

**PUBLIC**

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**05 March 2007**

**Further Information on UA 42/07 (AMR 19/005/2007, 16 February 2007) Starvation/Health concern**

**BRAZIL Scores of people from the Dourados Guarani Kaiowa indigenous community**

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Federal authorities in Mato Grosso do Sul state, western Brazil, have resumed the distribution of emergency food baskets to a number of Indigenous communities. However, a third child has reportedly died of malnutrition. Amnesty International is concerned that members of the Dourados Guarani Kaiowa indigenous community may still face starvation.

On 25 February, Cleison Benites Lopes, a 10-month-old boy from Bororó village on the Dourados Indigenous reservation, reportedly died of severe malnutrition, hours after being taken to the village health clinic. Staff at the clinic had allegedly given him vitamins and sent him home.

Amnesty International has also received unconfirmed reports that state and federal governments have now agreed to distribute food parcels jointly. This followed the decision taken by the state government when they took office in January to stop large parts of its spending on social welfare.

Furthermore, there appears to still be a lack of coordination between agencies responsible for the welfare of the Dourados Indigenous reservation to find long-term solutions to malnutrition, poverty and overcrowding in the Dourados Guarani Kaiowa Indigenous community. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the situation.

A doctor working for FUNASA (*Fundação Nacional de Saúde*, the National Health Foundation) – the federal agency which deals with indigenous health issues, stated that although overall health of Indigenous children has improved since 2003, 8 percent of children on the Dourados reservation remain at risk of malnutrition. According to reports, 20 children remain at serious risk of severe malnutrition.

Child malnutrition can have long term health consequences, even where it does not result in death, and as such the removal of these emergency food baskets could violate the right of those affected to the highest attainable standard of health.

Subsistence agriculture has provided insufficient supplies of food for the Dourados Guarani Kaiowa indigenous community on the reservation, which is reportedly the most densely populated Indigenous reservation in Brazil. The slowness of the process to transfer ancestral lands back to the Indigenous communities continues to be the root cause of the social and economic deprivation of these communities. The swift resolution the Guarani's claim to their ancestral lands, allowing them to grow their own food, will be the only sustainable way of tackling the starvation and poverty which is devastating their community.

Amnesty International has been informed that an "integrated plan of action" was presented to the federal government in October to address the plight of the Guarani Kaiowa. However, the plan remains unimplemented at this time.

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

- welcoming the resumption of the distribution of emergency food baskets to a number of Indigenous communities in Mato Grosso do Sul state, and the steps taken to guarantee the distribution of food parcels jointly by federal and state authorities;
- expressing concern at the news that another child from the Dourados Indigenous reservation has reportedly died as a result of severe malnutrition;
- urging the state and federal authorities to keep you informed of their efforts to ensure the distribution of food baskets and health provisions to the Indigenous families, and of the steps being taken to ensure long-term solutions to their plight;
- calling on the authorities to fulfil their constitutional and international obligations to resolve all outstanding indigenous land claims in Brazil, and to urgently implement an "integrated plan of action" to address poverty and overcrowding in the Dourados Indigenous reservation.

**APPEALS TO:**

Governor of Mato Grosso do Sul State

Exmo Governador do Estado do Mato Grosso do Sul  
Sr. André Puccinelli

Parque dos Poderes, Bloco 08  
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**Salutation: Vossa Excelência/ Your Excellency**

Minister of Justice

Exmo Ministro da Justiça

Sr. Márcio Thomaz Bastos

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**Salutation: Vossa Excelência/ Your Excellency**

Minister for social development and combating hunger

Exmo Sr Ministro do Desenvolvimento Social e Combate à Fome

Sr Patrus Ananias de Sousa

Esplanada dos Ministérios, Bloco "C" 5º andar

70046-900 - Brasília/DF– Brasil

**Fax: + 55 61 34331025**

**Salutation: Vossa Excelência/ Your Excellency**

President of FUNASA (Federal agency dealing with Indigenous health issues)

Dr Paulo de Tarso Lustosa da Costa

Funasa Sede – Presidência

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**Salutation: Exmo. Sr Dr**

**COPIES TO:**

Federal Human Rights Secretary

Secretaria Especial de Direitos Humanos

Exmo. Secretário Especial

Sr. Paulo de Tarso Vannuchi

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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 16 April 2007.