

## **URGENT ACTION HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS NETWORK**

**Public AMR 13/12/98**

**HRD-AMR 3/98      Fear for safety of Sergio Smietniansky, human rights defender lawyer,  
8 July 1998**

**ARGENTINA**

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Sergio Smietniansky, a lawyer for the non-governmental organization Coordination against Police and Institutional Repression (CORREPI).

According to reports, Sergio Smietniansky was threatened on 3 July 1998, just a few hours after the Federal Police evicted 50 families whom the lawyer had been defending from a municipal property in the Flores district of Buenos Aires. "You are going to spit blood, you jew... We are going to be waiting for you when you come out the office and there we are going see if you still want to carry on like a madman", said the message recorded on the office answer machine in Banfield, Buenos Aires.

Dr. Smietniansky supports the relatives of the victims of police repression, especially victims of trigger-happy killings. CORREPI lawyers representing numerous relatives of victims of police violence, for example María del Carmen Verdú and Daniel Stragá, have in the past been subject to threats and intimidation on account of their work (see Amnesty International Annual Report 1996). Daniel Stragá was also threatened in February 1997 by an anonymous caller who left a message on his office answer machine. A complaint regarding the threats was lodged with the Fifth Federal Judge of Buenos Aires (see Argentina: "Occupational Hazards" AI Index: AMR 13/05/98/, May 1998).

A complaint regarding threats against Dr. Smietniansky was lodged with the Lomas de Zamora Court. The judge put in charge of the case offered the lawyer police protection for his residence and office, an offer rejected by Dr. Smietniansky.

While Amnesty International is unable to confirm the source of the threats against Sergio Smietniansky, the organization believes that there is a well-founded concern for his safety due to the threats against CORREPI's lawyers in the past and the lack of thorough and conclusive investigations into these acts.

### **Recommended Action:**

- expressing concern at the death threats against Sergio Smietniansky;
- urging that immediate and effective steps be taken to guarantee his safety and that lawyers working on behalf of victims of human rights violations be allowed to perform their work without fear of intimidation;
- urging that the threats be investigated thoroughly and conclusively, urging that its findings be made public and those found responsible be brought to justice.

### **Appeals to:**

Minister of Interior

Sr. Ministro del Interior

Dr. Carlos Corach

Ministerio del Interior

25 de Mayo, 101

1002 Buenos Aires, C.F., Argentina

**Fax: + 541 331 1156** (if voice, ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

**Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Buenos Aires, Argentina**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

Minister of Justice

Sr. Ministro de Justicia

Dr. Raul Granillo Ocampo

Ministerio de Justicia

Sarmiento 329, 5o. Piso

1041 Buenos Aires, C.F., Argentina

**Telegrams: Ministro de Justicia, Buenos Aires, Argentina**

**Faxes: +541 328 6038 / 6039**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro/ Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

Human Rights Secretariat

Subsecretaria de Derechos Humanos

Prof. Inés Pérez Suárez

Ministerio del Interior

Av. Leandro N. Alem 150 P.B.1003

Buenos Aires C.F., Argentina

**Fax: + 541 331 7051** (if voice, ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Buenos Aires Ombudsman

Defensor del Pueblo de la

Ciudad de Buenos Aires

Dr. Antonio Cartaña

Av. Belgrano 1876, 3o. Piso Of. "B"

Capital Federal

Argentina

Newspaper

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Av. Belgrano 671/77

1092 Buenos Aires

Argentina

And to diplomatic representatives in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Consult with the International Secretariat if sending appeals after 10 August 1998.