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The *Varginha Incident*

Multiple Witnesses Report Entity Sightings; Brazilian Military Conducts Apparent Recovery

Operation — January–February 1996

DATE	LOCATION	WITNESSES	ENTITIES REPORTED
January–February 1996	Varginha, Minas Gerais, Brazil	Multiple civilian & military	Alive at initial contact
MILITARY RESPONSE	STATUS		
Yes — confirmed presence	Open — disputed		

Varginha, January 1996

The city of Varginha in the southern Minas Gerais state of Brazil had a population of approximately 120,000 in January 1996. It was known in Brazil primarily for its coffee production and the unusual concrete sculpture of a grey alien that now adorns one of its main traffic roundabouts — an acknowledgment by the city itself of what its residents reported in the early weeks of 1996. The events of that January and February have not been fully explained. They have not been forgotten.

On the morning of January 20, 1996, three young women — Liliane Fatima Silva, Valquiria Fatima Silva, and Katia Andrade Xavier — reported encountering a creature crouching beside a wall in a public area near their home. They described it as approximately 1.6 metres tall with brown oily skin, a large head, large red eyes, very short arms and legs, and a pronounced V-shaped raised area on its forehead. It appeared to be in distress. The women fled. They reported the encounter to their family immediately; their mother corroborated their distressed state.

Separate civilian witnesses reported seeing a low-flying craft in the predawn hours of January 20, moving erratically over the city and appearing to descend. A farmer outside the city reported an object crashing on or near his property. These accounts were made independently and were not initially connected to the three women's encounter.

"It was squatting there. It was real. It had these huge red eyes and it was shaking. I don't know if it was cold or frightened but it was alive. We ran."

— LILIANE FATIMA SILVA, INTERVIEWED BY BRAZILIAN JOURNALIST UBIRAJARA RODRIGUES, 1996

What elevates the Varginha incident above many comparable cases is the confirmed and unexplained military response. Brazilian Army units from the 2nd Army Regiment and from a Minas Gerais fire brigade were observed operating in the area around the reported sighting and crash sites. Witnesses, including military personnel who later spoke anonymously or on record, described what appeared to be a recovery operation involving the transport of one or more entities.

Corporal Marco Eli Cherese, a military police officer who reportedly participated in the handling of a recovered entity, died on February 15, 1996, at the age of twenty-three. The official cause of death was given as pneumonia, but family members stated that he had fallen severely ill shortly

after his reported involvement in the Varginha operation. He died within weeks. The connection between his illness and any involvement in the incident has never been officially addressed.

<p>PRIMARY CIVILIAN WITNESSES</p> <p>Three women; independent corroborating accounts</p>	<p>MILITARY PRESENCE</p> <p>Confirmed — 2nd Army Regiment, fire brigade</p>	<p>RECOVERY OPERATION</p> <p>Witnessed by multiple sources; officially denied</p>
<p>CPL. CHERESE</p> <p>Died February 15, 1996, age 23 — cause: pneumonia</p>	<p>HOSPITAL REPORTS</p> <p>Humanoid entity allegedly received at Varginha Regional Hospital</p>	<p>OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT POSITION</p> <p>No incident occurred</p>

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The Varginha incident attracted serious investigative attention from Brazilian researchers and several international investigators. The accounts of hospital personnel who reported receiving a non-human entity for examination were never officially addressed. Military participants, speaking years later, gave accounts broadly consistent with a recovery operation having occurred. The Brazilian government has declined to release any records pertaining to the event.

What distinguishes Varginha from many comparable cases is the specific human cost attached to it. A young soldier apparently involved in the operation died within weeks. His family's account of his final illness has been consistent over decades. The city itself — by erecting the alien monument at its roundabout — has in a civic sense acknowledged that something remarkable happened there, even if official channels have not.

CASE STATUS

The Varginha incident remains open. The three women who first reported the encounter have maintained their accounts. Military witnesses have spoken, at varying levels of specificity, of a recovery operation. Corporal Cherese's family has never been given a satisfactory account of his illness and death. The Brazilian government has not disclosed relevant records. The case is not closed.

