

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 53/06/98

29 July 1998

Further information on UA 194/98 (AMR 53/04/98, 8 July 1998) - Fear for safety / Death threats

VENEZUELA Alcira Benítez (f), mother of murdered Nilson Enrique Benítez  
Rosario Estrada (f), sister of above  
Alicia Guerrero

Sergio Salvador, human rights worker  
Maridex Valera, human rights worker  
Teolindo Rojas, human rights worker  
and human rights volunteers

Killed: Nilson Enrique Benítez, taxi driver, son of Alcira  
Benítez  
José Lino Pirela, blacksmith  
Omar Montiel

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Further serious incidents involving threats to the safety of Sergio Salvador and Alcira Benítez have recently occurred.

Late in the evening on 13 July 1998 shots were fired into the home of Alcira Benítez from a large white car which drove past at high speed. Alcira Benítez was standing on her doorstep at the time to greet her daughter as she arrived home. There were no injuries and the relevant authorities were informed.

On 27 July Sergio Salvador was approached by two strangers as he left the offices of the *Red de Apoyo por la Justicia y la Paz*, Support Network for Justice and Peace where he is a volunteer. He was warned by them to "*que dejen lo de la exhumación [del cuerpo de Nilson Benítez] porque si no tu serás el próximo exhumado*", "leave the exhumation [of Nilson Benítez's body] alone or else you will be next". He also noticed that a third person, sitting nearby in a car, was pointing a gun at him. Again the relevant authorities were informed.

The harassment and threats to Sergio Salvador and Alcira Benítez follow their involvement in the investigation into the reported extrajudicial executions of Nilson Enrique Benítez, José Lino Pirela and Omar Montiel by the *Policía Técnica Judicial (PTJ)* Criminal Investigations Police, on 5 June. Those who have been targeted so far include relatives of the victims, eye witnesses to the killings and volunteer members of the human rights organization *Red de Apoyo por la Justicia y la Paz*.

Amnesty International is not aware of further threats to those also named above but continues to be concerned for their safety.

**Please continue appeals as specified in original UA taking into account the above information. Appeals by telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or in your own language:**

- expressing serious concern at the continued death threats and harassment targeted at Sergio Salvador and Alcira Benítez and calling for guarantees for their safety;
- calling for guarantees for the safety of the others named above;
- urging the government to carry out an immediate investigation into the death threats and harassment of those involved in the case and for those responsible to be brought to justice;

- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the killings of the three men to be carried out without delay and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Justice

Hilarión Cardoza  
Ministro de Justicia  
Ministerio de Justicia  
Torre Norte, piso 25  
Centro Simón Bolívar  
Caracas, Venezuela

**Telegrams: Ministro Justicia, Caracas, Venezuela**

**Faxes: + 582 483 7515**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

Attorney General

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

**Telegrams: Fiscal General, Caracas, Venezuela**

**Faxes: + 58 2 564 74 61**

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

Director of the Criminal Investigations Police

Comisario José Ramón Lazo Ricardi  
Director del Cuerpo Técnico de Policía Judicial  
Esquina de No. Pastor  
a Puente Victoria  
Ed. Parque Carabobo PB  
Caracas, Venezuela

**Telegrams: Director PTJ, Caracas, Venezuela**

**Faxes: + 582 574 09 72**

**Salutation: Sr Director / Dear Director**

President of the National Human Rights Commission

Dr. Asdrubal Aguiar  
Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos  
Palacio de Miraflores  
Edificio Bicentenario, Nivel Plaza, Of. 206  
Caracas, Venezuela

**Faxes: + 582 806 39 42**

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

**COPIES TO:**

Sres.  
Red de Apoyo por la Justicia y la Paz  
Apartado Postal 17.476  
Parque Central  
Caracas 1015-A  
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 9 September 1998.