

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear for Safety / Death threats

17 March 1995

HONDURAS

Norma Bessy JERESANO DE RIVAS (f)  
Óscar Wilfredo JERESANO MURILLO, her brother  
Mayra BETANCOURTH (f)  
Bessy Maribel JERESANO BETANCOURTH (f)  
Juan Pablo RIVAS JERESANO

and other members of the Jeresano family

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of members of the Jeresano family, who have reportedly been subjected to death threats, harassment and surveillance since the killing in early 1995 of Norma Bessy Jeresano de Rivas's husband, Juan Pablo Rivas Calderón.

Juan Pablo Rivas Calderón, a retired army major, was shot dead by unidentified individuals in San Pedro Sula on 4 January, in circumstances which have yet to be officially clarified. Since his death, it has emerged that Juan Pablo Rivas Calderón's killing may be related to charges brought by him in 1993 against the former head of the Armed Forces, Humberto Regalado Hernández, for corruption.

Hours after the killing, neighbours saw unidentified individuals apparently watching Norma Bessy Jeresano de Rivas' home from several vehicles. On the evening of Juan Pablo Rivas Calderón's funeral, the same vehicles, which had no number plates, were seen circling the home. Shortly afterwards Óscar Wilfredo Jeresano Murillo received an anonymous telephone call warning him not to continue calling for an investigation into the killing of Juan Pablo Rivas Calderón. Óscar Wilfredo Jeresano Murillo's partner, Mayra Betancourth, was also followed by a suspicious vehicle as she took their daughter, Bessy Maribel, to school. The same vehicle has been seen watching their home.

Norma Bessy Jeresano de Rivas has also received anonymous telephone calls, in which the caller either asks who lives there or just breathes heavily down the telephone. On 7 March, Juan Pablo Rivas Calderón's son, Juan Pablo Rivas Jeresano, was on his way to buy drinks when a similar car without number plates appeared deliberately to try to run him over. Juan Pablo Rivas Jeresano narrowly avoided the car and was shaken but unhurt.

According to a complaint presented before the *Comité de Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos de Honduras (COFADEH)*, Committee of Relatives of the Detained-Disappeared in Honduras, the family believes the harassment is intended to intimidate them and other witnesses, so as to stall the investigation into the killing of Juan Pablo Rivas Calderón. No progress appears to have been made in investigating this killing.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The killing of Juan Pablo Rivas Calderón and the threats against his family have occurred in the context of recent moves by the one-year-old government of President Carlos Roberto Reina to investigate human rights abuses and acts of corruption by officials of previous administrations.

Human rights activists campaigning for the bringing to justice of those responsible for past "disappearances" have received death threats, believed to be issued by sectors of the military linked to these abuses. Members of

the press who have denounced corruption by powerful economic sectors, including the military, have also received threats.

The government of President Carlos Roberto Reina has repeatedly voiced its commitment to end impunity for human rights violations by the military and for acts of official corruption. However, Amnesty International is concerned that those allegedly responsible for these abuses may be resorting to threats and intimidation to prevent the truth about these abuses from emerging.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the above-named members of the Jeresano family, following reports that they have been threatened and intimidated, apparently in connection with their calls for an investigation into the killing of Juan Pablo Rivas Calderón;
- asking for steps to be taken to ensure their protection, including the investigation of these incidents and the bringing to justice of those responsible;
- calling for measures to guarantee the safety of all those involved in denouncing human rights violations and official acts of corruption, including witnesses, relatives, human rights activists and members of the press.

**APPEALS TO**

1) President of the Republic

S.E. Carlos Roberto Reina  
 Presidente de la República de Honduras  
 Casa Presidencial, 6<sup>a</sup> Avenida, 1<sup>a</sup> Calle  
 Tegucigalpa, Honduras

**Telegrams: Presidente Reina, Tegucigalpa, Honduras**

**Faxes: +504 37 85 21 and 34 49 47 and 34 19 66**

**Telexes: 1129 MMRR HO/1429 HO**

**Salutation: Sr. President / Dear Mr. President**

2) Attorney General

Lic. Edmundo Orellana Mercado  
 Fiscal General  
 Fiscalía General de la República  
 Ministerio Público  
 4° Avda, Colonia Palmira, Edificio Castillo Poujol  
 contiguo del Colegio de Enfermeras  
 Tegucigalpa, Honduras

**Telegrams: Fiscal General, Tegucigalpa, Honduras**

**Faxes: +504 39 36 97 and 39 36 98**

**Salutation: Sr. Fiscal General/Dear General Attorney**

3) Human Rights Commissioner

Lic. Leo Valladares Lanza  
 Comisionado Nacional para la Protección de los Derechos Humanos  
 Edificio Las Cumbres, Quinto Piso  
 Ave. Cervantes, Apdo. 2986  
 Tegucigalpa, Honduras

**Faxes: +504 38 75 38**

**Salutation: Sr. Comisionado/Dear Commissioner**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Human Rights Organization

COFADEH

Apartado Postal 1243, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

**Fax: +504 37 98 00**Daily newspaper

Diario Tiempo

Altos del Centro Comercial Prisa,

Colonia Miramontés, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

**Faxes: +504 534590; Tel/Fax: +504 310422**Radio

Radio América

Colonia Alameda, AP 259, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

**Faxes: +504 31 29 23**Head of the Honduran Armed Forces

Jefe de las Fuerzas Armadas de Honduras

Gral. Luis A. Discua Elvir

Cuartel General, Estado Mayor, Comayagüela, Honduras

**Fax/Tel: +504 37 32 95**

and to diplomatic representatives of Honduras accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 May 1995.