

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

13 September 2000

PERU

Cecilia Valenzuela Valencia (f), journalist
All staff at *imediaperu.com*

A leading Peruvian journalist has survived an attempt on her life after she published articles linking the Peruvian intelligence services to drugs and arms trafficking. Amnesty International is concerned for her safety.

Cecilia Valenzuela Valencia, director of the press agency *imediaperu.com* was outside her home in the capital, Lima, when a car driver reportedly attempted to run her down on 4 September.

According to reports, a van with tinted windows has been parked in front of her offices since 31 August, intimidating her and other *imediaperu.com* staff. This follows her publication of articles linking the *Servicio de Inteligencia Nacional* (SIN), National Intelligence Service, to drugs and arms trafficking. During the past few weeks, she has also become the victim of a smear campaign in the tabloid press, which is reportedly controlled by SIN.

Cecilia Valenzuela has previously suffered harassment and intimidation because of her journalistic work. For more than a decade, she has been at the forefront of investigative journalism in Peru, unveiling human rights violations committed by the security forces, corruption and other government wrongdoings. In 1998, she received death threats after exposing military human rights violations in a television program.

Amnesty International believes that the intimidation and harassment of Cecilia Valenzuela and other journalists uncovering stories compromising the authorities aims to restrict the fundamental right to freedom of thought and expression as set out in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights, both of which have been signed by Peru.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 28 May President Alberto Fujimori won a third term in office amid allegations of fraud and irregularities. The international community has strongly criticised President Alberto Fujimori's government for the way the election was run, and for failing to respect the rule of law.

In June the Organization of American States (OAS) sent a high level mission to Peru to "explore with the government of Peru and other sectors of the political community, options and recommendations aimed at further strengthening democracy in that country..." (OAS General Assembly, June 2000, Resolution 1753). A permanent OAS representative is now discussing how to implement the high level mission's recommendations, which include guaranteeing media independence, with the authorities, members of civil society and the political opposition.

Journalists and others opposing the reelection of President Fujimori, including those who uncover stories perceived to further damage the government's image, have been subjected to threats, harassment and intimidation during the past months.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Cecilia Valenzuela Valencia after a car driver attempted to run her down on 4 September;
- urging the authorities to guarantee her safety and that of other *imediaperu.com* staff;
- urging the authorities to carry out an immediate, independent and exhaustive investigation into the murder attempt and intimidation, and to make the results public;

- reminding the authorities that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights, to which Peru is party, guarantee the right of freedom of thought and expression.

APPEALS TO:

President

Ing. Alberto Fujimori Fujimori
Presidente de la República del Perú
Palacio de Gobierno
Plaza Mayor
Lima 1
PERU

Fax: + 511 426 6770

Salutation: Dear President / Sr. Presidente

Minister of the Interior

General Walter Chacón Málaga
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Plaza 30 de Agosto s/n
Urb. Córpac
San Isidro
Lima 27
PERU

Fax: + 511 224 2405

Salutation: Dear Minister / Sr. Ministro

COPIES TO:

Human Rights organization

Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos,
Jr. Túpac Amaru 2467
Lince
Lima 14
PERU

and to diplomatic representatives of Peru accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 October 2000.