

UA 265/99

Fear for

**ARGENTINA Hebe BONAFINI, President of the human rights organisation *Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo*
And members of *Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo***

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of members of the human rights organization *Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo*, Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo Association, who have been threatened and intimidated because of their work for the relatives of the "disappeared".

On 17 September 1999 graffiti was reportedly painted on the organization's headquarters and bookshop, which read: "*Libertad a Massera*", "*Viva Massera*" and "*Viejas putas*" ("Freedom for Massera", "Long live Massera" and "Old Whores"). On 23 September they received a threatening email: "...*sus hijos eran unos locos judíos y terroristas de mierda que ni deberían haber tenido el orgullo de haber nacido en un país glorioso como es la patria nacional cristiana argentina.*" (...your children were crazy Jews and worthless terrorists who shouldn't have had the honour of being born in a glorious country like the national Christian fatherland Argentina."). The message also claimed responsibility for the graffiti.

It is also reported that on 27 September, Hebe Bonafini, President of the *Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo*, received a number of telephone calls from someone claiming to represent the *Comando Massera*, Massera Command, who threatened to blow up the organization's headquarters.

The organisation made a public denunciation of these threats and intimidation on 27 September in the Plaza de Mayo.

Amnesty International believes that the threats and intimidation are related to two court rulings by the Argentine Judiciary in September 1999 against Emilio Massera. Massera was head of the Navy during the military government of 1976 to 1983. On 1 September 1999 the Supreme Court of Argentina ruled that former Admiral Massera should pay \$120,000 in compensation to a victim of human rights violations, for the "disappearance" of his parents, brother, sister and sister-in-law in July 1976. On 9 September 1999 the highest court in Argentina, the Federal Court, confirmed the proceedings against Emilio Massera for seizing and kidnapping babies born in captivity ("*sustracción, retención y ocultación de menores*"), many of whom were adopted by members of the security forces. Emilio Massera has been under house arrest since November 1998.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo* is a women's human rights organisation set up to campaign for their children and relatives, "disappeared" during the years of military government, during which thousands of people were abducted by the security forces and "disappeared".

Amnesty International has consistently urged the Argentine authorities to clarify the fate and whereabouts of the "disappeared", emphasising that the victims' relatives have a right for the truth about what happened to their families to be made public, and for those responsible to be identified.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of its president, Hebe Bonafini, and other members of the *Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo*;
- expressing concern that the threats are an attempt to intimidate Hebe Bonafini and other members of the *Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo*;
- reminding the government of its obligation to clarify the fate and whereabouts of the "disappeared";
- calling for a prompt, full and impartial investigation into the threats and intimidation, for the results to be made public, and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

President

Exmo. Sr. Presidente de la República Argentina
Dr. Carlos Saúl Menem
Casa Rosada, Balcarce 50
Buenos Aires C.F., ARGENTINA

Telegrams:President Menem, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Faxes:+ 5411 4331 6376 / 4331 1849

Salutation:Excelencia / Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

Sr Ministro del Interior
Dr Carlos Corach, Ministerio del Interior
25 de Mayo, 101, 1002 Buenos Aires C.F., ARGENTINA

Telegrams:Ministro Interior, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Faxes: + 5411 4331 1156

(if voice, ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation:Sr Ministro / Dear Minister

Minister of Justice

Ministro de Justicia, Dr Raúl Granillo Ocampo
Ministerio de Justicia, Sarmiento 329, 5o. piso
1041 Buenos Aires, C.F., ARGENTINA

Telegrams:Ministro Justicia, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Faxes: + 5411 4328 6038 / 4328 6039

Salutation:Sr Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organisation

Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo, Hipólito Yrigoyen 1442
1089 Buenos Aires, C.F., ARGENTINA

Faxes: + 5411 4954 0381

Newspaper

Página 12, Av. Belgrano 673
Buenos Aires, C.F., ARGENTINA

Faxes:+ 5411 4334 2330

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 17 November 1999.