

10 March 1998

**Further information on UA 267/97 (AMR 53/10/97, 11 August 1997)- Torture/Fear for safety**

**VENEZUELA Wilfredo Alvarado Baldaggio, president of the *Asociación Pro-Vivienda de Brisas del Turbio I*, Brisas del Turbio I Pro-Housing Association and community activist**

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There are renewed fears concerning the safety of community activist Wilfredo Alvarado Baldaggio after he was threatened by a member of the National Guard on or around 11 February 1998.

Wilfredo Alvarado was arbitrarily detained by members of the *Guardia Nacional* (GN) National Guard, in his home town of Barquisimeto on 16 July 1997. They allegedly severely tortured him -- he was suspended upside-down, given electric shocks and beatings and subjected to a mock execution. On 17 July he was transferred to the headquarters of the *Policía del Estado Lara*, Lara State police in Barquisimeto. Here the police chief reportedly threatened him with death. Upon his release, on 22 July, he continued to receive death threats from unidentified policemen eventually forcing him to leave Barquisimeto. Family and local residents who campaigned for his release were also threatened and death threats were daubed on walls near his home.

A complaint against members of the National Guard responsible for the arrest and torture of Wilfredo Alvarado has been opened. The case is currently at the pre-investigative phase known as the *información de nudo hecho*, a preliminary judicial investigation into complaints committed by members of the police or armed forces while on duty or by reason of their position. It is thought the threats are an attempt to deter him from pursuing the case.

According to reports, the February incident occurred as Wilfredo Alvarado Baldaggio was leaving the offices of the Public Ministry in Barquisimeto, Lara State. A member of the National Guard climbed into his taxi and threatened him, reportedly telling him that he was in trouble with them.

His detention and the subsequent threats are believed to be linked to a dispute between local authorities and members of the *Asociación Pro-Vivienda de Brisas del Turbio I*, Brisas del Turbio I Pro-Housing Association community, over the land where they live.

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

- expressing concern at the death threats suffered by Wilfredo Alvarado;
- calling for thorough investigations into the threats and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- expressing serious concern at the arbitrary detention and torture of Wilfredo Alvarado and calling for all those responsible to be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) Minister of the Presidency

Doctor Asdrúbal Aguiar  
Secretaría de la Presidencia  
Palacio de Miraflores  
Caracas, Venezuela

**Telegrams: Secretaría Presidencia, Caracas, Venezuela**

**Faxes: + 58 2 861 0793**  
**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

2) Attorney General

Dr Iván Darío Badell González  
Fiscal General de la República  
Esquina de Manduca a Ferrenquín,  
Caracas, Venezuela

**Telegrams: Fiscal General, Caracas, Venezuela**  
**Faxes: + 58 2 564 74 61**  
**Salutation: Sr. Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General**

3) Governor of the State of Lara

Dr. Orlando Fernández Medina  
Gobernador del Estado Lara  
Palacio de Gobierno  
Barquisimeto  
Venezuela

**Telegrams: Gobernador Estado Lara, Barquisimeto, Venezuela**  
**Faxes: + 58 51 312157**  
**Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor**

**COPIES TO:**

Human Rights Organization

Sres., Red de Apoyo por la Justicia y la Paz  
Apartado Postal No.17.476.  
Parque Central  
Caracas 1015-A  
Venezuela

**Faxes: + 58 2 574 1949**

Human Rights Organization

Sres. Asociación Pro-Defensa de los Derechos Humanos  
de Barquisimeto (APRODEH)  
Apartado Postal 675  
Barquisimeto  
Estado Lara, Venezuela

and to diplomatic representatives of Venezuela accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 21 April 1998.