

UA 197/01

Fear for

ECUADOR Teresa Gladys Pita Bravo [f] mother of "disappeared"
Gino Cevallos González [m] human rights lawyer

The mother of a man who "disappeared" in November 2000 and a lawyer acting on his behalf have received death threats over the past few months. Amnesty International is concerned for their safety.

Teresa Gladys Pita Bravo and Gino Cevallos González have been receiving death threats since June 2001. Teresa Gladys Pita Bravo's son, Elias Elint Lopez, "disappeared" after having been detained by the police in Tungurahua Province in November 2000. Gino Cevallos Gonzalez is the lawyer who is representing Elias Elint Lopez at the trial of eight police officers who have been charged with his "disappearance" and that of a witness to his detention, Luis Shinin, who also "disappeared" after testifying in the case.

Amnesty International has recently learnt that a police officer threatened Gino Cevallos Gonzalez in June 2001 telling him "we will see what will happen to you..." ("*Vamos a ver lo que te va a pasar*"). Since then he has been receiving telephone threats from unknown people. Teresa Gladys Pita Bravo received a telephone call on 9 July 2001 (after the Supreme Court of Justice transferred the case from the police courts to the civil courts) in which she was reportedly told that, if she continued with the judicial proceedings, her other son would "suffer the same consequences" ("*igual suerte correria su otro hijo*"). Since then, she has lived in fear for the safety of her family.

The Ecuadorean authorities must take all the necessary steps to guarantee the safety of Teresa Gladys Pita Bravo and Gino Cevallos Gonzalez as well as that of the families of both victims and all the witnesses and lawyers in this case.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to reports, on 6 November 2000, Elias Elint Lopez Pita, owner of a sea food restaurant, from the town of Ambato, Tungurahua Province, was arrested at the Panamericana Norte police check point of Ambato, as he was travelling in a bus from Ambato to Esmeraldas Province. His whereabouts are unknown. On 7 November 2000, the prosecutor investigating the "disappearance" heard the testimony of Luis Alberto Shinin Laso, who was at the time in police custody. Elias Lopez apparently told Luis Shinin, when they met at the main police station, that he was being held on suspicion of robbery and that he had been beaten up by police officers. Luis Shinin was later released but, on 14 November 2000, was abducted by unidentified gunmen and taken by car to the outskirts of Ambato, where he was shot and thrown over a cliff. He survived this attack but on 17 November 2000, according to hospital staff, at least six armed men in balaclavas burst into the hospital where he was being treated and kidnapped him. He has not been seen since.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Teresa Gladys Pita Bravo, Gino Cevallos Gonzalez and all other witnesses and lawyers in this case;
- urging the authorities to do everything necessary to guarantee their safety;
- asking the authorities to order a prompt and effective investigation into the threats these two persons have been subjected to, to publish the findings and bring those responsible to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior and Police

Dr. Juan Manrique Martínez

Ministerio de Gobierno y Policía

Benalcázar y Espejo

Quito

Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 580-067

Telegram: Ministerio de Gobierno, Quito, Ecuador

Salutation: Señor Ministro/ Dear Minister

Head of the National Police

Ing. Jorge Guillermo Molina Nuñez

Comandante General de la Policía Nacional

Ramírez Dávalos 612 y Av. 10 de Agosto

Quito

Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 508 724 / + 593 2 506 066

Telegram: Comandante General Policía Nacional, Quito, Ecuador

Salutation: Señor Inspector General/Dear Chief Inspector

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organization

Comisión Ecuménica de Derechos Humanos

Carlos Ibarra 176 y 10 de Agosto

Edificio Yuraj Pirca, Piso 9

Quito

Ecuador

and to diplomatic representatives of Ecuador accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 September 2001.