

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 34/44/92

Distr: UA/SC

UA 319/92

Fear for physical safety

14 October 1992

GUATEMALA: Members of the Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo por el Aparecimiento con Vida de Nuestros Familiares (GAM), Mutual Support Group for the Appearance of Our Relatives Alive.

Amnesty International is concerned that a bomb exploded at the offices of GAM on 12 October 1992 in Guatemala City, injuring GAM leader Juana Contreras and causing material damage. Amnesty International is also concerned at other instances of intimidation against members of GAM reported to have occurred in the week before this incident.

According to reports received by Amnesty International, on 12 October at about 8pm, a bomb went off near the entrance of GAM's offices in Zone 12 of Guatemala City. Juana Contreras was reportedly injured in the blast but she did not require hospitalization. The bomb apparently caused damage to the door and windows of the building and shattered neighbouring houses' space windows.

In the week before this incident, members of GAM reported that they had noticed heavy surveillance around their offices and that they had received threats from anonymous telephone callers. Shortly after the explosion, four armed men, who did not identified themselves, reportedly went into GAM's offices and asked GAM members the name of their leaders and inquired about GAM's activities. They left minutes later in a red car.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

GAM was formed in 1984 and it is comprised of relatives of "disappeared" people attempting to determine the fate of their missing relatives. Two of its founding members were killed in 1985 in circumstances strongly suggesting official involvement and its leadership and members have continued to experience threats and harassment. GAM's offices were previously damaged by a bomb in August 1989 but on this occasion there were no injuries. In recent weeks 18-year-old Noel de Jesús Gómez Contreras, Juana Contreras' son, was reportedly beaten and threatened by unidentified men who stopped him while he was riding his bike. Members of GAM considered the incident to be an attempt to intimidate them.

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

- expressing concern at the latest bomb attack against the offices of GAM, injuring Juana Contreras and causing material damage;

- urging a full investigation into the attack and that those found to be responsible be brought to justice;

- asking that the necessary steps be taken to guarantee the safety of GAM leaders and members.

Page 2 of UA 319/92

APPEALS TO

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías
Presidente de la República de Guatemala
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegrams: Presidente Serrano, Guatemala, Guatemala

Faxes: + 502 2 537472, + 502 2 519702

Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President

2) Minister of Defence:

Gral. José García Samayoa
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala

Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Head of the National Police:

Lic. José María Menéndez
Director General de la Policía Nacional
6 Avenida 13-71
Zona 1, Guatemala
Guatemala

Telegrams: Director Policía Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala

Faxes: + 502 2 53 3057

Salutation: Señor Director / Dear Sir

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Human Rights Attorney:

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio
Procurador de los Derechos Humanos
12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1,
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Faxes: + 502 2 81734

2) Newspaper:

Diario Prensa Libre

13 Calle 9-31, 50 Nivel

Edificio Prensa Libre

Zona 1, Guatemala

GUATEMALA

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala accredited in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 November 1992.