

PUBLIC

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06 June 2007

UA 136/07      Fear for safety

GUATEMALA      **Edit Corado Gómez (f), outreach team member at *Asociación de Mujeres Ixqik* (Ixqik women's association)**  
**Liliana Tzin (f), Ixqik staff member**  
**Olympia Chatá (f), Ixqik staff member**  
**Other Ixqik staff**

**Killed:      **María Cristina Gómez (f), human rights defender, mother of Edit Corado****  
****José Corado Gomez (m), brother of Edit Corado****

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Staff of the women's human rights organization Ixqik have reportedly suffered a series of threatening incidents over the last three weeks. In a 3 June attack María Cristina Gómez, who worked on women's human rights issues through her local church, was killed, as was her son. Her daughter, Ixqik worker Edit Corado, was seriously wounded. Amnesty International believes that she and her colleagues at Ixqik could be in serious danger.

On 5 June at approximately 10am Ixqik director Iris Perez received a phone call in which a male voice stated "We know where all four [other Ixqik staff] of you are, you are going around with her, because of that you'll see" (*Ya tenemos ubicadas a las cuatro y vos andás con ella y por eso ya verás*)

On 3 June at approximately 5.30 pm, two men parked their car next to Edit Corado's house, where her family keep a small shop, in the town of El Chal, in the northern department of El Petén. They went into the shop, and one of them went on to one of the family rooms, where he shot José Corado fatally in the back of the head. Maria Cristina was also fatally shot and Edit Corado was wounded in her left shoulder, right hand and left leg.

On 2 June Ixqik staff member Martha Arauz had allegedly received a call at 6am from a woman who asked for Eulalia Herrera García's phone number. Eulalia Herrera is a colleague of hers at Ixqik. Martha said that she did not have it and the woman told her to contact Eulalia and find out for her. She then hung up, saying that she was Clara, Eulalia Herrera's aunt. Eulalia Herrera says she has no aunt named Clara.

On 1 June at about 10.15pm two men, apparently drunk, walked into the corridor that leads to the apartment where Ixqik staff member Olga Urizar lives. They stood by her door for a few minutes, talking loudly. After a short silence, one allegedly shouted, "Tell her to come out. Come out! We'll break down the door, we'll blow this up... Where shall we put the bomb and we run away, one, two, three, now! (*decile que salga. Salga señora! Vamos a tirar la puerta, vamos a explotar esto... En dónde ponemos la bomba y nos vamos, uno, dos, tres, ya!*). At about the same time, Ixqik Director Iris Pérez received a phone call in which she only heard a man laughing loudly.

Ixqik staff members have also received a number of intimidating phone calls and text messages. From 18 to 31 May four Ixqik members received approximately eight phone calls, which appeared to come from Ixqik colleagues. Some of the phone calls were asking for details of the whereabouts of staff members, while others were open threats. On 25 May Ixqik member Margarita Tux received a text message reading, "Just you wait you will see what is going to happen. I'm going to do it..." (*Espérame ya vas a ver que te va a pasar. Yo voy adelante...*)

From 13 to 20 May, Olga Urizar, Evely Valladarez and other Ixqik workers were repeatedly followed, and saw men keeping watch on their homes.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Ixqik has been working on promoting women's human rights and the political participation of women in El Petén department for the last nine years. In particular they carry out research into violence against women, raising awareness of it and preventing it. In November 2005, after organizing a march calling for justice for rape victims in their local area, their offices were raided (see UA 291/05, AMR 34/042/2005, 15 November 2005).

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Edit Corado Gómez and other staff at Ixqik;
- calling on the authorities to order a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the 3 June killing of María Cristina Gómez and José Corado Gómez, in which Edit Corado was wounded, and the intimidation of other Ixqik staff, and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate and effective measures to guarantee the safety of all the human rights defenders working for Ixqik, according to their own wishes;
- reminding the authorities that human rights defenders have the right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- reminding the authorities that acts of harassment and intimidation against members of organizations that work to end violence against women must be investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.

### **APPEALS TO:**

#### Attorney General and Head of the Public Prosecutor's office

Lic. Juan Luís Florido

Fiscal General de la República y Jefe del Ministerio Público

Edificio Ministerio Público

15 Avenida 15-16, Zona 1, Barrio Gerona, 8vo. Nivel,

Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

**Fax: +502 2411 9124**

**+502 2411 9326**

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

#### Minister of Interior

Adela Camacho de Torrebiarte

Ministra de Gobernación

6a. Avenida 13-71, Zona 1,

Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

**Fax: +502 2413 8658**

**Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimada Sra. Ministra**

### **COPIES TO:**

#### Human Rights Associations

Asociación de Mujeres Ixqik c/o

Unidad de Protección de Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanos

Movimiento Nacional de Derechos Humanos

1 Avenida 0-11, Zona 2

Colonia Lo de Bran

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Fax: +502 2232 2651 (if a voice responds, say "por favor, tono de fax")**

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 17 July 2007.