
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 105/94

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - BRAZIL

PLEASE NOTE: The enclosed item on Brazil was sent to the media in Brazil on 20 May.

PLEASE NOTE: CORRECTION - The title of the Spanish translation of the Colombia item sent out in News Service 103/94 should read COLOMBIA: AMNISTÍA INTERNACIONAL CONDENA EL HOMICIDIO DELIBERADO Y ARBITRARIO DE UN PRISIONERO...

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

China - 1 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

Turkey - 30 June - News item on torture, deaths in custody, "disappearances" and political killings and calling on CSCE to send special mission to Turkey.

Pakistan - 27 July - PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Guatemala - 25 May - SEE NEWS SERVICE 99/94

MOROCCO - 30 MAY - Report and news service on hundreds still in detention after a year of promises by the government.

Austria - 7 June - Report and News Service on the ill-treatment of foreigners. The report will be going out in the Weekly Mailing of 25 May.

Denmark - 15 June - Report and news service item on ill-treatment. The document will be mailed out by swiftair end next week.

Myanmar - 20 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 99/94

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Annual Report - 7 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 51/94

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20 May 1994

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR PROTECTION FOR CHILD WITNESSES IN BRAZILIAN CANDELARIA MASSACRE

Amnesty International today asked Brazilian authorities to provide urgent protection and safe accommodation for child and young adult witnesses to last year's 'Candelária Massacre', some of whom are taking part in identification procedures at a Rio de Janeiro police station on Monday (23 May). They will be asked to identify a fourth military police suspect who has recently been detained in connection with the July 1993 killings.

"Given the importance of the case, it is quite astounding that immediate action has not been taken to ensure the safety of the witnesses in question" said Amnesty International. Since July 1993 the organization has repeatedly raised the question of the witnesses' safety with the authorities and called for safe accommodation appropriate to the special needs of street children.

In letters to the Governor and Mayor of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's Attorney General and the Attorney General for the State of Rio de Janeiro, Amnesty International sought protection for ten witnesses aged from 13 to 22 who took part in previous court proceedings and face-to-face identifications of three military police standing trial for the killings. These identifications took place without a protective screen in open court attended by military police colleagues of those accused. The organization also submitted for the second time a list of a further 54 children and young adults who were present in the Candelária square at the time of the killings, or were in some way connected to it, whose physical integrity and lives are also believed to be at risk, while many of them remain sleeping on the streets.

Although the ten court witnesses were offered temporary protection in an adult 'Witnesses Safe House' according to Amnesty International "it is our understanding that at the present date the witnesses are no longer in the Witnesses House, nor is any other form of state accommodation or protection currently being given to them. Indeed it is our understanding that at least three of the court witnesses (one aged 13) are actually sleeping on the streets. Several of these witnesses have received bomb and death threats allegedly from members of the military police in connection with the massacre."

On 23 July 1993 seven street children were killed when gunmen fired into a crowd of over 50 children sleeping rough outside the Candelária church in downtown Rio de Janeiro. A seventh youth later died of his injuries. The killings, which have become known as the 'Candelária Massacre', sparked a national and international outcry.