

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 34/041/2001

UA 278/01

Death threats / Fear for safety

1 November 2001

GUATEMALA

Javier Méndez Games (m), Assistant Human Rights
Procurator, Quetzaltenango department.
Other staff of the Human Rights Procurator's Office.

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Javier Méndez Games, an Assistant Human Rights Procurator who has received a series of death threats, intimidating phone calls and had his workplace broken into.

On 5 October 2001, assailants broke into the offices of the Assistant Human Rights Procurator in Coatepeque, Quetzaltenango department. Nothing was stolen, but the office's car was destroyed. Javier Méndez Games has also received threatening telephone calls and on one occasion heard what sounded like a gun being fired.

Javier Méndez Games and his colleagues at the Assistant Procurator's office have been investigating and denouncing corruption within state institutions in Quetzaltenango. This includes the regional division of the National Police which is currently under investigation. The regional offices are the local representatives of the Human Rights Procurator, who is elected by Congress every five years to investigate human rights abuses and make recommendations to the government on issues dealing with human rights.

In recent months, staff from a number of regional Procurator offices have been targets in what appears to be a systematic pattern of threats and intimidation. (See further information UA 315/00, AMR 34/015/2001, 8 May 2001 and further information UA 225/01, AMR 34/037/2001, 21 September 2001). Other threats and acts of intimidation against assistant procurator offices have been reported in Huehuetenango, Retalhuleu departments and in the city of Quetzaltenango.

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

- denouncing the threats and intimidation against Javier Méndez Games;
- expressing serious concern that government officials mandated to protect human rights and investigate abuses have themselves been targeted;
- asking for a full investigation into all threats and acts of intimidation against staff of the Human Rights Procurator's offices, and that the perpetrators be brought to justice;
- asking that the government institute special protection measures for all staff of the Human Rights Procurator's offices who have received threats or other acts of intimidation and that it publicly express official support for the important work of the Human Rights Procurator

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

Sr. Byron Barrientos

Ministro de Gobernación

Ministerio de Gobernación, 6^a Avenida 4-64, Zona 4

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegram: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: + 502 362 0239/ 362 0237

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

Telegram: Fiscal General, Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: + 502 221 2718

Salutation: Dear Attorney General / Estimado Señor Fiscal General

Head of the National Police in Quetzaltenango

Carlos Federico Argueta M.
Comisario de la Policía Nacional
10ª Calle 12-21, Zona 1
Quetzaltenango, Quetzaltenango
GUATEMALA

Telegram: Comisario de la Policía Nacional, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

Fax: + 502 763 0136

Salutation: Dear Commissioner / Señor Comisario

Departmental Governor of Quetzaltenango

Lic. Aristides Vielman
Gobernador Departamental
13ª Avenida 5-64, Zona 1
Quetzaltenango, Quetzaltenango
GUATEMALA

Telegram: Gobernador Departamental, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala

Fax: + 502 761 4737/ 763 003

Salutation: Dear Governor / Señor Gobernador

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Julio Eduardo Arango Escobar
Procurador de Derechos Humanos
Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos
12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala 01001, GUATEMALA

Telegram: Procurador de Derechos Humanos, Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: +502 238 1734

Salutation: Dear Procurator /Señor Procurador

Newspaper

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

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 13 December 2001.