

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 13/09/99

UA 311/99

Fear for safety / Death threats

1 December 1999

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 recently been threatened and intimidated as a result of their work on behalf of the "disappeared".

The threats, made to Hebe Bonafini, the president of the *Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo*, were contained in a document sent to the organisation and to the Argentine press, a few days ago. Reportedly the document was issued by the *Alianza Anticomunista Argentina (AAA)*, Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance, a former death squad and right wing paramilitary group active in the 1970s which directed organised violence against what could broadly be called the left - students, lawyers, journalists and militant trade unionists. The document, dated October 1999, indicates that the AAA held a recent congress and threatens to take "direct action" if assistance is given to judicial investigations currently underway abroad, into past human rights violations in Argentina.

The return address on the document was that of the Judicial Morgue where, a few days ago, threatening graffiti had been daubed on the walls. It read: "*Muerte a Bonafini y a las viejas*" ("Death to Bonafini and the old women"), "*Muerte a Bonafini y a las viejas de Plaza de Mayo*" ("Death to Bonafini and the old women of the Plaza de Mayo square"), and "*Cárcel a Bonafini*" ("Prison for Bonafini").

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo* is a women's human rights organisation set up to campaign for their "disappeared" relatives. Amnesty International issued another Urgent Action on behalf of its members in October 1999 (see UA 265/99 Argentina, AMR 13/03/99, 6 October 1999 and follow ups) after the association received a threatening phone call and E-mail, and threatening graffiti was daubed on its walls.

The organization has consistently urged the Argentine authorities to clarify the fate and whereabouts of the "disappeared", stating that the victims' relatives have a right for the truth to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Hebe Bonafini and other members of the *Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo*, who have been threatened, in an apparent attempt to intimidate them;
- calling for a prompt, full and impartial investigation into the threats and intimidation against them, for the results to be made public, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- reminding the government of its obligation to clarify the fate and whereabouts of those who "disappeared" during Argentina's military rule and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to publicly repudiate all harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders, and to publicly recognize the important contribution that human rights defenders make to the protection of human rights and the promotion of a society which fully respects human rights.

APPEALS TO:

On 10 December 1999 the new president-elect, Fernando de la Rúa, and his new cabinet will take office. Please address all postal appeals to the new president and to the individual ministerial offices. Please address all fax and telegram appeals sent before this date to the names given below:

President

Exmo. Sr. Presidente de la República
Argentina
Dr. Carlos Saúl Menem
Casa Rosada, Balcarce 50
1064 Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA
Telegrams: President Menem, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Faxes: + 54 114 344 3700 / 3800
Salutation: Excelencia / Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

Sr Ministro del Interior
Dr Carlos Corach, Ministerio del Interior
Balcarce 24, 1064 Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA
Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Faxes: + 54 114 331 7051 (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, ARGENTINA
Telegrams: Ministro Justicia, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Faxes: + 54 114 328 6038 / 4328 6039
Salutation: Sr Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organization
Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo, Hipólito Yrigoyen 1442
1089 Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA
Faxes: + 54 114 954 0381

Newspaper

Página 12, Av. Belgrano 673
Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA
Faxes: + 54 114 334 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 7 January 1999.