

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 53/07/92

Distr: UA/SC

UA 203/92

Possible Extrajudicial Execution/Torture

17 June 1992

VENEZUELA:

Victims of possible Extrajudicial execution:

Rommer FIGUEROA LIZARDI, worker, (19)

Pedro José VASQUEZ, student, (16)

José Gregorio ROMERO UZCÁTEGUI, student (21)

Victims of torture:

Omar URIBE, student

Arnel RODRÍGUEZ, student

José Antonio BRICEÑO

Julio César VERA, student

Oswaldo RODRÍGUEZ, journalist

Amnesty International is seriously concerned at the continuing use of excessive force (including firearms) by the Venezuelan security forces against people participating in anti-government demonstrations. According to reports, since 29 May 1992 at least three people have been killed. One died after being beaten by members of the Guardia Nacional, National Guard, and two after being shot by the police. The organization is also deeply concerned about reports of torture and ill-treatment of people arrested during demonstrations.

According to reports, Rommer Figueroa Lizardi was brutally beaten and kicked in the street by members of the National Guard during a demonstration in Ciudad Guayana, state of Bolívar, on 29 May. He died later that day. A forensic report revealed that the cause of death had been severe internal injuries. More than 40 people participating in the demonstration were reportedly injured by the National Guard, and dozens were arbitrarily arrested for a short period.

Pedro José Vazquez, a secondary school student, was reportedly killed by the police on 2 June during a demonstration in the town of Maracay, state of Aragua. He died as a result of two bullet wounds: one to the head and one to chest. At least 21 other students, including two minors, were wounded with firearms reportedly used by the police to disperse the demonstration.

José Gregorio Romero Uzcátegui was hit in the neck with buckshot (*perdigón*) reportedly fired by the police during a demonstration at the Universidad Central de Venezuela, Venezuelan Central University, Caracas, on 2 June. He died in hospital on 4 June. According to reports, at least nine other students, including a minor, were seriously wounded by the police during the demonstration.

Students Omar Uribe, Arnel Rodríguez, José Antonio Briceño and Julio César Vera, were arrested on 2 June by the Policía Metropolitana, Metropolitan Police, during an anti-government demonstration in the town of Caballero Mejías, state of Miranda. Before their release the same day, Omar Uribe and Arnel Rodríguez were reportedly beaten and their

hair was burnt with cigarettes. José Antonio Briceño and Julio César Vera's whereabouts remained unknown until their release, free of charges, on 4 June. While in detention they were reportedly blindfolded and repeatedly beaten.

At least five journalists who were covering the demonstrations reportedly suffered beatings by members of the security forces. For example, Oswaldo Rodríguez, a reporter of "El Aragueño" newspaper, was brutally beaten by members of the National Guard and the state police on 4 June, during a demonstration against police brutality in Maracay.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about reports of human rights violations in Venezuela, including killings, against those participating in recent anti-government demonstrations. An Amnesty International delegation which visited the country in early May 1992 documented at least six cases of arbitrary killings by the security forces during the demonstrations which had taken place in March and April 1992. According to reports, those responsible have remained at large.

Although Amnesty International recognizes the law-enforcement duties of the security forces, it is deeply concerned at reports that individuals have been killed or seriously injured as a result of the apparent arbitrary use of excessive force by police personnel during demonstrations.

Amnesty International is also seriously concerned about reports of the arbitrary arrests, torture and ill-treatment of political activists and students - including those tortured in Caballero Mejías on 2 June - and at the apparent impunity benefitting those responsible.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- calling for full investigations into the killing of Rommer Figueroa Lizardi, Pedro José Vasquez and José Gregorio Romero Uzcátegui, and that those responsible be brought to justice.
- pointing out that while appreciating the difficulties faced by the security forces in connection with serious disturbances in various parts of the country, available information suggests that the three victims were killed, and many more injured, as a result of the apparent arbitrary and excessive use of force by the police, and calling for the authorities to ensure that the security forces abide by the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Personnel;
- expressing serious concern at reports of torture against Omar Uribe, Arnel Rodríguez, José Antonio Briceño and Julio César Vera by members of the state police of Miranda; calling for full investigations and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO

1) President:

Sr. Carlos Andrés Pérez
Presidente de la República
Palacio Miraflores, Caracas, Venezuela
Telegrams: Presidente Pérez, Caracas, Venezuela
Telexes: 26429 EXTER VC

**Salutation: Sr. Presidente /
Dear President**

2) Minister of Interior:

Sr. Luis Piñerúa Ordaz
Ministro del Interior
Palacio Miraflores, Caracas, Venezuela
Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Caracas, Venezuela

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro /
Dear Minister**

Telexes: 26429 EXTER VC

3) Attorney General:

Sr. Ramón Escovar Salom

Fiscal General de la República

La Candelaria, Caracas, Venezuela

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Caracas, Venezuela

Telexes: 24787 FISGE VC

**Salutation: Sr. Fiscal General /
Dear Attorney General**

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Human Rights Organization:

Sres. PROVEA

Apartado Postal 5156

Caracas, Venezuela

Daily Newspaper:

Sres. El Diario de Caracas

Final Av. Principal

Boleíta Norte

Caracas, Venezuela

and to diplomatic representatives of Venezuela in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your office, if sending appeals after 29 July 1992.