

PUBLIC

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Death Threats/fear for safety

30 June 2000

BRAZIL

Dionísio Vendresen, age 50, human rights defender
Other members of the Land Pastoral Comission- Parana

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Dionisio Vandresen, Regional Coordinator of the *Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT)*, Pastoral Land Commission, in Curitiba, Paraná State.

On 28 June 2000, a female staff member at the Guarapuava Pastoral Land Commission in Paraná State took an anonymous collect phone call in the office: "*Desta vez te pegamos! Você a um filho da puta*", "This time we'll get you, you are a son of a bitch". The anonymous caller said "*filho*" (masculine) rather than "*filha*", indicating that a man was the target of the death threat.

The Pastoral Land Commission believes that the threat was directed at Dionisio Vandresen who has received death threats on other occasions. A similar phone call, also collect, was made on 26 April 2000: "*[você] se esta metendo em tudo*", "you are getting involved in everything".

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has been working in collaboration with CPT members for many years. The CPT have been tireless in their efforts to publicize high levels of violence perpetrated with total impunity. They have also supported many victims, and relatives of victims, through legal procedures that can last many years. Dedicated work by Amnesty International members has helped the CPT to maintain pressure on both the Federal and State authorities to investigate the violence perpetrated in the region and bring those responsible to trial.

Human rights defenders in Brazil are frequently harassed, intimidated and threatened.

In June 1999, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States adopted a resolution stating their intention to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which the UN passed on 9 December 1998. The UN agreed to "recognize and support the work carried out by Human Rights Defenders and their valuable contribution to the promotion, observance, and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms in the Americas". The resolution called on state members to provide "Human Rights Defenders with the necessary guarantees and facilities to continue freely carrying out their work of promoting and protecting human rights", as well as to adopt "the necessary steps to guarantee their life, liberty, and integrity".

If the Brazilian authorities are serious about allowing human rights defenders to carry out their work, they must abide by the letter and spirit of international human rights standards. By doing so they would be sending a clear signal that intimidation of human rights defenders will not be tolerated.

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

- calling for an immediate investigation into the alleged death threats;
- reminding the federal authorities of their duty to ensure that human rights violations are investigated and punished, wherever they occur in Brazil;
- urging the Brazilian government to adhere to its obligations regarding human rights defenders, as laid out in the *UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* adopted on 9 December 1998, and the *Organization of American States Human Rights Defenders in the Americas* resolution adopted on 7 June 1999 [AG/RES. 1671 (XXIX-O/99)].

APPEALS TO:

Governor Paraná State

Exmo. Sr. Governador do
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Sr. Jaime Lerner
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Salutation: Vossa Excelência/Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

Exmo. Sr. Ministro da Justiça
do Brasil
Dr. José Gregori
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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 11 August 2000.