

PUBLIC

**AI Index: AMR 19/007/2008
12 May 2008**

Further Information on UA 270/07 (AMR 19/018/2007, 23 October 2007) Fear for safety

BRAZIL

Around 50 Guajajara indigenous families

Killed:

M.S. (f) 6 years old

Around 50 Guajajara indigenous families, in the remote Araribóia reservation in the central west of Maranhão state, are at risk of attack from local gunmen allegedly contracted by illegal loggers and the local population who oppose to the indigenous presence.

On 5 May, two armed men on a motorbike invaded the Anajá village. They shot in the direction of a family. In the commotion, a six-year-old girl, M.S. was hit in the head and died instantly. According to the Guajaras, the gunmen were among the same ones who had killed Tomé Guajajara and wounded two other indigenous men on 15 October 2007, when the reservation was invaded by 15 gunmen.

According to a local NGO, the Conselho Indigenista Missionário, (Indigenous Missionary Council, CIMI), the Federal Police is investigating the six-year-old girl's murder. However, no one has been charged with the murder of Tomé Guajajara. The Guajaras do not believe in the judicial system and do not denounce crimes fearing retaliation, as no measures have been taken to protect the community. According to the Guajajara, "Killing Indians around here is the same as killing dogs, because nothing is done about it" ["matar índios por aqui é igual matar um cachorro, pois não acontece nada"].

Attacks on the community are common and many indigenous families have fled from areas near the road that borders the reservation in order to be close to the centre where they are less likely to be targeted by people shooting from cars or motorbikes.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The reservation of Araribóia, one of the oldest indigenous reservations in Brazil, covers an area of 413 thousand hectares across six municipalities of Maranhão state. Since the beginning of the 1980s, the region has been subject to repeated incursions from illegal loggers. The invasions have created violent conflict with indigenous peoples and widespread environmental damage, including deforestation, forest fires and water drainage. Ninety per cent of Guajajara land is now affected by logging, hunting and land invasions, threatening indigenous livelihoods. With little to no state presence, the loggers have been free to act with impunity, buying off some of the indigenous people to divide communities. The Guajajara have been campaigning to for the redefinition of their lands, the protection of the reservation's borders and the expulsion of illegal settlers.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Guajajara families in the Anajá village in Maranhão state who are under threat of imminent violence;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee the security of these families, according to their wishes;
- urging that the killings of M.S. and Tomé Guajajara and the threats against the Guajajara be fully and transparently investigated and those responsible for carrying out or ordering these attacks be brought to justice;
- expressing your concern at the continuing pattern of harassment and intimidation and land degradation by illegal loggers;
- urging the authorities to fulfil their constitutional and international obligations to maintain the integrity of the Araribóia reservation, expelling illegal settlers and preventing further land degradation.
- requesting a state presence and the provision of basic services for the Guajajara and other indigenous groups, to make their lives on the reservation viable.

APPEALS TO:

President of FUNAI (Government Agency for Indigenous People)

Exmo. Sr. Presidente Márcio Meira
SEPS Quadra 902/702 - Bloco. A
Ed. Lex - 3º Andar
70340-904 - Brasília – DF, Brasil
Fax: + 55 61 3226 8782
Salutation: Exmo. Sr Presidente

Governor of Maranhão State

Exmo. Sr. Jackson Lago
Palácio dos Leões,
Avenida Pedro Segundo,
s/n Centro 65010-904
São Luís /MA
Salutation: Exmo. Sr. Governador

COPIES TO:

Federal Human Rights Secretary

Secretaria Especial de Direitos Humanos
Exmo. Secretário Especial
Sr. Paulo de Tarso Vannuchi
Esplanada dos Ministérios - Bloco "T" - 4º andar, 70.064-900 - Brasília/DF –
Brasil
Fax: + 55 61 3226 7980

Local NGO

Conselho Indigenista Missionário, (CIMI)
Rosimeire de Jesus Diniz Santos
Rua do Pespontão, 99 - Centro
São Luis - MA - CEP 65010-460

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 23 June 2008.