

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Threats/Intimidation

9 March 1993

GUATEMALA:

Axel MEJÍA

José Antonio HIGUEROS GONZÁLEZ, 20

Amnesty International has learned of a renewed series of death threats against Axel Mejía, a street educator with Covenant House (Casa Alianza), a refuge for street children. Amnesty International is also concerned at the beating of street youth José Antonio Higueros González on 1 March 1993 reportedly by two plain clothes members of the National Police.

At approximately 9.45 am on 2 March 1993, the Secretary of the Casa Alianza boys' Crisis Centre, where Axel Mejía works as a Supervisor, received a telephone call from an anonymous male who said "Tell Axel Mejía not to go out tonight" ("*Avisale a Axel Mejía que no salga esta noche*"). On the same day at approximately 7.30 pm the guard of the boys' centre received an anonymous telephone call from a male who said "This week we will kill Axel Mejía" ("*esta semana mataremos a Axel Mejía*").

On the following day, at approximately 11.45 am a woman called the boys' Crisis Centre, and spoke to the nurse, asking to speak to the Social Worker. The woman said "Take care if you go around with Axel Mejía, because he has only a few days left to live, and if you do you will join the queue." ("*Ten cuidado de andar con Axel Mejía porque a él le quedan pocos días de vida y si lo haces también te vas en la colada.*")

In a separate incident street youth José Antonio Higueros González reported that he was sleeping under a bridge in Zone 1 of Guatemala City, when two men in plain clothes woke him up and identified themselves with National Police badges. They told José Antonio Higueros to hand over a gold chain they said they knew he had stolen, and when he denied stealing the gold chain they kicked him on the side of his face. They continued kicking him and demanding the gold chain and when he persisted in claiming his innocence they threw him into a grey and white Jeep they were driving and took him to a park in Zone 2 of the city. There the two policemen punched him in the head and nose, causing his nose to bleed. They confiscated his *cédula* (identification papers) and then released him, warning that if they saw him again they would put him in prison.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over two years ago Covenant House began denouncing human rights violations against street children in Guatemala, including beatings, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial executions, reportedly carried out by official security force agents. Since that time its workers have been consistently targeted by the security forces. Street educators like Axel Mejía have been subjected to harassment and intimidation, either because of their work protecting street children from abuse, because they have denounced human rights violations against the street children or because they have provided evidence as witnesses in judicial proceedings against members of the security forces. Axel Mejía has been consistently intimidated and threatened with death since November 1990 when he was the

principal witness to an incident involving abuse of street children by members of the National Police, Treasury Police and Mobile Military Police. (see Guatemala: Children in Fear, AI Index: AMR 34/24/92 of May 1992).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in Spanish, English or in your own language:

- expressing concern at the renewed series of threats made against Axel Mejía;
 - asking that these threats be investigated and that those found responsible be brought to justice;
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- calling for protection for Axel Mejía and all those working to protect street children;
 - expressing concern also at the beating reportedly by members of the National Police, of street youth José Antonio Higueros González;
 - asking for an investigation into the beating and that those responsible be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías
Presidente de la República de Guatemala
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala

**Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente /
Dear President**

Telegrams: Presidente Serrano, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telephone: + 502 2 21212, + 502 2 22266
Faxes: + 502 2 537472; + 502 2 519702
Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU

2) Minister of the Interior:

Lic. Francisco Perdomo
Ministro de Gobernación
Despacho Ministerial
Oficina No. 8, Primer Nivel
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro /
Dear Minister**

Telegrams: Ministro Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telephone: + 502 2 21212, ext 500; + 502 2 518105-6 (direct)
Faxes: + 502 2 518105
Telexes: 5085 MINGOB GU

3) Director of National Police:

Lic. Leopoldo Armando Guerra
Director General de la Policía Nacional
6 Avenida 13-71
Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Salutation: Sr. Director General /
Dear Director General**

Telegrams: Director General de la Policia Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telephone: + 502 2 20221 to 26, + 502 2 515158
Faxes: + 502 2 533057

4) Minister of Defence:

Gral. José García Samayoa
Jefe del Estado Mayor de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala

**Salutation: Señor Ministro /
Dear Minister**

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala

Telephone: + 502 2 21212, ext 2226

Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Interim Attorney General:

Lic. Edgar Tuna Valladares
Procurador General de la Nación
Procuraduría General de la Nación
18 Calle 10-36, Zona 1, Guatemala
Guatemala

Newspaper:

Diario Siglo XXI
7a Avenida 11-79
Edificio Galerias España, 6o piso
Zona 9, Guatemala, Guatemala

Human Rights Procurator:

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio
Procurador de Derechos Humanos
Avenida Simeón Cañas 10-61
Zona 2,
Guatemala, Guatemala

Covenant House:

Casa Alianza
Apartado Postal 2704
Zona 1, Guatemala
Guatemala

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 April 1993.