

**EXTRA ADDRESSES FOR E-MAIL RECIPIENTS ONLY**

Dr. Edmundo Vásquez Martínez      **Señor Presidente de la Corte Supreme de Jusiticia**  
Presidente de la Corte  
Suprema de Justicia  
Centro Cívico  
21a Calle y 7a Avenida  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Telegrams: Presidente Corte Suprema, Guatemala, Guatemala**

Sr Director                                      **Señor Director**  
Relaciones Públicas de la Policía Nacional  
6 Avenida 13-71 Zona 1  
Guatemala, Guatemala

**Telegrams: Director Relaciones Publicas Policia Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

**AI Index: AMR 34/37/91**  
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**UA 279/91**

**Torture**

**16 August 1991**

**GUATEMALA**

**Edwin Esteban Rodríguez García**

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Amnesty International is concerned at reports that on Thursday 1 August 1991, 15-year-old street child Edwin Esteban Rodríguez García was illegally detained and tortured with the apparent complicity of two uniformed police agents in Guatemala City.

According to the information received by Amnesty International, at about 3.00 pm on 1 August 1991, Edwin Esteban Rodríguez García reportedly stole a pair of sunglasses from a man dressed in civilian clothes close to *La Placita* market at the corner of 19th Street and 6th Avenue in Zone 1 of Guatemala City. The man grabbed Edwin Rodríguez, but he managed to escape and boarded a bus, in which two uniformed policemen were travelling. Upon seeing them, Edwin Rodríguez immediately got off the bus, as did the two policemen when they saw that he was being chased by the man whose glasses he had stolen.

Eyewitnesses have stated that Edwin Rodríguez was eventually caught, and the two policemen helped the man in plain clothes force the child into his pick-up van, whose licence plates were taken down by a witness. The policemen rode in the van as well, and got out later on at the *Parque de la Industria*. According to Guatemalan Law, Edwin Rodríguez should have been taken to the *Magistratura de Menores* (juvenile court) by the uniformed police officers who assisted in his capture. However, the van then picked up two other men dressed in plain clothes, possibly detectives, and they took Edwin Rodríguez to a secret location close to Mixco, a Guatemala City suburb, where they started to torture him. He was allegedly severely beaten on different parts of his body, which resulted in an open wound to the head, and was burnt with cigarettes on his chest, back and testicles.

Edwin Rodríguez was later thrown in a gully. The morning after, he went to the legal office of *Casa Alianza* (Covenant House), an organization that works on behalf of, and provides refuge for, street children, and told them what happened to him. The legal office carried out an investigation to verify the allegations made by the child. Complaints were made to the Justice of the Peace on duty, who ordered a forensic doctor's examination, and the National Police's Juvenile Section.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Over the past year, Amnesty International has received an escalating number of reports of

human rights violations against street children in Guatemala City, including beatings, torture, "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions, reportedly carried out by official security force agents, particularly the police, acting sometimes in plain clothes and sometimes in uniform. In other cases, abuses have been carried out by agents of private security firms (see *Guatemala: Extrajudicial Executions and Human Rights Violations against Street Children*, AI Index: AMR 34/37/90 of August 1990, which documented many of these cases).

Approximately 39 legal suits against more than 50 National Police are currently pending with the Guatemalan courts and only in isolated cases have investigations resulted in the prosecution and conviction of those responsible. Children who have witnessed or given information concerning abuses directed against other street children have been subjected to reprisals, and those working with street children have also been subjected to harassment and intimidation. In July unidentified gunmen opened fire on *Casa Alianza's* crisis centre, after shouting death threats against Bruce Harris, its executive director, *Casa Alianza* staff and the street children (see UA 246/91 - Death Threats - Bruce Harris, Staff and Street Children of Covenant House (*Casa Alianza*), AMR 34/31/91 of 18 July 1991). Also, according to reports received by Amnesty International, the heavily tortured body of an unidentified street child, of seven or eight years of age, was found on 31 July among the rubbish close to an electricity pylon in Zone 3 of Guatemala City. His eyes had been gouged out, and his head beaten or crushed so badly that it was impossible to identify him. *Casa Alianza* staff are pressing for an investigation into the killing.

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern at the incident in which Edwin Rodríguez was reportedly illegally seized and tortured, with the apparent complicity of two uniformed police agents;
- asking that the incident be thoroughly and impartially investigated and that those found responsible be brought to justice;
- urging the government to take steps to ensure the security of street children and those working on their behalf and that they are no longer subjected to human rights violations.

**PLEASE ORGANIZE APPEALS FROM CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS**

**APPEALS TO**

1.

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

**Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente**

**Telegrams: Presidente Serrano, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU**

**Faxes: + 502 2 537472; + 502 2 519702**

2.

Lic. Fernando Hurtado Prem  
 Ministro de Gobernación  
 Despacho Ministerial  
 Oficina No. 8, Primer Nivel  
 Palacio Nacional  
 Guatemala, Guatemala

**Señor Ministro**

**Telegrams: Ministro Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Telexes: 5085 MINGOB GU**

**Faxes: + 502 2 518105**

3.

Cnel. Julio Enrique Paiz Bolaños  
 Director General de la Policía Nacional  
 6 Avenida 13-71  
 Zona 1, Guatemala  
 Guatemala

**Señor Director****Telegrams: Director Policia, Guatemala, Guatemala**

4.

Señor Acisclo Valladares  
 Procurador General de la Nación  
 Procuraduría General de la Nación  
 18 Calle 10-36  
 Zona 1, Guatemala  
 Guatemala

**Señor Procurador General****Telegrams: Procurador General, Guatemala, Guatemala****COPIES TO:**

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio  
 Procurador de Derechos Humanos  
 Avenida Simeón Cañas 10-61  
 Zona 2,  
 Guatemala, Guatemala

Lic Eunice Lima  
 Procuradora de Menores  
 Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos  
 Avenida Simeón Cañas 10-61  
 Zona 2,  
 Guatemala, Guatemala

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7a Avenida 11-79  
 Edificio Galerias España, 6o piso  
 Zona 9, Guatemala, Guatemala

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala in your country

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 September 1991.