

ARGENTINAPedro ORTIZ (m)]
Mary ORTIZ (f), his wife]
Lidia ZARATE (f)]Parents of children killed
Delia GARCILAZO (f)]in police shootings
Oscar RIOS (m)]
Silvia RUIZ (f)]
Alberto BARRETO (m)]
Their families

A group of parents of children killed in police shootings, who have been campaigning for justice, are being intimidated and threatened. The threats have intensified since the group published a report documenting over 800 cases of fatal police shootings. Amnesty International is concerned for their safety.

The *Comisión de Familiares de Víctimas de Gatillo Fácil*, Commission of Relatives of Victims of Police Shootings, was established in 1993 by a group of parents whose children had been killed by the police. They have been campaigning for the truth about the killings to be established, and for those responsible to be brought to justice. On 18 December 2000 the group submitted a report to the Ministry of the Interior detailing over 800 fatal police shootings. Also in December they staged a 25 day protest against the local authorities in Buenos Aires Province, where more than 50% of fatal shootings in Argentina reportedly take place. Lately, a number of people belonging to the group have been threatened, some of them by armed police officers.

On 9 March a known police informer brandishing a gun forced his way into Mary Ortiz's home. He reportedly attacked her, threatening her and telling her to stop her campaign for justice. Mary's husband, Pedro Ortiz, was attacked in February, only a few days after appearing on television to denounce police killings. Two men claiming to be police officers attacked him with a knife outside his home, cutting his arms and telling him to keep quiet: "*Callate la boca. No sigas hablando o te hacemos boleta*", "Keep quiet. Don't keep talking [about the killings] or we will kill you". The police shot dead the Ortiz's 16-year-old son in March 2000.

A policeman, who works at the same station as those believed to have killed her 17-year-old son, Juan Marcelo, reportedly threatened Lidia Zarate and her family on 2 January saying "*Cuidese. ¿Por qué no se dedica a cuidar a sus otros hijos? Que quiere? Que termine toda la familia como el?*", "Take care of yourself. Why don't you look after your other children? What do you want? For all the family to end up like him?". Since the killing the police have detained Juan Marcelo's younger brother, Martín, three times. They reportedly beat him and told him that he was going to die even younger than his brother. Shortly after he was threatened, unknown men driving a car shot Martín three times in the leg while shouting "*esto te pasa por culpa de tu vieja. Decile que no joda con la cana.*", "this is your mum's fault. Tell her not to mess about with the police".

On 13 January, a relative told Delia Garcilazo, whose son was killed by the federal prison police in 1992, that an anonymous caller had phoned to say her grandson had been shot, and that she should look for him at police stations. The following day, immediately after the grandson called to say he was with friends, an anonymous caller rang to say that this was meant as a warning, but that the next time it would be true.

On 5 January the police prevented Oscar Rios from posting flyers denouncing the killing of his son. The policeman who reportedly shot Oscar's son approached him, and, while handling his gun, threatened to kill him the way his son was killed.

Silvia Ruiz's 16-year-old son was shot dead by police in November 2000. Since then, the police have reportedly forced their way into her home on four occasions, although they did not have a warrant. They have fired gunshots in the house, and at least twice have threatened to kill her other teenage son. They have also threatened to kill Silvia Ruiz.

Alberto Barreto, whose 12-year-old daughter was killed in a police shooting in January 2000, has reportedly also been threatened and harassed by the police, and has been followed by a police patrol car on numerous occasions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Argentine authorities do not adequately investigate killings by the federal and provincial police forces. Those who campaign for the perpetrators of such killings to be brought to justice frequently face harassment. Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the authorities to reaffirm their control over the security forces at all levels, and to ensure that human rights violations committed by members of the security forces do not go unpunished.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of members of the *Comisión de Familiares de Víctimas de Gatillo Fácil*, including Pedro Ortiz, Mary Ortiz, Lidia Zarate, Delia Garcilazo, Oscar Rios, Silvia Ruiz, Alberto Barreto and their families, who have been intimidated and harassed by the police because of their legitimate campaign for justice on behalf of their children, who were killed in police shootings;
- urging the authorities to guarantee their safety and to publically recognize the legitimacy of their campaign;
- asking for full and impartial investigations to be carried out into the harassment, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

National authorities

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Sr. Ministro de Justicia y Derechos Humanos

Dr. Jorge de la Rúa,

Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos

Sarmiento 329, 5o. Piso, 1041 Buenos Aires, Argentina

Telegram: Ministro Justicia, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

Fax: + 54 11 4328 5395

Minister of the Interior

Sr. Ministro del Interior

Dr. Federico Storani

Ministerio del Interior

Balcarce 50

1064 Buenos Aires, Argentina
Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister
Fax: +54 11 4342 6081

Provincial authorities

Governor of Buenos Aires Province
Señor Gobernador de la Provincia de Buenos Aires
Sr. Carlos Ruckauf
Casa de Gobierno
Calle 6 Entre 51 y 53, 1900 La Plata
Buenos Aires C.F., Argentina
Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor
Fax: +542 21 429 4189

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and to diplomatic representatives of Argentina accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 April 2001.