

## Brazil Opens Archives from Dictatorship Era

Contributed by Érica Santana  
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Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva signed a decree which will make federal government documents produced during the country's military dictatorship (1964-1985) public beginning December 31. At the moment the documents are considered secret and are under the guardianship of the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (Abin).

The presidential decree sets up three work groups to examine and declassify the documents. It is understood that some documents, classified "ultra-secret," will remain out of the public domain.

It is believed that the opening of the secret archives of the Brazilian military dictatorship will make it possible to discover what happened to a number of Brazilians who disappeared during that period.

According to Augustino Veit, president of a commission at the Secretariat of Human Rights (Comissão Especial sobre Mortos e Desaparecidos Políticos) which deals with the issue, there are still 64 people missing who participated in an armed opposition group known as the Araguaia guerilla movement in the 1970s, besides some 10 political activists.

"The families of these people, and human rights activists, want to know what happened. If they died, how did they die and where are their bodies?" explains Veit, adding that the opening of the archives will also be important for the history of the country. People will have a better idea of exactly what happened during that period, he said.

As for indemnity payments, according to Veit, they have already been decided on and paid. The opening of the documents is not expected to have any effect on that, declared Veit.

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