

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 34/10/96

22 March 1996

Further information on UA 62/96 (AMR 34/08/96, 1 March 1996) - Fear for Safety

GUATEMALA Vilma Cristina GONZÁLEZ (f)

Reynaldo Federico GONZÁLEZ, brother of above, trade union leader

new name: Sergio GONZÁLEZ, 16-year-old son of Vilma Cristina González

Amnesty International is once again gravely concerned for the safety of Vilma Cristina González following a second abduction on 17 March 1996, and for her son, Sergio González, who was abducted on 8 March. Vilma González was released after about 10 hours and was reported to have suffered about 130 burns to her body which could have been caused by cigarettes or by a metallic instrument.

Both Vilma and her brother Reynaldo González, Secretary General of the *Federación Sindical de Empleados Bancarios y de Seguros de Guatemala* (FESBES), Federation of Trade Unions of Bank and Insurance Employees, had previously been warned to leave the country.

Around-the-clock National Police protection was provided to Vilma Cristina González at the beginning of March following repeated threats and intimidation against her and her brother, and after her abduction on 27 February. However, the police presence was reportedly reduced to passing patrols on 6 March, despite continued death threats. On 4 March, Vilma González received a written death threat which was pushed under the door of her home. On the morning of 17 March, Vilma González was abducted by two, possibly three, men driving a black vehicle, as she went to visit a neighbour. She was blindfolded and driven to a house where she was tortured and questioned about her brother's activities. She was released about 10 hours later near a fire station. A representative of the forensic examiner's office of the Public Ministry (*Ministerio Público*) examined Vilma González and she was subsequently transferred to hospital for emergency treatment. She had suffered burns to her arms, legs, back and breasts.

On 8 March Sergio González, the 16-year-old son of Vilma González was reportedly abducted. Neighbours saw armed men force him into a vehicle and drive off at high speed. He was subsequently released at 5.30am on 10 March. He had not been physically harmed.

On 6 March trade union leader Reynaldo González received a written death threat and was followed by two men. He was followed again on 7 March. On 14 March, he, his wife and two children left Guatemala.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned at the failure of the government to provide the necessary protection for Vilma González and her family, and calls it to initiate immediate investigations into the abductions, torture, rape of Vilma González, the abduction of her son Sergio González and the death threats she and her family have been receiving.

Reynaldo González has been very active in setting up the *Gran Alianza Sindical*, a trade union umbrella alliance, a recent effort to unify the trade union movement in Guatemala. He has also been the principle union representative before the National Salary Commission and it is believed that these activities may be the reason for the attacks and intimidation suffered by him and his family.

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

- expressing grave concern for the safety of Vilma González, following her abduction for a second time on 17 March and for the safety of her son Sergio González following his abduction on 8 March;
- asking that immediate and adequate measures be taken to provide for her physical safety as well as for the safety of her family;
- calling upon the authorities to initiate an immediate and thorough investigation into both abductions of Vilma Cristina González and that of her son Sergio González, as well as the death threats against the family, including Reynaldo González, and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Álvaro Arzú Irigoyen
Presidente de la República de Guatemala
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Presidente Arzú Irigoyen, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: +502 2 537 472
Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President

2) Vice Minister of Interior:

Lic. Mario René Cifuentes
Vice-Ministro de Gobernación,
Ministerio de Gobernación
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Vice Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 2 537 472
Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Minister of Defence

Gral. Julio Arnoldo Balconi Turcios
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala
Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Fiscal General

Lic. Ramses Cuestas Gómez
Fiscal General de la Nación
Ministerio Público, 18 Calle 10-36, Zona 1
Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Faxes: +502 2 537 554 / 530 482

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Jorge García Laguardia
Procurador de los Derechos Humanos
12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1,
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

FESBES

10 Calle 7-43, Zona 1
Edificio Torin, 5 nivel, of. 53
Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Faxes: +502 2 518553

Newspaper
Siglo 21, 11-63, zona 9
Edificio Galerías España, 6o piso
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

COPIES 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 6 May 1996.