

15 August 2002

Further information on UA 200/02 (AMR 34/041/2002, 2 July 2002) - Fear for safety

GUATEMALA Arturo Felipe Molina (m), aged 23 - seriously injured
Other peasant farmers belonging to the *Asociación de la comunidad de los Cerritos*, the Cerritos Community Association, associated with the *Comité de Unidad Campesina*, Peasants' Unity Committee (CUC)

Arturo Felipe Molina, a member of the community organization, *Asociación de la comunidad de los Cerritos*, the Cerritos Community Association, has been attacked on the *Las Quebradas* plantation. He is currently in a critical condition in hospital. This appears to be another example of serious intimidation by plantation security personnel against peasant activists involved in the occupation of the *Las Quebradas* plantation over recent months.

At 8.30am on 11 August, Arturo Felipe Molina was shot and seriously injured as he farmed a plot of land on the *Las Quebradas* plantation. He had been involved in the occupation of the *Las Quebradas* plantation, where 236 families presently occupy the land in an attempt to press the government to recognize what they believe is their right to cultivate the land.

Las Quebradas is the property of a woman with US nationality and the entrance to the plantation is manned by private security personnel, who are thought to be responsible for this shooting, and for other recent killings of peasant activists. All of the victims have been members of the *Asociación de la comunidad de los Cerritos*, the Cerritos Community Association. Guatemalan peasant organizations believe that the attack is an effort to intimidate local land activists to stop the occupation of the plantation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Land conflict in Izabal department has now claimed the lives of six land activists since April 2001. Most recently three peasant activists were shot dead, reportedly by plantation security personnel (see original UA, and UA 205/02, AMR 34/042/2002, 8 July 2002). In March 2002 land activist José Benjamín Pérez González of the neighbouring Languin II banana plantation was reportedly shot first by the National Civil Police and then in the head by a local ranch owner (see UA 90/02, AMR 34/020/2002). To date, none of those who ordered the crimes have been brought to justice.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals in Spanish or your own language:

- calling on the government to investigate the attack against Arturo Felipe Molina, to make the results public and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate measures to guarantee the safety of Arturo Felipe Molina and other members of the *Asociación de la comunidad de los Cerritos*, Cerritos Community Association and others involved in the land occupations in the Izabal department;
- urging the authorities to investigate allegations of a pattern of abuse and intimidation against peasant farmers involved in land disputes in the Izabal Department, including at the *Las Quebradas* plantation by plantation security personnel;
- pressing the authorities to investigate all those involved in all recent killings arising from land disputes, making the results public and bringing those responsible to justice;

- reminding the authorities that under Guatemalan legislation, private security forces are licensed by government agencies and that it is therefore the responsibility of the authorities to ensure proper and effective control over the operations of such groups;

- urging the authorities to take action to peacefully resolve the land disputes in these and other communities, to prevent further human rights violations.

APPEALS TO:

Attorney General

Lic. Carlos David de León Argueta
Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General del Ministerio Público
8a. Avenida 10-57
Tercer nivel
Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegram: Fiscal General de la República, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: + 502 221 2718

Salutation: Señor Fiscal/Dear Sir

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Adolfo Reyes Calderón
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
6ª Avenida 4-64, Zona 4
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegram: Ministro de Gobernación, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: + 502 362 0237

Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Secretary of Strategic Affairs

Lic. Edgar A. Gutiérrez
Secretario de Asuntos Estratégicos
Secretaría de Asuntos Estratégicos
6a Avenida "A" 3-53, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: + 502 2322886

Salutation: Señor Secretario/Dear Secretary

Director of Land Trust

Lic. Sergio Funes
Fontierras
7 Avenida 8-92, Zona 9,
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegram: Director de Fontierras, Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: + 502 334 6373 (If someone answers say "me podría dar tono de fax por favor")

Salutation: Dear Director/Señor Director

COPIES TO:

Peasants' Unity Committee

Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC)
31 Avenida A 14-46 Zona 7,
Ciudad de Plata II Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: + 502 434 9754
E-mail: cuc@guate.net

Press Agency

Cerigua

2a calle 1-42, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: + 502 238 1456/ 221 2521/ 251 1289 (If someone answers say "me podría dar tono de fax por favor")

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 26 September 2002.