

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 34/06/95  
Distr: UA/SC

9 March 1995

Further information on UA 395/94 (AMR 34/43/94, 3 November 1994) - Fear for Safety

**GUATEMALA** Félix GONZÁLEZ, trade union leader  
Débora GUZMÁN CHUPÉN, trade union leader, aged 23, wife of Félix González  
Julio COJ, trade union leader  
José GIL, trade unionist  
and 49 workers at Lunafil S.A.

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In November 1994, Amnesty International reported that workers and trade union leaders at the Lunafil S.A. textile factory in Amatitlán, Department of Guatemala, were repeatedly being subjected to death threats and other acts of intimidation. The threats and harassment began in May 1994, when a group of 49 of them began a protest outside the factory against what they claim to be its illegal and unjustified closure with the subsequent loss of 200 jobs.

Since then, further threats have greatly heightened concern for the safety of those named above.

On 28 February 1995 Débora Guzmán Chupén, a trade union leader with the trade union of *L y L Modas*, a *maquiladora de ropa* (a clothing factory) in Amatitlán, and the wife of Félix González, a trade union leader with the Lunafil factory, was abducted. She was released a day later on 1 March. During her abduction she was drugged and threatened with death.

According to Débora Guzmán at 9.30 am on 28 February, while she was out shopping she was intercepted by two heavily armed men and forced into a car. She was blindfolded and her hands were tied; she was then put into a second vehicle where were there two other people, one of whom she said was a woman. She was then administered some kind of drug, which caused her to lose consciousness.

The following day, she awoke at approximately 8.00am in a large room. She reports that she was taken out of the building and into a car where her captors made a telephone call to the Central Office of the *Unión Sindical de Trabajadores de Guatemala* (UNSI TRAGUA), Guatemalan Workers' Union. She was told "...*tiene que exigirle a la persona que conteste, que su marido se salga del Sindicato de Lunafil, porque sino usted no regresará con él...*" ("tell the person who answers to tell your husband to leave the Lunafil union, because if he does not, you will not be coming back to him..."). The person who took the call stated that when he tried to talk to Débora Guzmán after she had transmitted the message, the call was cut off. After the telephone call Débora Guzmán received a blow from a solid object and was told "...*usted es muy necia, no dijo la que tenía que decir, se la lleva de que no tiene miedo a morir, mire esto es apenas una amenaza, la próxima vez vamos a cumplir con lo que decimos...*"

("you are very stupid, you didn't say what you were supposed to, so I take it you are not afraid to die, listen, this is just a warning, the next time we will carry out what we say..."). The women then told her "...*a nosotros nos ordenaron que la detuvieramos sólo 24 horas y que no le hicieramos ningún daño, sólo que la dejaramos perdida...*" ("...we were ordered to detain you for 24 hours and that we were not to harm you and that we should leave you lost somewhere..."). Débora Guzmán reports being driven for several hours, before being released in the department of Totonicapán, blindfolded, with her hands tied behind her. She is currently under medical supervision as a result of her ordeal.

Following the abduction of Débora Guzmán on 4 March, a group of heavily armed men in a pick-up truck with darkened windows drove past the Lunafil factory, where members of the union were gathered, and fired shots in the air.

On 5 March, at approximately 6.30pm, Débora Guzmán and Félix González received another (written) threat at their home which said "*Señorah lla sabe lo que es estar secuestrada. le pedimos que exija a su marido la renuncia solo le dejamos setenta y dos horas mas sino cumpliremos con la que le dijimos sabemos que no tiene miedo pero lo aremos para demostrarle que podemos...*" [sic]. ("Madam, now you know what it is like to be kidnapped, we request that you insist that your husband resign, he has only seventy two hours to do so or we will carry out what we told you, we know you are not afraid, but we will do it to demonstrate what we are capable of...").

Later that day, heavily armed men again passed the Lunafil factory and again fired shots into the air. The men were believed to be the same as those who had fired the shots the previous day.

As with the previous series of threats, the workers believe that members of private security guards, hired by the Lunafil management during past disputes in 1987 and 1988, may have been responsible for some of these incidents. No official investigation has been opened.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern at the abduction of Débora Guzmán Chupén and at the serious threats made against her, her husband Félix González, and other workers from the Lunafil factory;
- asking the government to take immediate measures to guarantee their safety and that of their families;
- pointing out that, as private security firms must, by law, be licensed by the National Police and the Ministry of Interior, Amnesty International considers the Guatemalan authorities responsible for investigating these incidents and bringing the perpetrators to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

[NOTE: when sending faxes, it is best to try very early in the morning or very late at night, Guatemalan time. If you get a voice answer, ask "me da tono de fax, por favor".]

1) President of the Republic

S.E. Ramiro de León Carpio  
 Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Presidente de León Carpio, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 537472/515667**  
**Salutation:Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President**

2) Minister of Interior

Lic. Carlos Enrique Reynoso  
 Ministro de Gobernación,  
 Ministerio de Gobernación  
 Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Faxes:** + 502 2 515 368 / 518 105  
**Salutation:** Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Minister of Labour and Social Welfare

Sra. Gladys Morfin

Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social  
 Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Telegrams:** **Ministra de Trabajo y Previsión Social Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Faxes:** + 502 2 513 559, 532 345

**Salutation:** Sra. Ministra / Dear Minister

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Attorney General

Lic. Ramses Cuestas Gómez  
 Fiscal General de la Nación  
 Ministerio Público  
 18 Calle 10-36, Zona 1  
 Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Faxes:** + 502 2 536554

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Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Jorge García Laguardia  
 Procurador de los Derechos Humanos  
 12 Avenida 12-72  
 Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Trade union

Unión Sindical de Trabajadores de  
 Guatemala (UNSI TRAGUA)  
 11 Calle 8-14, Zona 1  
 Oficina 34, Tercer Nivel  
 Guatemala, GUATEMALA

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 20 April 1995.