

José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



European Institutions Office

Brussels, 18 January 2013

Our Ref: B1394

Dear President Barroso,

SIXTH EU-BRAZIL SUMMIT: ENSURE HUMAN RIGHTS REMAIN AT THE CORE OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

On the occasion of the Sixth EU-Brazil Summit, the EU must ensure that human rights remain at the heart of the EU-Brazil strategic partnership. The EU should take this opportunity to hold Brazil to its commitment, made in the EU-Brazil Joint Action Plan, *“to strive for the full protection and promotion in all our countries of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights”*. We particularly urge you to discuss the following human rights concerns:

- **The threat to the inter-American human rights system (IAHRS).** Recent actions by Brazil threaten to undermine the IAHRS. In April 2011, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued precautionary measures concerning construction of the Belo Monte dam. Brazil subsequently withdrew both its representative to the Organization of American States (OAS) and a future candidate for the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), and suspended its annual payment to the Commission. Brazil has criticised the Commission and has not spoken out against the most radical reform proposals that threaten to undermine the system's independence and autonomy. Brazil has recently moderated its critical attitude to the IACHR and we expect that this will continue as new proposals are being drafted ahead of the special OAS General Assembly session in late March.
- **Indigenous rights.** Indigenous peoples suffer discrimination, extreme deprivation, threats, attacks and even killings. They often suffer these abuses as a result of defending their constitutional rights to ancestral land. The expansion of agro-industry and large-scale development projects are also placing indigenous peoples in peril.
- **Human rights defenders (HRDs) at risk.** HRDs continue to be threatened and killed in their struggle for, among other issues, access to land and for speaking out against illegal logging and ranching in the Amazon region. The Brazilian National Program for the Protection of HRDs has major shortcomings, notably lack of funds and dysfunctional coordination between federal and local government. It also operates in only a third of 27 states.
- **Human rights violations in the context of public security.** Policing continues to be discriminatory and abusive. Death squads continue to operate around the country. We welcome the recent resolution passed by the Council for the Defence of Human Rights on the registration of police killings. This must now be fully implemented.

The EU should use the summit to urge Brazil to:

- Abide by promises made on election to the UN Human Rights Council to comply with and strengthen the IAHRS
- Ensure indigenous peoples are able to defend their constitutional right to ancestral lands without suffering discrimination, deprivation, threats, attacks or killings
- Ensure HRDs can carry out their work freely without threat or intimidation
- Ensure implementation of the resolution on registration of police killings; investigate and prosecute criminality in the police service; and pass pending legislation to allow the federalisation of investigations into activities of militias and death squads, and classification of such groups as criminal

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Nicolas J Beger
Director

CC

Christian Leffler, European External Action Service, Managing Director for the Americas

Véronique Arnault, European External Action Service, Director for Human Rights and Democracy

Tomás Dupla Del Moral, European External Action Service, Director for the Americas

Angel Carro Castrillo, European External Action Service, Head of Division for Mercosur countries

Ana Paula Zacarias, EU Ambassador to Brazil

Francisco Acosta Soto, Council Working Party on Latin America, Chair