

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 340/93 Arbitrary killing / fear of torture

24 September 1993

VENEZUELA Sergio RODRÍGUEZ YANCE, aged 27, an employee of the Venezuelan Central University

At least two students from Oriente University, State Bolivar

Amnesty International is seriously concerned at the arbitrary killing of Sergio Rodríguez Yance on 23 September in Caracas. He was shot by the security forces, who were dispersing a student demonstration, in circumstances suggesting excessive and unnecessary use of force. Also, at least two students from the Oriente University in State Bolívar were arrested during the demonstration and it is feared they may be subjected to torture.

The demonstration against university budget limitations by the government, which attracted students from all over the country, was violently suppressed by the National Guard and the Metropolitan Police, using tear-gas, buckshot, water-cannon vehicles and firearms. According to reports, Sergio Rodríguez Yance, who was taking part in the demonstration, was shot in the abdomen and later died in hospital. At least four other demonstrators were wounded by firearms and buckshot.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the years, Amnesty International has documented a disturbing pattern of killings of demonstrators by members of the security forces in circumstances suggesting that the use of firearms was excessive or unnecessary, and had been used with the deliberate intention to kill or cause serious bodily harm. Many of the demonstrators who have been killed in the last few years have been students calling for changes in the government's economic policy. During the disturbances of February and March 1989 several hundred people were killed.

The violence broke out following harsh economic measures taken by the government of former president Carlos Andrés Pérez. There were also reports of extrajudicial executions of civilians and military personnel following the attempted coups of February and November 1992. Sergio Rodríguez Yance had been detained and reportedly tortured during the disturbances of February and March 1989. His house had been raided in several occasions. Sergio's brother, Caril Rodríguez was reportedly arrested and tortured in 1991 by the Metropolitan Police, following a raid in their home.

In the past, Amnesty International has received reports of torture of detainees at the hands of both the National Guard and the Metropolitan Police. Methods of torture include beatings, electric shocks and near asphyxiation by placing plastic bags over detainee's heads. In January 1993, an Amnesty International delegation interviewed several students and community leaders who had been arrested by the security forces in Barquisimeto and Valencia following the attempted coup of 27 November 1992. The detainees were tortured by the security forces and were denied access to representatives of the Attorney General's Office (*Fiscalía General de la República*) and proper medical attention for

several days.

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

- expressing grave concern about the arbitrary killing of Sergio Rodríguez Yance at the hands of the security forces on 23 September 1993;
- urging that the physical integrity of all those detained since 23 September be fully protected, and that detainees be granted immediate

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access to representatives (*fiscales*) of the Attorney General's Office, lawyers, their relatives and that they are provided with an independent medical examination;

- urging that any reports of torture or ill-treatment be fully and immediately investigated and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- calling for immediate, full and impartial investigations into the killing following the guidelines of the United Nations' Principles in the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions; and requesting that the findings are made public;
- urging that all necessary steps are taken to ensure that the security forces abide by the United Nations' Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the United Nations' Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials;

APPEALS TO

1) President of the Republic

Sr. Ramón José Velásquez
President of the Republic of Venezuela
Palacio de Miraflores
Caracas, Venezuela

Telegrams: President Velásquez, Caracas, Venezuela

Telexes: 26429 EXTER VC

Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Mr. President

2) Minister of the Interior

Sr. Carlos Delgado Capellín
Ministro de Relaciones Interiores
Ministerio de Relaciones Interiores
Carmelitas a Santa Capilla
Caracas, Venezuela

Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Caracas, Venezuela

Telexes: 26429 EXTER VC

Faxes: +58 2 81 57 96

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Minister of Defence

Vice Almirante Radamés Muñoz León
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
Fuerte Tiuna, Conejo Blanco,
El Valle, Caracas, Venezuela

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Caracas, Venezuela

Faxes: +58 2 66 28 829

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

4) Attorney General of the Republic

Dr. Ramón Escovar Salom
Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General de la República
Manduca a Ferrenquín
La Candelaria
Caracas 1010-A, VENEZUELA

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Caracas, Venezuela

Faxes: + 58 2 66 28 829

Salutation: Estimado Dr. Escovar Salom / Dear Dr. Escovar Salom

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1). Human Rights organization
Sres.
PROVEA
Apartado 5156
Caracas 1010-A, VENEZUELA

2) Daily Newspaper
El Nacional
Edificio El Nacional
Puente Nuevo a Puerto Escondito
Caracas, VENEZUELA

and to diplomatic representatives of Venezuela accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 November 1993.