

# URGENT ACTION

## TWENTY-SIX KILLED AFTER PRISON RIOTS SPREAD

**Twenty-six men were killed and nine others severely injured in Alcaçuz prison in Rio Grande do Norte state, following the spread of riots and conflicts between criminal gangs in northern Brazilian prisons. Authorities must immediately investigate the killings and implement measures to prevent further possible riots and killings in the prison system.**

Between 14-15 January, **26 men were killed** and another **nine severely injured** during a riot and conflicts between criminal gangs in Alcaçuz prison in the city of Nisia Floresta, Rio Grande do Norte state in northeast Brazil. All those killed were prisoners in Alcaçuz. The vast majority were beheaded, some were quartered and others burned to death. Part of the prison facilities was destroyed during the riot, which lasted for over 14 hours. Over 8,000 people are imprisoned in Rio Grande do Norte state, while its prison system only has the capacity for 3,500. In March 2015, the state government had declared a "state of calamity" in its prison system due to the number of riots that had taken place.

This follows the murder of over 90 men in early January in prisons in Amazonas and Roraima states, northern Brazil, also as a result of riots and conflicts between criminal gangs. Between 1-2 January, 56 male prisoners were killed in Anísio Jobim prison in Manaus, Amazonas state, during a riot that lasted 16 hours. On 2 January, four men were killed in Puraquequara prison, also in Manaus. Due to lack of security and destruction of facilities, some prisoners from Anísio Jobim were taken to Vidal Jobim prison, which had been closed in 2016 due to inadequate conditions, and on 8 January, four men were killed there. Also on 8 January, three bodies were found in the woods surrounding Anísio Jobim. On 6 January, at least 31 men were killed in Monte Cristo prison in Boa Vista, Roraima state. The National Justice Council has criticized the severe overcrowding and poor conditions in Anísio Jobim and Monte Cristo prisons. The National Mechanism on the Prevention of Torture has denounced the inhuman conditions of Amazonas' prison system in particular, and called on the authorities to take urgent action. The situation in Amazonas, Roraima and Rio Grande do Norte state prisons remains unstable. The authorities must adopt immediate measures to address tensions in prisons due to overcrowding and poor conditions and ensure that conflicts between nationally-operating criminal gangs do not lead to further riots and killings.

### **Please write immediately in English, Portuguese or your own language:**

- Urging the authorities to ensure prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into the killings of 26 men in Alcaçuz prison, Rio Grande do Norte state, as well as the killings in prisons in Amazonas and Roraima states, and to bring all those suspected of criminal responsibility to justice in fair trials;
- Urging them to adopt immediate measures to prevent other possible imminent riots and killings in the prison system;
- Calling on them to implement the recommendations made by the National Mechanism on the Prevention of Torture and the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture in its report on its mission to Brazil.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 FEBRUARY 2017 TO:**

#### Minister of Justice

Alexandre de Moraes  
Esplanada dos Ministérios, Bloco T,  
Palácio da Justiça, edifício sede, 4º  
andar, Brasília, DF  
CEP: 70064-900, Brazil  
Twitter: @JusticaGovBR  
Facebook: JusticaGovBr  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

#### President of the National Justice Council

Carmem Lúcia Antunes Rocha  
Federal, 2º Andar, Gabinete da  
Presidência, Sala B219. Praça dos Três  
Poderes, s/nº, Brasília, DF  
Email: presidencia@cnj.jus.br  
Twitter: @CNJ\_oficial  
Facebook: cnj.oficial  
**Salutation: Dear President of CNJ**

#### **And copies to:**

Pastoral Carcerária (Church Prison  
Commission)  
Pe. Valdir João Silveira  
Praça Clovis Bevilácqua, 351, conj. 501,  
Centro, São Paulo, SP  
CEP 01018-001, Brazil

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** HIS EXCELLENCY MR ROBERTO JAGUARIBE GOMES DE MATTOS, Embassy of Brazil, 14/16 Cockspur Street SW1Y5BL, 020 7747 4500, [info.london@itamaraty.gov.br](mailto:info.london@itamaraty.gov.br) twitter: @BrazilEmbassyUK, [www.brazil.org.uk](http://www.brazil.org.uk). Salutation; Your Excellency **Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.** This is the first update of UA 6/17. Further information: [www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr19/5444/2017/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr19/5444/2017/en/)

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to the Ministry of Justice, by the end of 2015 the national prison system held more than 620,000 people, although the overall capacity was around 370,000 people. Severe overcrowding, degrading conditions, torture and violence are a pattern in Brazilian prisons. However, the authorities have taken no concrete measures in the past years to overcome serious overcrowding and harsh conditions and to prevent lethal violence inside prisons.

In October 2016, 10 men were beheaded or burned alive in a prison in Roraima state and eight men died of asphyxiation in a cell during a prison fire in Rondônia state. In 2015, in Minas Gerais state, three detainees were killed during a prison revolt in the Teófilo Otoni facility in October and two in similar circumstances in Governador Valadares prison in June. In October 2015, there were disturbances in Londrina prison in the southern state of Paraná. Throughout 2013, 60 detainees were murdered in Pedrinhas prison in Maranhão state, and almost 20 were killed between January and October 2014. Videos of beheadings were broadcast in the media. One of the prisoners in Pedrinhas had been killed, grilled and partially eaten by other prisoners. In November 2010, a riot in Pedrinhas prison resulted in 18 people killed. In May 2004, 31 men (30 prisoners and one prison guard) were killed during a riot in the Benfica detention center in Rio de Janeiro. In January 2002, 27 men were killed in Urso Branco prison in Porto Velho, Rondônia. In October 1992, 111 men were killed by the military police in Carandiru prison in São Paulo after a major riot. Seventy-four police officers had been sentenced for the killing of 77 of the victims, but in 2016 the trial was declared null and void and the killings remain unpunished.

The chaotic conditions of Brazilian prisons have been denounced in the past years by the National Justice Council, the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture (see: [http://www.sdh.gov.br/sobre/participacao-social/sistema-nacional-de-prevencao-e-combate-a-tortura-snpct/mecanismo/Unidades\\_Prisionais\\_de\\_Manaus\\_\\_\\_AM.pdf](http://www.sdh.gov.br/sobre/participacao-social/sistema-nacional-de-prevencao-e-combate-a-tortura-snpct/mecanismo/Unidades_Prisionais_de_Manaus___AM.pdf)), the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and several national and international human rights organizations. In its mission report on Brazil (see: [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?m=103](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?m=103)), the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture called on the Brazilian authorities to adopt immediate measures to eliminate overcrowding and implement full observance of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), to expand the realization of custody hearings to cover national territory and to put in place effective complaint mechanisms for detainees to denounce torture and ill treatment.

Further information on UA: 6/17 Index: AMR 19/5508/2017 Issue Date: 16 January 2017