

ANA MARIA SANTOS CRUZ

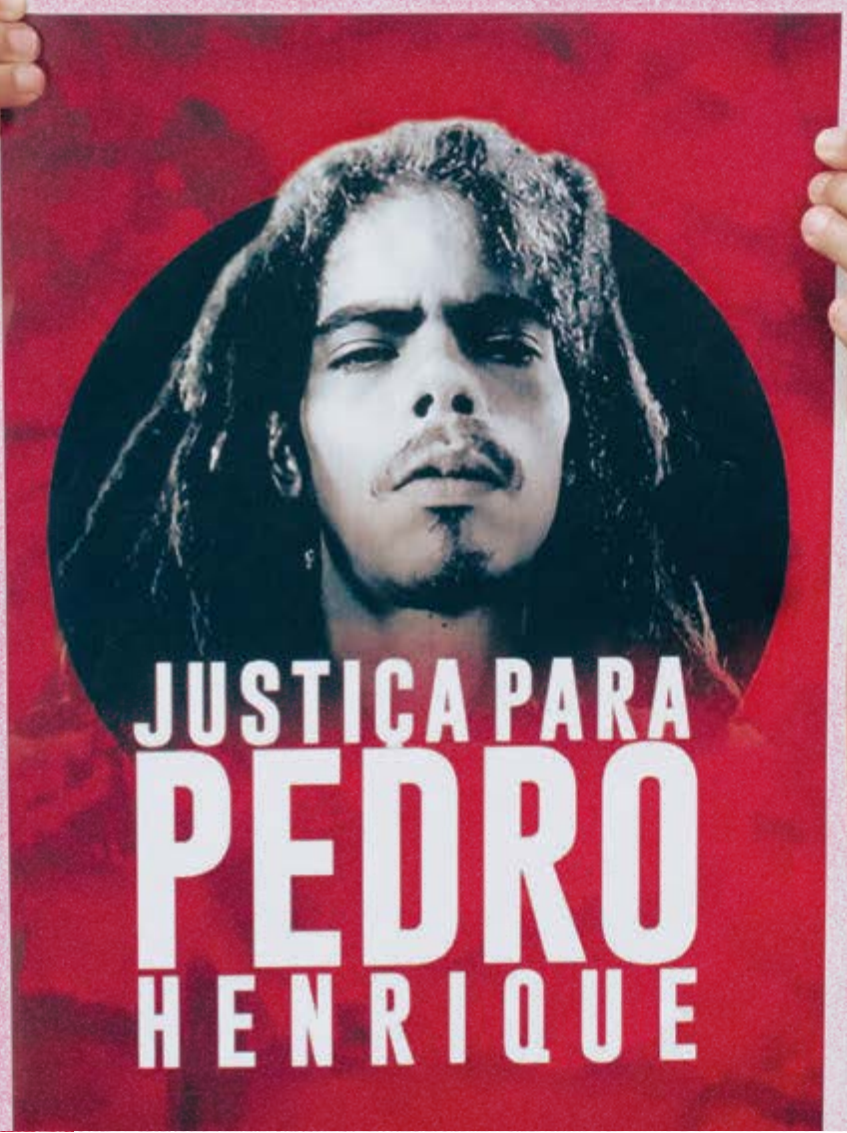
A MOTHER'S FIGHT

FOR JUSTICE

Brazil

WRITE
FOR
RIGHTS

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



JUSTICA PARA
PEDRO
HENRIQUE



WRITE FOR RIGHTS

MORE THAN 20 YEARS OF WRITING LETTERS THAT CHANGE LIVES

When just a handful of people unite behind someone, the results can be amazing.

Some 20 years ago, a small group of activists in Poland ran a 24-hour letter-writing marathon. Over the following years, the idea spread. Today, Write for Rights is the world's biggest human rights event.

From 2,326 letters in 2001 to more than 5.3 million letters, tweets, petition signatures and other actions in 2022, people the world over have used the power of their words to unite behind the idea that geography is no barrier to solidarity. Together, these individuals have helped transform the lives of more than 100 people over the years, freeing them from torture, harassment or unjust imprisonment.

Once again, this year's campaign features people from around the world, all connected because their human rights have been violated. Some by their governments, others by the police, or even big corporations. All because of who they are or because they simply exercised their rights. Together, we can fight for their rights. Through Write for Rights, they will receive personalized messages of solidarity from thousands of people across the globe. The awareness that their situations are gaining public attention offers reassurance to them and their families that they are not forgotten. And by writing directly to the authorities to demand they take immediate action to remedy injustice we can create a more just and equal world.

Alongside the letter-writing actions, Amnesty International speaks to those who have the power to change these people's situations, such as politicians in their countries. Write for Rights also gives visibility to these injustices through public events, and garners international attention on social media.

Individuals and groups featured in the campaign in previous years report the difference that these actions make, and often describe the strength they derive from knowing that so many people care about them. Often, there is a noticeable change in the treatment of these individuals, and of other people and groups in a similar situation, by the country's authorities. Charges may be dropped and people released from detention. People are treated more humanely, and new laws or regulations addressing the injustice are introduced.

"From the bottom of my heart, this campaign has kept me alive, it's what has stopped them from killing me because they know that you are there"

Jani Silva,
environmental defender, 2021

BEFORE YOU START

This human rights education activity can take place in a variety of online or offline settings, such as a school classroom, a community group, a family or an activist group. As a facilitator, you can adapt the activity to best suit the context and group you are working with. For example, you may want to consider what knowledge the group already has about the issues discussed, the size of your group and how to best organize the activity to allow for active participation, the physical setting of your activity, delivering it in-person or online, and any limitations. When participants want to take action on a case, discuss whether it is safe for them to do so.

The activities are all based on **participatory learning methods** in which learners are not merely presented with information; they explore, discuss, analyse and question issues relating to the cases. This methodology allows participants to:

DEVELOP key competencies and skills

FORM their own opinions, raise questions and gain a deeper understanding of the issues presented

TAKE CONTROL of their learning, and shape discussions according to their interests, abilities and concerns

HAVE THE SPACE required for them to engage emotionally and develop their own attitudes.



Letter writing event in Antwerp, Belgium, for Write for Rights 2022.

Read about the people we're fighting for:
[amnesty.org.au/campaigns/write-for-rights/](https://www.amnesty.org.au/campaigns/write-for-rights/)

Get in touch with us at

communityorganising@amnesty.org.au

Tweet your support to
[@AmnestyOz](https://twitter.com/AmnestyOz) using the hashtag **#W4R23**

If you are not familiar with participatory learning methods, look at Amnesty International's Facilitation Manual before you start: [amnesty.org/en/documents/ACT35/020/2011/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ACT35/020/2011/en/)

Amnesty International offers online human rights education courses, including a short course about human rights defenders which introduces the Write for Rights campaign: academy.amnesty.org/learn



YOUR WORDS ARE POWERFUL

ACTIVISTS ACQUITTED

After leading an anti-government protest in May 2020, Cecillia Chimбири, Joanah Mamombe and Netsai Marova were arrested, taken to a police station, forced into an unmarked car, and driven out of the city of Harare, Zimbabwe. They were subsequently beaten, tortured and left on the side of the road. While hospitalized, the women were charged with criminal offences relating to the protest. Later, they were also charged with communicating falsehoods and obstructing the course of justice, for speaking about their ordeal. Netsai fled Zimbabwe following the attack. After featuring in Write for Rights 2022, where more than half a million actions were taken on their behalf, Cecillia and Joanah were acquitted by the High Court on 4 July 2023.



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FREED FROM DEATH ROW

Magai Matiop Ngong from South Sudan was just a schoolboy when he was sentenced to death on 14 November 2017 for murder. Magai recounted how he told the judge the death was an accident and that he was only 15 years old at the time. Yet Magai was tried for capital murder without any access to a lawyer. More than 700,000 actions were taken for Magai during Write for Rights 2019. In March 2022 the High Court agreed that, because he had been a child at the time, he should be released. Magai is now safely out of the country and determined more than ever to help people like him.



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER FREED

Bernardo Caal Xol, a teacher and father, worked tirelessly to defend communities affected by hydroelectric projects on the Cahabón river, in northern Guatemala. In November 2018 he was sentenced to more than seven years in prison on bogus charges aimed at preventing his human rights work. During Write for Rights 2021, more than half a million actions were taken for Bernardo and, in March 2022, he was released from prison.



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ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are the basic freedoms and protections that belong to every single one of us. They are based on principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect – regardless of age, nationality, gender, race, beliefs and personal orientations.

Your rights are about being treated fairly and treating others fairly, and having the ability to make choices about your own life. These basic human rights are universal – they belong to all of us; everybody in the world. They are inalienable – they cannot be taken away from us. And they are indivisible and interdependent – they are all of equal importance and are interrelated.

Since the atrocities committed during World War II, international human rights instruments, beginning with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, have provided a solid framework for national, regional and international legislation designed to improve lives around the world. Human rights can be seen as laws for governments. They create obligations for governments and state officials to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of those within their jurisdiction and also abroad. Human rights are not luxuries to be met only when practicalities allow.



© Amnesty International Togo

Launch of Write for Rights 2022 in Lomé, Togo.



THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

The UDHR was drawn up by the newly formed United Nations in the years immediately following World War II. Since its adoption on 10 December 1948, it has formed the backbone of the international human rights system. Every country in the world has agreed to be bound by the general principles expressed within the 30 articles of this document.

The UDHR itself is, as its name suggests, a declaration. It is a declaration of intent by every government around the world that they will abide by certain standards in the treatment of individual human beings. Human rights have become part of international law: since the adoption of the UDHR, numerous other binding laws and agreements have been drawn up on the basis of its principles. It is these laws and agreements which provide the basis for organizations like Amnesty International to call on governments to refrain from the type of behaviour or treatment that the people highlighted in our Write for Rights cases have experienced.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS



CIVIL RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES

Right to life, freedom from torture and slavery, right to non-discrimination.

Article 1 Freedom and equality in dignity and rights

Article 2 Non-discrimination

Article 3 Right to life, liberty and security of person

Article 4 Freedom from slavery

Article 5 Freedom from torture



LEGAL RIGHTS

Right to be presumed innocent, right to a fair trial, right to be free from arbitrary arrest or detention.

Article 6 All are protected by the law

Article 7 All are equal before the law

Article 8 A remedy when rights have been violated

Article 9 No unjust detention, imprisonment or exile

Article 10 Right to a fair trial

Article 11 Innocent until proven guilty

Article 14 Right to go to another country and ask for protection



SOCIAL RIGHTS

Right to education, to found and maintain a family, to recreation, to health care.

Article 12 Privacy and the right to home and family life

Article 13 Freedom to live and travel freely within state borders

Article 16 Right to marry and start a family

Article 24 Right to rest and leisure

Article 26 Right to education, including free primary education



ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Right to property, to work, to housing, to a pension, to an adequate standard of living.

Article 15 Right to a nationality

Article 17 Right to own property and possessions

Article 22 Right to social security

Article 23 Right to work for a fair wage and to join a trade union

Article 25 Right to a standard of living adequate for your health and well-being



POLITICAL RIGHTS

Right to participate in the government of the country, right to vote, right to peaceful assembly, freedoms of expression, belief and religion

Article 18 Freedom of belief (including religious belief)

Article 19 Freedom of expression and the right to spread information

Article 20 Freedom to join associations and meet with others in a peaceful way

Article 21 Right to take part in the government of your country



CULTURAL RIGHTS, SOLIDARITY RIGHTS

Right to participate in the cultural life of the community.

Article 27 Right to share in your community's cultural life

Article 28 Right to an international order where all these rights can be fully realized

Article 29 Responsibility to respect the rights of others

Article 30 No taking away any of these rights!



ACTIVITY

POLICE VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION

KEY CONCEPTS

Police violence and impunity
The right to life
Unlawful killings
Racial justice
Racism and discrimination

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Participants will learn about the struggles and resilience of Ana Maria Santos Cruz, a mother who is seeking justice for the unlawful killing by the police of her son Pedro Henrique, a young Brazilian activist who advocated for racial justice and human rights. As part of the activity, participants are encouraged to write letters to the Brazilian authorities to demand justice and to show solidarity with Ana Maria.

AGE: 14+

TIME NEEDED

60 minutes – you may want additional time for **Take Action** the section.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants will:
understand the impact of racial discrimination and police violence on marginalized communities.
understand how police violence, unlawful killings and racial discrimination are connected.
understand the struggle that thousands of mothers face in their fights for justice.
learn about Amnesty International's Write for Rights campaign.
write letters in support of and showing solidarity with Ana Maria Santos Cruz.

MATERIALS

Handout: Excessive Use of Force and Racism (page 9)
Ana Maria's story (page 11)
Background information (page 10)
Paper, pens and envelopes (if sending letters)

Optional: Video of Ana Maria Santos Cruz from [amnesty.org/w4r-videos](https://www.amnesty.org/w4r-videos)

Optional: Template letters from: [amnesty.org.au/write-for-rights-2023-activist-toolkit/](https://www.amnesty.org.au/write-for-rights-2023-activist-toolkit/)

PREPARATION

Print the handout on page 9 for each participant/group.
Read the background information on page 10 and Ana Maria's story on page 11.

MORE INFORMATION

20-minute course on Write for Rights: academy.amnesty.org/learn/course/external/view/elearning/145/write-for-rights-a-short-guide

For more information on racial justice: [amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/discrimination/racial-justice/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/discrimination/racial-justice/)

For more information on Pedro Henrique's case (in Portuguese): anistia.org.br/informe/anistia-internacional-brasil-cobra-justica-por-morte-de-ativista-em-tucano-ba/

PRECAUTIONS

This activity discusses themes of racial violence and police abuses and killings, which may be distressing for participants. This activity is best done by two facilitators, or by having someone on standby to accompany participants who might want to step out. The story of Pedro Henrique and Ana Maria may provoke strong emotions and trigger situations of past trauma for some participants. Familiarize yourself thoroughly with the content and anticipate potential areas of sensitivity to navigate the discussions with empathy and understanding. Regularly check in with participants during the activity to gauge their comfort levels. This can be done through non-verbal cues, private dialogue or brief pauses for reflection. During and after the activity, allow participants to express their feelings and thoughts about the activity and the topics discussed. This can help them process any strong emotions they might have experienced.

BEFORE STARTING THE ACTIVITY

Welcome the participants and prepare them by explaining that this activity discusses themes of racial violence and discrimination, police abuses and death. Tell the participants that, if at any point they feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed, they may choose not to participate and to step out of the room.

1. A STORY OF HOPE AND DREAMS

Introduce the participants to Pedro Henrique by showing them his portrait from the background information on page 10. Tell participants:

“Pedro Henrique was a young Black man from Salvador, capital of the state of Bahia, in Brazil, who chose to live in the small town of Tucano, also in the state of Bahia. He belonged to a marginalized community. The middle child of three children, he cared a lot about his family and his people. Just like his mother, Ana Maria, Pedro Henrique was an avid lover of art and music. He was a great fan of popular Brazilian and reggae music, including Bob Marley and Peter Tosh. He was a member of the Rastafarian religious group, which has a shared philosophy and cultural traditions and a way of life in which concepts like balance, love, spirituality and destiny, and also the Black African diaspora and Black consciousness, are central.



15 MINUTES



In 2012, when he was 25 years old, he became a victim of police violence in front of his father's house, who lived in Tucano, Bahia. In response, he started organizing annual marches – 'Walks of Peace' – which peacefully brought together people of all ages from the community to call for justice and an end to police abuses primarily against Black people in Tucano. He had hopes and dreams for the future and he was a positive force for change, bringing people in the community together through his peaceful activism."

Ask participants to think about the following questions, and write their answers down on a piece of paper, for example in the form of word clouds:

What do you have in common with Pedro Henrique? Is there anything similar to your own life in his story?

Imagine that you were to organize a peaceful march in the hope of creating change for your community, what would your call for change be?

When he was young, Pedro Henrique was subjected to violence by the police. What do you know about police violence, in general or in Brazil particularly?

Ask a few volunteers to share their answers.

If possible, you can play the song "Filho do leão" by Planta e Raiz from youtu.be/up2j0qIZPy4 in the background. This is Ana Maria's favorite song.

2. A FIGHT FOR JUSTICE: ANA MARIA'S STORY



Hand out copies of Ana Maria's story (page 11) and give participants some minutes to read the information. Then bring participants together and guide a discussion using some of the following questions. You can use the background information (page 10) to help guide the conversation.

What happened to Ana Maria's son Pedro Henrique?

What are your thoughts and feelings after reading Ana Maria's story?

What shocks or surprises you about what happened to Pedro Henrique?

What can we learn from this story about the importance of standing up for human rights and the search for justice?

Highlight that, despite ongoing threats and the grief of losing her child, Ana Maria has bravely sought the truth about his death, calling on the authorities for a thorough investigation and for those responsible to be brought to trial.

Remember: the story of Pedro Henrique's killing might provoke strong emotions, and the topic of racial discrimination and police violence is one that resonates in many countries and communities, of which participants might have lived experiences of their own. Be prepared to take sufficient time to debrief and allow participants to share their feelings. You might have to end the activity here and go into the **Take Action** part of the activity.

3. RACISM, POLICE VIOLENCE AND IMPUNITY IN BRAZIL



Divide participants into small groups and distribute copies of the Handout: Excessive use of force and racism on page 9. Ask participants to use the handout and the questions below to guide their conversation.

How are police violence, unlawful killings and racial discrimination connected?

What is needed to break the cycle of police violence? (Think: measures, laws, investigations, etc.)

What happens when governments do not investigate crimes or do not bring perpetrators to justice, for example when police can kill people without facing the consequences?

What should happen for Ana Maria to receive justice?

Ana Maria still organizes Walks of Peace, and continues to fight to see Pedro Henrique's killers brought to justice. What do you think gives her the strength to continue?

Bring the participants back together and ask groups to share some of their findings and discussions, particularly focusing on the last two questions.



Stress that what happened to Pedro Henrique is not an isolated case. Explain that, in Brazil, racism, discrimination and police violence are ingrained in police institutions as part of their culture, with Brazil having one of the most lethal police forces in the world. Pedro Henrique may have been targeted for being a human rights defender demanding an end to police abuses. Yet he was also targeted because he was Black, a young man and from a marginalized, poor community. Unlawful killings of innocent young Black men and other people in marginalized communities is a systemic issue in Brazil. Under the guise of a 'war on drugs', the rights of Black and marginalized populations are violated on a daily basis. The war on drugs promotes the violent invasion and occupation of favelas, imposes a daily war on thousands of families and claims the lives of many young people.

4. TAKE ACTION



Explain about Amnesty International's Write for Rights campaign. Explain that Amnesty International is encouraging people to demand justice for Ana Maria. You can give examples from last year's campaign (page 3) demonstrating how successful writing letters and taking other actions can be, or watch this one-minute video from Moses Akatugba who was freed from death row thanks to the actions of people during Write for Rights 2014: youtu.be/8cU6EPY5r_c (available in English only).

If there isn't enough time for participants to take action within the time allowed, encourage them to organize how to do so afterwards or divide the actions among the groups. Encourage them to be creative.

Show participants the video of Ana Maria which can be found here: www.amnesty.org/w4r-videos (available in English).

WRITE A LETTER

Encourage participants to write to the Brazilian authorities using our [blank letter template](#). You can check out our pre-filled letter to the General Prosecutor of Bahai [here](#) for inspiration.

Tell the authorities something about yourself to make this a personal letter.

Tell them what shocks you about the case of Ana Maria Santos Cruz and her son, Pedro Henrique.

Tell them why you think it is important that governments step up and end police violence once and for all.

Tell them to promptly conclude the investigation into Pedro Henrique's killing in an independent and impartial manner so that all those responsible for the crime are brought to justice in fair trials.

Send your letter back to us at

Amnesty International Australia
Locked Bag 23
Broadway NSW 2007
Australia

By the 31st of January 2024.

We'll make sure all your letters and messages of solidarity reach the people who need to hear it!

SHOW SOLIDARITY

Show Ana Maria that she is not alone. Send your messages of solidarity to help keep Ana Maria's spirits strong. Be creative! She is a great fan of reggae and popular Brazilian music, just like her son Pedro Henrique was, so you may want to mention music in your message. We have some blank postcards that you can print out and use for your solidarity message [here](#).

Ana Maria speaks Portuguese. Here are some example messages to include:

Ana, estamos com você, a sua luta nos inspira a continuar! (Portuguese)

Ana, we are with you, your fight for justice inspires us! (English)

Ana, você não está sozinha e o nome de Pedro Henrique não será esquecido!(Portuguese)

Ana, you are not alone and Pedro Henrique's name will never be forgotten! (English)

Send your solidarity message back to us at

Amnesty International Australia
Locked Bag 23
Broadway NSW 2007
Australia

By the 31st of January 2024.

We'll make sure all your letters and messages of solidarity reach the people who need to hear it!

When sending us your letters and solidarity postcards please ensure to include the name and at least one point of contact (phone, email address or home address) for the person who wrote the letter or postcard. We need at least one contact method to verify that an action taker is a unique individual.

We have [pre-filled letter templates](#), [blank letter templates](#) and [blank solidarity postcards](#) available on our website here: <https://www.amnesty.org.au/write-for-rights-2023-activist-toolkit/>

HANDOUT**BRAZIL: EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE AND RACISM**

In Brazil, racism continues to drive state violence. Unlawful killings by public security officials are frequent, disproportionately affecting Black people in marginalized neighbourhoods. Heavily armed police operations often result in hours of intense shootings in favelas (informal housing settlements) and marginalized neighbourhoods. The state's excessive use of force manifests itself in unlawful killings, raids on people's homes, destruction of belongings, psychological torture, restrictions on people's freedom of movement and the suspension of basic services such as schools and health centres.

Brazil's 'war on drugs', which has ruled public security policies for decades, continue to feed the cycle of racial violence and unlawful killings by police. The Brazilian Forum on Public Safety reported that, in 2021, 99% of victims of police killings were male, 84% were Black and 52% were aged under 25.

The continuing high death toll during police operations is evidence of the state's failure to effectively oversee police conduct. The fact that Black people make up a disproportionately high percentage of victims is further proof that systemic and institutional racism continues to drive the criminalization of and excessive use of force against Black people in Brazil.

The persistence and scale of killings by police also demonstrates the impunity enjoyed by those directly responsible and the lack of accountability of those in the chain of command who facilitate or tolerate excessive use of force.

Amnesty International is calling for racial justice, so that people who have been historically and systemically discriminated against can enjoy equality in law and practice. States must ensure justice and redress including through the removal of racist laws, policies and practices, and guarantee equality in access to economic and social rights. They should also take measures to end the over-policing and over-criminalization of people and communities facing discrimination.

Unlawful killings, or extrajudicial executions, are killings ordered by a government, or committed with the government's knowledge and support. They are carried out by the military, the police, or by civilians working with government forces. Unlawful killings include killings resulting from excessive use of force by law enforcement officials.

Racial justice means going beyond preventing individual cases of racial discrimination and also combating structural oppression. It involves working towards systemic change and solutions, by targeting the root causes of racial oppression as it intersects with patriarchy, colonialism and slavery as well as economic inequality.



Residents look on as police patrol the streets in Brazil.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

IMPUNITY AND VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHT TO LIFE

Everyone has the inherent right to life. This right is the precondition that allows us to enjoy all other rights and it is protected by law. Nobody should be deprived of their right to life. This means that governments not only have to refrain from taking life, but they must also take reasonable measures to prevent death. A failure to investigate the circumstances of someone's death could constitute a human rights violation under international human rights law.

States must ensure that a prompt, independent, impartial, thorough and effective investigation takes place if someone has lost their life. This must be carried out by independent and impartial bodies. If it is suspected that the death was the result of criminal conduct, the authorities must ensure that those suspected of responsibility are brought to justice in fair trials.

The Brazilian authorities systematically fail to adequately investigate cases of excessive use of force or ensure that those who are directly responsible or in the chain of command are brought to justice. This creates a culture of impunity where state officials who have committed crimes frequently avoid punishment.

Human rights defenders are individuals who, individually or in association with others, take non-violent actions to defend and promote human rights..

PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Globally, the space for civil society organizations has shrunk alarmingly and the threats and challenges faced by human rights defenders have increased in recent years. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Brazil was among the countries where the most human rights defenders were killed between 2015 and 2019.

Governments bear the ultimate responsibility and obligation to protect human rights defenders and ensure they can carry out their legitimate work in a safe and enabling environment without fear of reprisals. This obligation also requires governments to implement measures to prevent human rights violations being committed against human rights defenders and address allegations of abuses against them. Yet attacks against human rights defenders often happen precisely because states do not foster a safe and enabling environment. Governments often fail to recognize and protect defenders at risk, or fail to bring perpetrators to account. When states do not take attacks against defenders seriously, the authorities send a message that such acts are tolerated, with little or no consequence for the perpetrators, making further attacks more likely in the future.



ANA MARIA'S STORY

📍 BRAZIL

WRITE
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Ana Maria Santos Cruz is a loving mother. She enjoys attending concerts and cultural events with her daughter in Salvador, Brazil. However, since the death of her son, Pedro Henrique, Ana Maria feels like a part of her has been taken away.

In his short life, Pedro Henrique achieved a lot. An activist and advocate of racial justice and human rights, Pedro Henrique organized 'Walks of Peace' in his hometown of Tucano, in Bahia, Brazil. These annual marches brought people together to speak out about police abuses primarily against Black communities.

These moments of solidarity were met with hostility and intimidation from the police. Officers began to monitor Pedro Henrique. They threatened and violently attacked him for his activism. On 27 December 2018, at the age of 31, Pedro Henrique was killed. His house was raided by three hooded men as he slept next to his girlfriend. He was shot eight times in the head and neck. His girlfriend recognized the three men as police officers.

The officers suspected of killing Pedro Henrique were indicted in 2019. But, almost five years later, they are still active in the police force. The investigation into the killing has not been concluded and the trial has yet to begin.

Despite ongoing threats and the grief of losing her child, Ana Maria has bravely sought the truth about his death, calling on the authorities to conduct a thorough investigation and to put those responsible on trial.



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Top: The family of Pedro Henrique Santos Cruz hold placards demanding justice for Pedro.

Bottom: A 'Walk of Peace' in Tucano, February 2023.



ABOUT

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Amnesty International is a movement of 10 million people which mobilizes the humanity in everyone and campaigns for change so we can all enjoy our human rights. Our vision is of a world where those in power keep their promises, respect international law and are held to account. We investigate and expose the facts, whenever and wherever abuses happen. We lobby governments as well as other powerful groups such as companies, making sure they keep their promises and respect international law. By telling the powerful stories of the people we work with, we mobilize millions of supporters around the world to campaign for change and to stand in the defence of activists on the frontline. We support people to claim their rights through education and training.

Our work protects and empowers people – from abolishing the death penalty to advancing sexual and reproductive rights, and from combating discrimination to defending refugees' and migrants' rights. We help to bring torturers to justice, change oppressive laws, and free people who have been jailed just for voicing their opinion. We speak out for anyone and everyone whose freedom or dignity are under threat.

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