union leaders**

Amnesty International continues to be concerned for the safety of rubbertappers' trade union leaders in the state of Acre, among them Osmarino Amâncio Rodrigues, President of the Rural Workers Trade Union of Brasiléia.

On 4 and 5 November 1990, anonymous letters threatening the lives of Osmarino Amâncio Rodrigues and three other rubbertappers, Jose Pereira da Silva, Abraão dos Santos Cardoso and Amarildo Simedon, reportedly arrived at their homes and at the headquarters of the National Rubbertappers Council. "I am contracted to kill four of you," the notes said, "you won't make it to 1991."

Osmarino Amâncio Rodrigues has reported receiving death threats for more than a year (see UA 66/89, AMR 19/03/89, 3 March, and follow-ups AMR 19/10/89, 13 April, and AMR 19/14/89, 6 June 1989 and UA 218/90, AMR 19/15/90, 25 May 1990). He is accompanied by three bodyguards whose expenses he pays himself; in mid-1989, after similar threats were divulged, state authorities refused to pay daily costs of police guards assigned to protect him.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The trial of the accused assassins of rubbertapper leader Chico Mendes is scheduled to begin on 12 December 1990. The pattern of threats to Osmarino Amâncio Rodrigues is similar to that experienced by Chico Mendes in the months before his assassination. Tension in the area of Xapuri, where the trial will take place, is said to be increasing, with landowners allegedly hiring gunmen to kill Chico Mendes's successors. As secretary of the National Rubbertappers Council and president of the Rural Workers Union of Brasiléia, Osmarino Amâncio Rodrigues is thought to be one of several targets for assassination. Amnesty International reported in May 1990 that he and some 25 others are alleged to be on a "death list" drawn up by landowners.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Courteously worded telegrams/telexes/airmail letters:

- seeking assurances for the safety of rubbertapper trade-union leaders in Acre, including Osmarino Amâncio Rodrigues;
- seeking information about the progress of investigations into threats against Osmarino Amâncio Rodrigues and assassinations of other rubbertapper leaders, including Wilson Pinheiro (1980) and Ivair Higino (1988).

APPEALS TO:**Head of Federal Police:**

Sr Romeu Tuma
 Director Geral
 Departamento de Policia Federal
 SAS 06, Lotes 9 e 10, Ed. Sede DPF
 70.070 Brasilia DF, Brasil

Telegrams: Diretor Geral Policia Federal, Brasilia, Brazil

Telexes: 611461 DPFE BR

Secretary of Public Security:

Secretário de Segurança Pública
 Estado do Acre
 Dr. Carlos Alberto da Silva
 Av. Getúlio Vargas

Palácio da Secretarias, Subsolo
 69.900, Rio Branco, AC, Brasil

Telegrams: Secretario Seguranca Publica, Rio Branco, Brazil

Telexes: 682591 SSPA BR

Minister of Justice:

Exmo Sr Jarbas Passarinho
 Ministro da Justiça
 Ministerio da Justiça
 Esplanada dos Ministérios
 Bloco 23
 70064 Brasilia DF, Brasil

Telegrams: Ministro Justica, Brasilia, Brazil

Telexes: 611003 MNJU BR, 611088 MNJU BR or 612313 MNJU BR

Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Exmo. Sr. Ministro das Relações Exteriores
 Sr. Francisco Rezek
 Ministério das Relações Exteriores
 Palácio do Itamaraty
 Esplanada dos Ministérios
 70.170 Brasilia DF, Brasil

Telegrams: Ministro Relacoes Exteriores, Brasilia, Brazil

COPIES TO:**Rural Workers Union:**

Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais de Brasília
 Caixa Postal 11
 Avenida Santos Dumond s/n
 69.930 Braliléia, Acre, Brasil

National Council of Rubbertappers:

Conselho Nacional dos Seringueiros
 Rua Alexandre Farhat, 206
 Barrio Jose Augusto
 69.000 Rio Branco, AC, Brasil

and to diplomatic representatives of BRAZIL in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 January 1991.