

## US Nun's Murders Condemned in Brazil. Masterminds of Crime Not Tried Yet.

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Two Brazilian men have been convicted of killing an American nun who spent decades defending land rights for poor settlers in the Amazon.

A jury in the Brazilian city of Belém, capital of the Northern state of Pará, Saturday, found the defendants Clodoaldo Carlos Batista and Rayfran das Neves Sales guilty of murdering Sister Dorothy Stang, 73.

Sales, who shot Sister Stang six times, was sentenced to 27 years in prison, while his accomplice, Batista, was sentenced to 17 years.

Sister Dorothy's 68-year-old brother said the sentences represent justice for his sister and the poor of the Amazon.

But observers say the real test will be if Brazil tries the ranchers who are alleged to have paid the men about US\$ 20,000 to kill the nun.

Three defendants remain accused of ordering and financing the murder. According to the prosecution, Vitalmiro Bastos de Moura, a farmer accused of planning the murder will be put on trial in the first semester of 2006.

"This is just the beginning," said Margaret, a sister of Dorothy Stang while embracing activists who worked with Stang, after the sentence was announced. She came from the United States to follow the trial,

A Brazilian Senate commission has concluded the crime was part of a wider problem and urged a strong government crackdown on such extra-judicial killings.

In the last 30 years in Pará, 772 activists fighting for land have been killed. Until Saturday only nine of them had been sentenced to jail.

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