

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 46/16/97

UA 107/97 Death threats / Fear for safety

18 April 1997

PERU

Edmundo Cruz, journalist
Antonia Cáceres Delgado (f)
Heriberto Benitez Rivas, defence lawyer
Ana María Montejó Soto (f)
Eric Benitez Montejó, aged 4

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of those named above.

Journalist Edmundo Cruz, who works for the *Unidad de Investigación*, Investigation Unit, of Peruvian newspaper *La República*, received a veiled death threat by telephone at his home in Lima, the capital, on 4 April 1997. The caller told him that "*La factura está emitida; sólo falta cobrarla*" ("the invoice has been made out; all that is needed is to pay the cost"). The threat followed a series of articles published in *La República* between December 1996 and March 1997, in which Edmundo Cruz divulges information about army intelligence plans to intimidate journalists and defence lawyer Heriberto Benitez Rivas (see below).

Antonia Cáceres, cousin of opposition Congressman Róger Cáceres Velazquez, also fears for her safety after claiming to have discovered a plan by the *Servicio de Inteligencia*, SIE, Army Intelligence Service, to kill her cousin. On 13 April 1997 Antonia Cáceres made her claims on Peruvian television and told of how she had discovered the plan during the second half of 1994 to "eliminate" ("*eliminar*"), Róger Cáceres. The latter presided over a congressional investigation into La Cantuta massacre, in which nine students and a professor were killed by members of the army allegedly attached to a "death squad" known as *Grupo Colina*. According to reports, Congressman Cáceres believes the life of Antonia Cáceres to be at risk, and has asked the authorities to take the necessary measures to protect her.

Heriberto Benitez Rivas, a defence lawyer currently representing Leonor La Rosa Bustamente, an army intelligence agent allegedly tortured by SIE members (see UA 98/97, AMR 46/11/97, 11 April 1997), has also received a death threat.

On 22 March 1997 Heriberto Benitez received an anonymous telephone call at his home in Lima, in which he was told that "*El No.1 y el No.2 han decidido acabar con tu vida*" ("The Number 1 and the Number 2 have decided to kill you.").

Two days later Heriberto Benitez denounced the threat to the Ombudsman, *Defensor del Pueblo*. On 17 April Heriberto Benitez denounced on television that he is being denied access to his client, Leonor La Rosa, by the military justice system. He and his wife, Ana María Montejó, told Amnesty International that they fear for their safety and that of their four-year-old son, Eric Benitez.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the past months, Amnesty International has documented a series of events which point to a worsening situation concerning the protection of human rights in Peru. In particular the organization is concerned at numerous reports that political opponents and journalists critical of the government are being targeted because of their opinions.

It is in this context that, for example, in November 1996, General Rodolfo Robles was detained after having denounced that an attack on *Global Television*

in Puno department weeks earlier was perpetrated by members of the SIE (see UA 277/96, AMR 46/23/96, 7 November 1996).

Over the past years, Amnesty International has documented thousands of cases of human rights violations, including death threats, committed by the parties involved in the internal armed conflict which has afflicted Peru since 1980.

The perpetrators of the vast majority of these abuses have not been brought to justice. Indeed, impunity is not only institutionalized in Peru but legalized. In June 1995 an Amnesty Law which closed all investigations into human rights violations committed by members of the security forces between 1980 and 1995 came into force. Impunity is a denial of truth and justice and contributes to further human rights violations.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Edmundo Cruz, Antonia Cáceres Delgado, Heriberto Benitez Rivas, Ana María Montejo Soto and Eric Benitez Montejo in the light of death threats against them;
- urging that these threats be promptly and effectively investigated, the findings be made public, and those responsible be brought to justice;
- requesting that all necessary measures be taken to guarantee the safety of those under threat.

APPEALS TO:

Attorney General

Dr Miguel Aljovín
Fiscal de la Nación
Fiscalia de la Nación
Av. Abanacay, 5 cuadro s/n
Lima 1, Peru

Fax: +511 426 2474 / 433 2773

Telegrams: Fiscal de la Nacion, Lima, Peru

Salutation: Sr Fiscal de la Nación / Dear Attorney General

Minister of Defence

General EP Tomás Castillo Mesa
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Avenida Boulevard y Monterrico
Lima 33, Perú

Fax: + 511 435 9567

Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Lima, Peru

Salutation: Dear Minister/ Señor Ministro

COPIES TO:

Human rights organization

APRODEH
Jr. Pachacutec 980
Jesús María
Lima 11, Perú

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 4 June 1997.