

## **Catholic missionary shot dead in Amazon region**

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

Quito, Ecuador--Armed men have shot dead an Austrian Roman Catholic missionary in the most violent region of the Brazilian Amazon.

Bishop Erwin Krautler told Reuters news service that Humbert Mattle, 65, died October 10 in an ecclesiastical residence in Altamira, Para state at the hands of armed attackers carrying automatic weapons.

Mattle "never harmed anyone in his life," the bishop said. He opened the door to let the men in when they shot him, he said.

The missionary, a lay catholic brother, was injured by four or five shots and died instantly.

Mattle was from Gotziz, Austria, but had worked in Brazil for almost 40 years. He was buried in the South American country on October 11.

Krautler said it was not immediately clear if the motive of the shooting was robbery or politically motivated. Shortly after the killing, the attackers robbed a bank and fled with an equivalent of \$3,000.

There have been no arrests in the case.

Altamira is 1,600 miles northeast of Brazilia in the middle of the most lawless zone of the country where it is common to see slavery, the abuse of human rights, and violent conflicts over land issues.

The Indigenous Missionary Council, a Roman Catholic organization in Brazilia, said that perhaps the attackers were looking for the Reverend Fritz Tschol, also an Austrian missionary known for his defense of Indigenous rights in the area.

Tschol lives in the residence along with Mattle and other missionaries.

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