



**POLÍCIA MILITAR DA BAHIA**  
**COMANDO-GERAL**

**LETTER OF TESTIMONY | ART OF LIVING FOR MILITARY PROGRAM**

**General Commander Colonel ANSELMO Alves BRANDÃO**

Police work is extremely stressful. As the general commander of the State of Bahia Police I have always felt how important it is to address the mental health of our police. Dealing with life and death daily puts an enormous strain on our staff affecting directly their quality of life. I believe that return home after a long day, relax, unwind and spend quality time with families will benefit them as human beings and in their ability to perform their jobs. Mental health of police is a global issue. To address it we established a program supporting the wellness of the men and women putting their lives on the line every day to protect our people and our society.

I was a police officer for over 30 years before taking the role of commander. During those years I found myself under enormous strain, similar to my colleagues. One day, in 2016 someone met with me in my office and told me about a program which uses breathing techniques to shift mental outlook and useful to anyone. I was impressed with our meeting and thought, 'let me see for myself how it works.' I did the program with my wife and daughter and was amazed at how it affected my own personal stress management and the pressure that was on me. Almost instantaneously, on the second day of the course, the breathing technique brought me to a deep sense of relaxation and calm in my mind. I felt more centered during the day and noticed an improved quality of sleep at night. Earlier in life I had tried to practice meditation, but once I did this breath technique I realized that I had never been truly calm in my mind. When I finished the course I realized that all my 32,000 officers needed access to these skills and tools to manage stress.

In police work all over the world, we see that when a police officer is highly stressed they are more likely to either hurt people in the community or hurt themselves. Obviously we don't want them hurting anybody. Their job is to protect society. My first action was to do the program with my toughest unit with the most difficult issues. I figured, if it worked with this unit it would work with any unit. We did the initial