

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 34/036/2001

UA 225/01

Fear for Safety/Extrajudicial execution

7 September

GUATEMALA

Enrique Aceituno, radio journalist

Killed: Jorge Alegría, radio journalist

Radio presenter Jorge Alegría was shot dead outside his house on 5 September. His colleague Enrique Aceituno has received death threats, and Amnesty International believes he is in grave danger.

Jorge Alegría was the presenter of the phone-in *Línea Directa* show on Radio Amatique, which broadcasts from Puerto Barrios in the eastern Izabal region of Guatemala. On the show he regularly denounced alleged corruption and wrongdoing by Izabal district officials and encouraged callers to the program to do the same. He had received a number of death threats before he was killed.

Officials from the local Santo Tomás de Castilla port authority and from the Puerto Barrios municipality allegedly tried to bribe Alegría, to stop him denouncing their corrupt practices, but Alegría refused.

Journalist Enrique Aceituno has resigned from Radio Amatique in fear for his life, after he reported receiving death threats. Aceituno reported receiving telephone death threats to his news program, and according to press reports on one occasion was riding home on his motorbike when a red car pulled up and the driver said "you are going to die, son of a ...; your days are numbered" (*te vas a morir, hijo de ...; tus días están contados*). He also says he was offered bribes to stop criticising various government organisations in Puerto Barrios.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A number of Guatemalan journalists have been threatened in the past few months (see UA 198/01, AMR 34/029/2001, 2 August 2001). This has been widely condemned by newspapers in Guatemala and abroad, and by human rights organizations. Jorge Alegría was murdered as a delegation from the *Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa* (SIP), Interamerican Press Association, left the country after a two-day evaluation of the situation regarding freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Delegation member Ricardo Trotti, coordinator of the association's commission on freedom of the press, urged the authorities to conduct a prompt investigation into the crime.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish, English or your own language:

- urging the authorities to take immediate and effective measures to protect Enrique Aceituno;
- calling for an immediate and thorough investigation into the death threats he has received, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- asking for a thorough investigation into the murder of Jorge Alegría, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic of Guatemala

Lic. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera

Presidente de la República de Guatemala

6a. Avenida "A" 4-46, Zona 1, Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: + 502 239 0090

Email: mensajes@presidenteportillo.gob.gt
Salutation: Dear President/Señor Presidente

Minister of the Interior
Sr. Byron Barrientos
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación, 6ª Avenida 4-64, Zona 4
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax: + 502 362 0239
Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Attorney General
Lic. Adolfo González Rodas
Fiscal General de la República
Ministerio Público
8a. Avenida 10-67
Zona 1, Tercer nivel
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax: + 502 221 2718
Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Estimado Señor Fiscal General

COPIES TO:

Information Agency
CERIGUA, 2a calle 1-42, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Tel/Faxes: + 502 238 1456/ 221 2521
E-mails: cerigua@guate.net

Newspaper
Diario El Periódico, 15 Ave 24-51, Zona 13
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 332 9761
E-mails: opinion@elperiodico.com.gt

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 October 2001.