

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "disappearance"/torture

14 November 1990

GUATEMALA/BELIZE

Luis Arturo AREVALO

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Luis Arturo Arévalo, a Guatemalan citizen, who was arrested and reportedly tortured by the Belize police, and then handed over to the Guatemalan military authorities.

According to the information received by Amnesty International, the Guatemalan authorities warned the Belize authorities that Luis Arturo Arévalo, whom they accused of membership of a Guatemalan armed opposition group, had arrived in Belize. Luis Arévalo was captured by the Special Branch of the Belicean security forces between 3 and 4 November 1990, and reportedly subjected to repeated beatings. After about a week, he was reportedly handed over to the Kaibiles, an elite counterinsurgency unit of the Guatemalan security forces, in Melchor de Mengos, El Petén department, Guatemala. Amnesty International fears he may be tortured while in military custody and that he may be extrajudicially executed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tens of thousands of people have been victims of human rights violations in Guatemala over the past two decades. Members of all branches of the Guatemalan police and military have been responsible for a wide range of human rights violations against those considered to be government opponents. Trade unionists, academics and students, priests and catechists have been abducted, tortured and killed. Indian villagers have been seized, mutilated and shot dead.

After nearly 20 years of military government, a civilian government was elected in January 1986. However, after a brief decrease in human rights violations, reports of abductions, "disappearances," and political killings escalated throughout the administration of President Vinicio Cerezo. Now, as the administration reaches its closing months (the first round of presidential elections was held on 11 November), abuses have reached levels which some observers consider equal those of any of President Cerezo's military predecessors.

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

To the Belicean authorities:

- expressing concern at the reports that Luis Arturo Arévalo was tortured by the Belicean authorities;
- expressing concern that he was returned to Guatemala, where there are grounds to believe that he might be subjected to human rights violations by the Guatemalan military authorities;

To the Guatemalan authorities:

- urging the Guatemalan authorities to clarify his whereabouts and legal situation;
- expressing concern that he may be tortured while in the custody of the Guatemalan army, and asking for assurances that his physical integrity will be respected.

APPEALS TO:**In Belize:**

George Price
 Prime Minister
 Office of the Prime Minister
 East Bloc
 Balmopan, Belize
Telegrams; Prime Minister,
Balmopan, Belize
Telexes: 138 b2

Florencia Marín
 Minister of Home Affairs
 Ministry of Home Affairs
 Balmopan, Belize

Telegrams: Home Affairs Minister,
Balmopan, Belize

Said Musa
 Minister of Foreign Affairs
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Balmopan, Belize
Telegrams: Foreign Affairs Minister,
Balmopan, Belize
Telexes: 102 foreign bze

Arnell Brooks
 Superintendent of the Belize
 Defence Force
 Price Barracks
 Ladyville, Belize
Telegrams: Belize Defence Force
Superintendent, Ladyville, Belize

COPIES TO:

Belize Human Rights Commission
 PO Box 707
 Belize City, Belize

The Reporter (newspaper)
 PO Box 617
 Belize City, Belize

In Guatemala:

Brig. Gral. Juan Leonel Bolaños
 Ministro de Defensa
 Ministerio de Defensa
 Palacio Nacional
 Guatemala, Guatemala
Telegrams: Ministro Defensa
Guatemala, Guatemala
Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU
Faxes: + 502 253 7472

Lic Ariel Rivera Irias
 Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
 Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
 Palacio Nacional
 Guatemala, Guatemala
Telegrams: Ministro Relaciones
Exteriores, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telexes: 5321 RELEXT GU
Faxes: + 502 2 516 745

Cnel Fransisco Ortega
 Comandante
 Base Militar No 23
 Santa Elena
 El Petén, Guatemala
Telegrams: Comandante Base Militar 23, Sta Elena, El Peten, Guatemala

COPIES TO:

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

Lic. Mario Roberto Yllescas Aguirre
 Procurador General de la Nación
 Procuraduría General de la Nación
 7a Avenida 7-78
 Edificio Centroamericano
 Zona 4,
 Guatemala, Guatemala

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala and Belize in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 December 1990.