

21 May 1999

**Further information on UA 86/99 (AMR 34/11/99, 22 April 1999) - Fear for Safety / Legal concern**

**GUATEMALA**                    **Witnesses in the Tuluché trial**  
**Rolando Colindres, lawyer**  
**Lucrecia Barrientos, lawyer**

**and new name:**            **Juan Jeremías Tecú - Confederación de religiosos de Guatemala**  
**(CONFREGUA), Guatemalan Episcopal Conference**

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Amnesty International has received numerous reports that friends and family of Cándido Noriega have been threatening and intimidating those involved in legal proceedings against him, including widows of his alleged victims, and their lawyers. Many of those responsible are former civil patrol members who are believed to be acting with the complicity of local military and other officials.

The latest incident, the short-term kidnapping and beating of Jeremías Tecú, an indigenous religious layworker with *Confederación de religiosos de Guatemala* (CONFREGUA), Guatemalan Episcopal

Conference, was apparently a reaction to decision just a few days ago, to grant an appeal against Noriega's recent, second acquittal on human rights charges. This acquittal, on 15 April 1999, had cleared him of a representative sample of the best-documented charges against him, including six extrajudicial executions, five "disappearances," and a rape, despite numerous eyewitness testimonies to his responsibility for the abuses. A lawyer who observed the April 1999 trial on behalf of Amnesty International testified to the intimidatory atmosphere, leaving the witnesses and others involved in the case, in his view, with a well-founded fear for their safety. In all, local villagers charge that as leader of the local civil patrol, Cándido Noriega was responsible for more than 150 human rights violations directed against Quiché indigenous villagers in the Tuluché area, Quiché department, during Guatemala's civil conflict. He was previously cleared of all charges in 1997.

Jeremías Tecú, the victim of this latest abuse, has played a major role as a translator and "accompanier," e.g. has attempted to protect by his physical presence the witnesses involved in the Tuluché case. Amnesty International believes this was the reason for this recent effort to intimidate him. He was kidnapped on 20 May and held prisoner for two hours by a group of men with short, military-style hair-cuts, armed with sub-machine guns, who beat and interrogated him about his work with CONFREGUA. In an apparent reference to his involvement and that of CONFREGUA in the Tuluché case they told him "Ya sabemos todo lo que han estado haciendo," ("We already know everything you've been doing"). His family was also threatened. Jeremías Tecú has reportedly been severely traumatised by the incident and his family are extremely concerned for his safety.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Please send telegrams/e-mails/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or in your own language:**

- calling on the authorities to fully investigate the kidnapping of Jeremías Tecú on 20 May 1999 and to bring those found guilty to justice;
- calling on the authorities ensure the safety of Jeremías Tecú and all others involved in the trial of Cándido Noriega who may be at renewed risk following the recent decision to uphold the appeal against his latest acquittal;
- calling on the authorities to investigate all complaints, death threats or intimidation of anyone connected with the Tuluché trial.

**APPEALS TO:**

President

S.E. Álvaro Arzú Irigoyen  
 Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
 Palacio Nacional, 6ª Calle y 7ª Avenida, Zona 1  
 Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Telegrams: Presidente, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Faxes: + 502 221 4537**

**E-mails: alvaroarzu@guate.net / alvararzu@guateconnect.com**

**Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Your Excellency**

Attorney General

Lic. Adolfo González Rodas  
 Fiscal General de la República  
 Ministerio Público, 6ª Avenida 3-11, Zona 4  
 Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Telegrams: Fiscal General, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Faxes: + 502 362 7223**

**Salutation: Señor Fiscal / Dear Attorney General**

Director General of the National Civil Police

Lic. Ángel Antonio Conte Cajulún  
 Director General de la Policía Nacional Civil  
 6ª Avenida 13-71, Zona 1, Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Telegrams: Director General Policia Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Faxes: + 502 232 7721**

**Salutation: Señor Director / Dear Director**

**COPIES TO:**Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Julio Eduardo Arango Escobar, Procurador de Derechos Humanos  
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Daily Newspaper

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**Faxes: + 502 251 8768**

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**Salutation: Estimados Señores / Dear Sirs**

Guatemalan Episcopal Conference (CONFREGUA)

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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 2 July 1999.