

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 48/95 Fear for Safety/Fear of Torture

24 February 1995

ECUADOR Ángel Ulbio VÉLEZ TORRES, aged 43, theatre director

Amnesty International is concerned at the reported detention by members of the Ecuadorian army of Ángel Ulbio Vélez Torres, and the risk of his being subjected to torture or ill-treatment.

According to information, Ángel Vélez was detained on 7 February 1995 by members of the army in the military control post of Palmales, in Arenillas, near the border with Perú. The reports say that he was travelling from the Loja province to his home in Machala and that he was carrying a film camera with him. He is believed to be held at the Infantry Brigade of the El Oro province, in the southeast of the country, but his relatives have not been allowed to see him.

Ángel Vélez' relatives were told by army officers of the Infantry Brigade of El Oro province that he had been imprisoned for having sold a video on the Ecuadorian army to the Peruvians. Some weeks ago, Ángel Vélez had filmed a video of a public exhibition by the Ecuadorian army. He offered the film to the Ecuadorian army and other agencies.

Concern has been expressed by local human rights organizations about his physical safety, as he suffers from gastric ulcers and there are fears that he may be subjected to torture or ill-treatment.

On 20 February 1995, Argentinian Nobel Price writer Adolfo Pérez Esquivel held an interview with Ecuadorian President Sixto Durán Ballén, during which the president reportedly promised to intercede on behalf of Ángel Vélez and to obtain his immediate release. In spite of this, there are no signs that Ángel Vélez is to be released.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ecuador has been engaged in armed conflict with Perú since 26 January 1995. Amnesty International has received reports of a large number of civilian citizens, mostly of Peruvian nationality, who have reportedly been detained by the Ecuadorian army.

On 8 February 1995, Amnesty International wrote to President Sixto Durán Ballén of Ecuador, urging his government to respect the human rights enshrined in the international treaties signed by his country.

Amnesty International receives frequent reports on torture or other human rights violations by members of the armed forces; some of these reports are supported by detailed testimonies. These violations appear to take place in conditions of almost total impunity. Ecuador has ratified international treaties such as the United Nations Convention Against Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

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

- expressing concern for the physical wellbeing of Ángel Ulbio Vélez Torres;
- seeking guarantees for his safety;
- urging that his place of detention be disclosed and that he be allowed access to relatives, lawyer and doctor;

- asking that he be charged with a recognizable offence or released.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Republic

Dr. Sixto Durán Ballén
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Gobierno
Quito, ECUADOR

Telexes: 22375/22201 prerep ed

Telegrams: Presidente, Quito, Ecuador

Salutation: Dear President Durán Ballén/Señor Presidente

2) Minister of Defence

General José Gallardo Román
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
La Recoleta
Quito, ECUADOR

Faxes: + 593 2 519280

Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

(human rights organization)
Señores
Comisión Ecuménica de Derechos Humanos
Apartado 720 A
Quito, ECUADOR

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 April 1995.