

Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy  
French Presidency of the  
Council of the European Union

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Brussels, 15 December 2008

Dear Mr. Sarkozy,

**Subject: EU- Brazil Summit, 22 December 2008**

The French Presidency of the EU has made violence against women a general priority in its work on human rights. Ahead of the final summit of this Presidency, we urge you to take action on this issue, by raising specific concerns about violence against women with the government of Brazil. In a letter to Jean Davide Levitte, on 11 December 2008, we have also raised a number of other human rights concerns, including in relation to public security and violence against indigenous communities, which we would propose the French government discusses bilaterally with the government of Brazil.

On April 2008, Amnesty International launched its latest report: 'Picking up the pieces: women's experience of urban violence in Brazil'. The report documents how women deal with high levels of criminal violence in the absence of the State protection; how increasing numbers of women have become directly or indirectly involved in the drug trade; and how women's contact with the criminal justice system often makes already traumatic situations worse. In the development of the report Amnesty International received many accounts of abuse and intimidation of women during large scale security operations. This includes illegal searches of women, disrespectful and discriminatory language, destruction or theft of property and intimidation especially when women attempt to intervene to protect male relatives. Women are injured and killed in the crossfire.

Amnesty International has also received extensive reports of human rights violations against women in detention. Human rights groups in São Paulo did extensive work documenting torture, ill-treatment and cruel, inhuman and degrading conditions suffered by women in the state's detention system, including lack of access to health care. The State has failed to address the specific needs of women in detention and has failed to provide mechanisms to oversee and monitor the conditions they are held under as well as ensure they have means of safely reporting violations against them.

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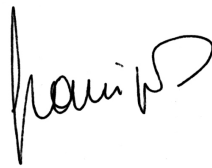
Amnesty International welcomes the creation of the Women's Ministry and the 'Maria Da Penha' Law which takes the issue of domestic violence out of the small claims courts where it had languished. This law offers a raft of different measures for protection of women, setting out the responsibilities of various authorities. A process should be set up to independently monitor the implementation of this law, which should include civil society.

We would welcome any feedback on discussions with the Brazilian government on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Nicolas Beger  
*Director*  
*Amnesty International EU Office*



*Geneviève Garrigos*  
*Chair*  
*Amnesty International France*

C.C: Bernard Kouchner, Minister for Foreign Affairs.  
João José Soares Pacheco, Head of EU Delegation in Brazil.