

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

ARGENTINA

Pablo Gabriel Salinas (m), human rights lawyer

His family

María Angélica Escayola (f)] human rights lawyers

Alfredo Guevara Escayola (m)]

Human rights lawyer Pablo Gabriel Salinas and his family have been intimidated in an apparent attempt to discourage him and his colleagues from carrying out their legitimate work. Their lives may be in danger.

At 5am on 16 December, Pablo Salinas' wife answered the telephone at the family's home in Mendoza province, western-central Argentina, and heard an unidentified male voice say "I'm going to do everything to you...I'm going to fuck you" ("*te voy a hacer de todo...te voy a culiar*"). On 15 December at approximately the same time Pablo Salinas answered the telephone only to hear a recording of the voice of his eight-month-old son. He believes that the recording of his son must have been a result of his telephone being tapped.

The legal office shared by Pablo Salinas and his colleagues María Angélica Escayola and Alfredo Guevara Escayola has recently been daubed with graffiti. On 5 December the word 'rats' (*ratas*) was painted on the wall of their offices, with an arrow pointing to the entrance. Following the death of one of their colleagues, Alfredo Ramón Guevara, on 15 November, the message "goodbye pig", ("*chau cerdo*") was written on the walls of their offices. Pablo Salinas has filed a judicial complaint with the Public Prosecutor's office (*Fiscalía*) concerning the threats they have received. Amnesty International is not aware of any steps taken by the authorities to investigate the complaint or provide protection to the lawyers.

Pablo Salinas and his colleagues currently represent a number of families of victims of human rights violations committed during the period of military rule in Argentina between 1976 and 1983, as well as families of victims of alleged police killings in Mendoza province. The lawyers have also successfully sought the intervention of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in cases of inhumane treatment and harsh detention conditions in the province's prison establishments.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Human rights defenders working in Mendoza are often the target of harassment and threats. Amnesty International has expressed concern for their safety and has consistently asked for thorough and independent investigations into the judicial and public complaints submitted in relation to the threats.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Pablo Salinas and his family, and also his colleagues, María Angélica Escayola and Alfredo Guevara Escayola;
- calling for an immediate, thorough and independent investigation into the threats and harassment of the lawyers, and of the family of Pablo Salinas; for the results to be made public, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to take the necessary steps to protect and guarantee the safety of Pablo Salinas and his family, and that of his colleagues;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties

recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of Mendoza Province

Gobernador de la Provincia
Ing. Dn. Julio César Cleto Cobos
Casa de Gobierno
Av. L. Peltier 351- 4to piso
5500 Mendoza, ARGENTINA
Fax: + 54 261 44 92 142

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sr. Jorge Taiana
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Esmeralda 1212
1003 Buenos Aires, Argentina
Fax: + 54 11 4819 7359

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/ Dear Minister

Minister of Justice and Security of Mendoza Province

Sr. Ministro de Justicia y Seguridad de la Provincia de Mendoza
Dr. Miguel Bondino
Salta 672
5501 Godoy Cruz, Mendoza, Argentina
Fax: + 54 261 44 99 085 / 020 (if someone answers, ask for the fax: "El tono de fax, por favor").
Salutation: Sr. Ministro/ Dear Minister

Undersecretary for Justice and Human Rights Mendoza Province

Sr. Subsecretario de Justicia y Derechos Humanos de la Provincia de Mendoza
Dr. Alejandro Acosta
Salta 672
5501 Godoy Cruz, Mendoza, Argentina
Fax: + 54 261 44 92 240
Salutation: Sr. Subsecretario/ Dear Undersecretary

COPIES TO:

Legal offices

Rivadavia 680
5500 – Mendoza, Provincia de Mendoza, Argentina

Provincial Newspaper

Diario Los Andes
Avenida San Martín 1049,
5500 Mendoza, Argentina
Fax: + 54 261 420 2011

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 30 January 2006.