

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 46/24/00

UA 220/00

Fear for safety/Death threats

20 July 2000

PERU

Luzmila Sifuentes Reyes, opposition activist, and her family

Opposition activist Luzmila Sifuentes Reyes has received a letter threatening her and her family after she complained that police had threatened and robbed her.

Luzmila Sifuentes Reyes is an activist with the opposition party *Peru Posible*. The party leader, Alejandro Toledo, pulled out of the second round of the elections, claiming the ballot was rigged. President Alberto Fujimori won a third term in office, despite widespread allegations of fraud and other irregularities.

The elections were followed in late June by demonstrations, which tried to attract the attention of a delegation from the Organisation of American States (OAS) sent to Peru in the wake of the elections to explore ways of strengthening democracy in the country. Luzmila Sifuentes photographed the security forces using teargas on demonstrators on 27 June. Police officers who saw her reportedly threatened to rape her and stole some of her belongings.

She reported these abuses to the police authorities that day. On 18 July a letter was delivered to her home in the capital, Lima, which read:

"Señora Luzmila, this is to inform you that your daughter could be in danger. You should take very good care of her, because if you don't, we will take care of her. We also wish to inform you that we have spoken to her, and we know that she has two brothers, called Paulo and Pedro. Pedro is 16 years old and Paulo is 12; you have a maid whose name is Elvira and your husband is called Pedro. So be very careful. Take care. Your family is very close. You do not want it to split up, do you?)

"Señora Luzmila: Le anuncio que su hija puede estar en peligro. Cuidela muy bien porque sino la tendremos que cuidar nosotros. También queremos decirle que ya hemos hablado con ella y ya sabemos que tiene dos hermanos que se llaman Paulo y Pedro. Pedro tiene 16 años y Paulo 12 años, tiene ustedes una empleada que se llama Elvira y su esposo Pedro. Así que tengan mucho cuidado. Cuidense. Esa familia es muy unida. No quieren que se separe?"

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

President Fujimori's victory was tainted by allegations of ballot-rigging during the first and second rounds of the election, in April and May. Many consider a third term in office to be unconstitutional. Since the election there has been a series of demonstrations, where the security forces have reportedly used excessive force against protesters.

There is serious concern that the election result will mean that respect and protection for fundamental human rights are seriously undermined. The allegations of fraud and irregularities in the elections led the OAS General Assembly to send a high-level mission to Peru in June to explore "with the government of Peru and other sectors of the political community, options and recommendations aimed at further strengthening democracy in that country..." (OAS General Assembly, Resolution 1753). The mission has recommended a number of measures, including a National Plan for the protection of human rights.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Luzmila Sifuentes Reyes and her family, who received death threats on 18 July 2000;
- urging the authorities to take all necessary measures to protect Luzmila Sifuentes Reyes and her family;
- calling on the authorities to conduct an independent and impartial investigation into the death threats and bring those responsible to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Señor Alberto Bustamante Belaúnde
Primer Ministro
Palacio de Gobierno
Plaza Mayor
Lima 1, PERÚ

Fax: + 511 447 1628

Salutation: Sr. Primer Ministro/Dear First Minister

General César Enrique Saucedo
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Plaza 30 de Agosto s/n
Urb. Córpac
San Isidro
Lima 27, PERÚ

Fax: + 511 224 2405 /+511 475 3419

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Non-governmental human rights organisation
Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos
Jr. Túpac Amaru 2467
Lince
Lima 14
PERU

and to diplomatic representatives of Peru accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 September 2000.