

# URGENT ACTION

## OVER 90 MEN KILLED IN BRAZILIAN PRISON RIOTS

**In the first week of January, over 90 men were killed (shot dead, beheaded or quartered) in prisons in Amazonas and Roraima states in northern Brazil, as a result of riots and conflicts between criminal gangs. Authorities must promptly investigate the killings and adopt measures within the prison system to prevent similar incidents.**

Between 1 and 2 January, 56 male prisoners were killed in Anísio Jobim prison in Manaus, Amazonas state, during a riot and conflict between criminal gangs. Some were killed by firearms, others were stabbed, beheaded, burned and quartered. The riot lasted around 16 hours and 12 people were made hostages, but were later released unharmed. Over 180 prisoners escaped during the riot, but by 8 January, less than half had been located and imprisoned by police. On 2 January, four men were killed in Puraquequara prison, also in Manaus. Due to lack of security and destruction of the 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 prison. Anísio Jobim is severely overcrowded, holding over 1,200 prisoners while only having capacity for 770. This is indicative of the prison system in Amazonas state, which has over 10,000 prisoners while its capacity is for 3,100. The National Justice Council and the National Mechanism on the Prevention of Torture have previously denounced the inhuman conditions and overcrowding of Amazonas' prison system and called on the authorities to take urgent action, but to date, nothing has been done. Since 2013, Anísio Jobim prison has been under private administration.

In addition, in the early hours of 6 January, at least 31 men were killed in Monte Cristo rural prison in Boa Vista, Roraima state. Authorities stated this number is potentially higher as they are having difficulties identifying a number of bodies that have been quartered and dismembered. Many victims were beheaded and had their hearts and other body parts removed. Prisoners filmed part of the killings. Monte Cristo prison is also overcrowded, holding over 1,400 prisoners while only having the capacity for around 700. In September 2016, the National Justice Council denounced the degrading conditions of this prison. The situation in Amazonas and Roraima prisons remains unstable. In other states, there are reports of tensions in prisons due to overcrowding and poor conditions, but also due to conflict between criminal gangs that operate nationally.

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

- Urging the authorities to ensure a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of the killing of over 90 people in the prisons of Amazonas and Roraima and to bring all those suspected of criminal responsibility to justice;
- 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 21 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

**Salutation: Dear Minister / Exmo  
Ministro**

#### President of the Justice National Council

Carmem Lúcia Antunes Rocha  
Ed. Anexo I do Supremo Tribunal  
Federal, 2º Andar, Gabinete da  
Presidência, Sala B219. Praça dos Três  
Poderes, s/nº, Brasília, DF  
CEP: 70.175-900, Brazil

Email: presidencia@cnj.jus.br  
**Salutation: Dear President of CNJ**

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

Pastoral Carcerária (Church Prison  
Commission)  
Pe. Valdir João Silveira  
Praça Clovis Beviláacqua, 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.**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Some authorities' reactions and public statements regarding the killings in Anisio Jobim prison have been inappropriate. President Michel Temer labeled the killings as "a horrific accident" (*um acidente pavoroso*); the Governor of Amazonas State José Melo justified the episode saying "there were no saints there" (*Ali não tinha nenhum santo*); the Secretary for Prison Administration in Amazonas stated "What did you want? There were no priests here, only criminals" (*Quería o que? Ali não tinha padre, tinha criminoso*); and the National Secretary for Youth Bruno Julio stated that "They should have killed more. There should be one massacre every week." (*Tinha era que matar mais. Tinha que fazer uma chacina por semana*). Due to public pressure, the National Youth Secretary resigned after making this statement.

Following the killings in the prisons in Roraima state, the Governor of Roraima affirmed she had formally requested support from the Federal Government and the Minister of Justice in October 2016 due to the unstable conditions of the prison system in the state. The Federal Government denied support in October last year. The Minister of Justice said they had not denied support to Roraima state, but official documents leaked to the press contradicted him and revealed that the Federal Government refused to send support.

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 of the massacre, but in 2016 the trial was declared null and the massacre remains 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.

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