

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 259/93 Indiscriminate use of lethal force

6 August 1993

GUATEMALA: Demonstrators including:

Killed:

Juan Pablo CHANAY, 64

Wounded:

Miguel MORALES, 19

Lucía QUILA (female)

A Belgian journalist

Amnesty International is concerned at the indiscriminate use of lethal force by members of the Civil Defence Patrols against peaceful demonstrators on 3 August 1993 which allegedly resulted in the death of one person and the wounding of several others.

According to the information received by Amnesty International, on 3 August several hundred peasants, *campesinos*, members of the Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC), Consejo Nacional de Desplazados de Guatemala (CONDEG), and Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala (CONAVIGUA), staged a peaceful demonstration to protest against alleged threats and harassment of the people of Colotenango by members of the army and the Civil Defence Patrols. When the demonstrators were assembled in the village of El Naranjal, municipality of Colotenango, Huehuetenango, members of the Civil Defence Patrols reportedly fired indiscriminately against the crowd, killing Juan Pablo Chanay and wounding several others, among them Miguel Morales, Lucía Quilá and a Belgian journalist. There are unconfirmed reports that at least two other demonstrators were killed in the incident.

The local Human Rights Procurator, the Departmental Governor, the commander of the military zone and other state authorities had reportedly been invited to meet with the demonstrators. The organizers of the demonstration had also allegedly met the local military commander to discuss their grievances.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Civil Defence Patrols (PAC) were created as a component of the military counter-insurgency strategy in 1982. Although voluntary according to the Constitution, civil patrols are in effect compulsory. Those refusing to take part in them have been branded "guerrillas" and many have been subjected to human rights violations, including harassment and attacks, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution.

For many years Amnesty International has been concerned about human rights violations in Guatemala. Trade unionists, student leaders, journalists and those working with non-governmental organizations have been long-term targets of abuses, including harassment, threats, torture, "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions.

On 6 June 1993 Ramiro de León Carpio, previously Human Rights Procurator, was voted President, almost unanimously, by Congress to serve out the remaining term of President Jorge Serrano

Eliás. Ex-President Serrano had been forced from office after trying to seize near-dictatorial powers on 25 May 1993.

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

- expressing concern at reports that on 3 August 1993 demonstrators at El Naranjal, Colotenango were indiscriminately fired at by members of the Civil Defence Patrols;
- expressing concern that Juan Pablo Chanay was killed and several others, including Miguel Morales, Lucía Quilá and a Belgian journalist were wounded;

- urging that this incident be immediately investigated and that those found responsible be brought to justice;

- urging the authorities to ensure that the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials adopted in 1990, which restrict the use of force and firearms against non-violent demonstrators, are respected and to inform all members of the security forces that human rights violations, including the killing of unarmed civilians, are criminal offences and that those responsible should be brought to justice;

- urging for an investigation into the allegations of threats and harassment of the people of Coloteanango by members of the armed forces and the Civil Defence Patrols.

APPEALS TO:

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, + 502 2 519702
Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President

2) Minister of Interior:

Lic. Arnaldo Ortiz Moscoso
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 2 518105
Telexes: 5085 MINGOB

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. Mario Enríquez Morales
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 2 537472
Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Human Rights Procurator:

Lic. Jorge García Laguardia
Procurador de los Derechos Humanos
12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1,
Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Faxes: + 502 2 81734

2) Council of Ethnic Communities "We are all Equal":

Consejo de Comunidades Etnicas, CERJ
5a Avenida 3-13

Santa Cruz del Quiché
El Quiché
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 17 September 1993.