

PUBLIC

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UA 283/03 Fear for safety/Possible extrajudicial execution

GUATEMALA Amílcar Méndez (m)
Angélica Macario (f)
Tomás Guarcas (m)
Other members of *Consejo de Comunidades Etnicas Runujel Junam* (CERJ),
Council of Ethnic Communities "We Are All Equal"

Killed: Eusebio Macario (m)

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Amílcar Méndez, founder of indigenous rights organization *Comunidades Etnicas Runujel Junam* (CERJ), Council of Ethnic Communities "We Are All Equal", Tomás Guarcas and Angélica Macario, coordinators of CERJ, and other members of the organization. Eusebio Macario, a coordinator of CERJ and the father of Angélica Macario, was assassinated on 27 September.

Eusebio Macario, who was one of the founding members of CERJ, was killed at around 7pm on 27 September near his house in the village of Chulumal, Chichicastenago, El Quiché department. He was walking near his home when he was reportedly shot eight times by unknown assailants. On 1 October, Amílcar Méndez received an anonymous telephone call to his mobile phone, in which he was threatened "*Ya hicimos justicia con Eusebio, vayan a quejarse con su Procurador hijo de la gran puta y con los gringos, hijos de la gran puta*" ("We already carried out justice with Eusebio, go on complain to the Procurator, that son of a bitch, and to the Yankees, sons of bitches").

It is feared that the assassination may be in reprisal for CERJ's work on behalf of victims of Guatemala's internal civil conflict of the early 1980s. Tens of thousands of non-combatant rural and indigenous people were executed or "disappeared" at the hands of the Guatemalan military and their civilian adjuncts, *Patrulleros de Defensa Civil* (PAC), Civil Defence Patrols during the conflict. CERJ seeks to obtain reparations for the victims of the conflict.

Approximately two weeks before his death, Eusebio Macario had reportedly had a public argument with a local mayoral candidate for the ruling party, the *Frente Republicano Guatemalteco* (FRG), Guatemalan Republican Front, during a campaign rally. Two days later he was allegedly followed by a car without license plates. On 21 September, Eusebio Macario and other members of CERJ organized a meeting to inform victims of the conflict of their right to reparations. Five days later, three unidentified men reportedly asked a number of members of the local community about who had been mobilizing the community on reparations and other human rights issues.

Amnesty International fears that Amílcar Méndez, Angélica Macario and Tomás Guarcas are particularly at risk of further reprisals as they are all particularly prominent members of CERJ.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

CERJ has been a long-term target of human rights violations. The organization believes that these recent human rights violations are being carried out by former members of the PAC. During the armed conflict these paramilitary groups operated alongside the army, and committed gross human rights abuses. They were declared illegal, and were supposedly disbanded, under the Peace Accords, but former patrol leaders continue to exercise power in many communities and some post-war violations have been attributed to re-surfacing patrols.

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

- expressing grave concern at the killing of Eusebio Macario, coordinator of *Comunidades Etnicas Runujel Junam* (CERJ), and at the death threat reportedly received by Amílcar Méndez, founder of CERJ;
- expressing serious concern for the safety of Amílcar Méndez, Angélica Macario, Tomás Guarcas and other members of CERJ;
- urging the authorities to take adequate measures, in accordance with the wishes of those at risk, to ensure their safety;
- calling on the authorities to immediately, independently and exhaustively investigate the assassination of Eusebio Macario, to make the results of the investigation public and to bring those found to be responsible to justice;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals;
- asking the authorities to implement the Peace Accords and full fill its obligations to provide reparation and assistance to those who suffered human rights violations during the civil conflict as called in under the Peace Accords.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic of Guatemala

Lic. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera

6a Avenida "A" 4-41 Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: + 502 238 3579

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/ Dear President

Ministro de Gobernación

Lic. Adolfo Reyes Calderón

6ª Avenida 4-64, Zona 4

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: + 502 362 0239

Salutation: Señor Ministro/ Dear Minister

Director General of the National Civil Police

6a Avenida 13-71, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: + 502 251 9382

Salutation: Señor Director/Dear Director

Special Prosecutor on Human Rights Defenders

Licenciada Telma de Lam

Fiscal Especial en activistas de derechos humanos

7ta Avenida 11-20 Zona 1 Segundo Nivel

Unidad de Fiscalía Especial Nro. 2

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telefax: + 502 230 5296/230 5306

Salutation: Estimada Señora/Dear Madam

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Sergio Morales, Procurador de Derechos Humanos

Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos

12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1, Ciudad de Guatemala 01001, GUATEMALA

Fax: + 502 230 0874 / 76 / 77 / 78 / 238 1734 (if someone answers, please say "fax, por favor")

Indigenous Rights Organization

Centro de Comunidades Étnicas “Runujel Junam” (CERJ)
10 Avda. 10-44, zona 1,
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax: + 502 755 1672

Newspaper

Diario Prensa Libre
13 Calle 9-31, Zona I
Ciudad de Guatemala 01001, GUATEMALA
Fax: + 502 251 8768/ 230 2193/ 230 2257

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 13 November 2003.