

PUBLIC

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UA 254/06 Possible “disappearance”/Fear for safety

ARGENTINA Jorge Julio Lopez (m), aged 77, construction worker

Construction worker Jorge Julio López, who has testified against a man who was a senior official in the security forces while Argentina was under military rule, has not been seen since 17 September, when his family saw him at his home in the city of La Plata, Buenos Aires Province. There are fears that he may have been abducted by people connected with the former military government because of his involvement in the trial, and as a warning to potential witnesses in similar future trials.

A habeas corpus writ has been filed on his behalf before the Federal Court No. 3 (*Tribunal Federal N°3*), and the provincial government has offered a reward of 200,000 pesos (US\$64,000 approx) for information.

Jorge Julio López had been a main witness and complainant (*querellante*) in the trial of the former Director of Investigations of the Buenos Aires Province Police, Miguel Etchecolatz (*ex Director de Investigaciones de la Policía Bonaerense*), who was sentenced to life imprisonment on 18 September. Jorge Julio López had identified Miguel Etchecolatz as one of the men who tortured him while he was detained in the 5th Police Station in La Plata in 1976.

Jorge Julio López was abducted in October 1976, after the military seized power, by members of the security forces in La Plata and kept in the secret detention centres at the Police Barracks of Arana (*Destacamento Policial de Arana*), known as the “Pozo de Arana”, and the 5th Police Station in the city of Plata (*Comisaría 5 de la Plata*).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the return of civilian government in 1983, lawyers, relatives of those who “disappeared” while the country was under military rule and members of non-governmental organizations investigating those “disappearances” have been threatened, harassed and attacked. Thousands of people “disappeared” in Argentina during the years of military government (1976 to 1983). The 1986 Full Stop Law (*Ley de Punto Final*) and the Due Obedience Law (*Ley de Obediencia Debida*) of 1987, which protected the security forces from prosecution, were declared null and void in June 2005. Several former members of the security forces accused of human rights violations have now been put on trial.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Jorge Julio López, who has not been seen since 17 September;
- urging the authorities to continue their efforts to locate Jorge Julio López;
- asking the authorities to protect other witnesses in forthcoming trials of former members of the security forces in the Province of Buenos Aires.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Security

Ministro de Seguridad de la Provincia de Buenos Aires

Sr. León Carlos Arslanian

Calle 2 e/51 y 53

1900 La Plata, ARGENTINA

Fax: +54 221 429 3187

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Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires
Gobernador de la Provincia de Buenos Aires
Sr. Felipe Solá.
Casa de Gobierno
Calle 6 Entre 51/53
1900 La Plata, Prov. Buenos Aires
ARGENTINA

Fax: +54 221 429 4189

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador/Dear Governor

Minister of Interior
Ministro del Interior
Sr. Aníbal Fernández
Ministerio del Interior
25 de Mayo 101/145.
1002 Buenos Aires.

Fax: +54 11 4345 3336

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/ Dear Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Sr. Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Sr Jorge Enrique Taiana
Ministerio de Relaciones
Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Esmeralda 1212
1007 Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA

Fax: +54 11 4819 7324

Salutation: Sr. Ministro /Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organization - Association of Former Disappeared Detainees
Asociación de ex Detenidos Desaparecidos
Carlos Calvo 1780, 1er Piso, Dpto.10 , Timbre 26
1102 AB Buenos Aires, Argentina

Fax: +54 11 4304 8283

Email: aedd@exdesaparecidos.org.ar

and to diplomatic representatives of Argentina accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 November 2006.