

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 13/02/96

UA 59/96

Fear for Safety / Harassment

1 March 1996

ARGENTINAMIRABET family

Alejandro MIRABET, 17

Amnesty International is deeply concerned at reports that relatives of Alejandro Mirabet and witnesses of his shooting by members of the police in the neighbourhood of Belgrano, Buenos Aires, have been subjected to harassment and intimidation.

According to reports, in the early hours of 20 February Alejandro Mirabet was standing with a group of friends in a street in the neighbourhood of Belgrano, Buenos Aires, when two policemen, wearing civilian clothes and travelling in a police car from (Seccional 33) Police Station 33, but without number plates, asked the youths for identification documents. Alejandro Mirabet became frightened at the sight of the police and ran away trying to hide in the house of some relatives. He was followed by the police car. Reports indicate that before Alejandro Mirabet reached the house one of the policemen grabbed him and fired a shot in the back of his neck. Alejandro Mirabet was transferred by members of the police to the Pirovano Hospital in Buenos Aires where he was registered as N.N. (person unknown) although the police had his identity documents. He is reported to be in a coma.

It has been reported that the head of the 3rd Police district of the Metropolitan Security Department (Jefe de la Circunscripción 3ra. De la Secretaría de Seguridad Metropolitana) claimed that Alejandro Mirabet was armed and was wounded while struggling with the police. Eyewitnesses have publicly stated that Alejandro Mirabet was unarmed and that the police wiped up the blood around the area of the incident before taking him to the hospital.

Argentine human rights organizations have denounced the shooting of Alejandro Mirabet and the harassment suffered by members of the Mirabet family and witnesses of the shooting. Witnesses to the shooting and relatives of Alejandro Mirabet have alleged that they have been subjected to surveillance by police agents in civilian clothes and that they have received a number of anonymous telephone calls since the shooting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years relatives and lawyers of victims of human rights violations allegedly committed by members of the police, have been subjected to harassment and death threats. (See UA 123/94, AI Index AMR 13/05/95, October 1995: Death in Custody, Death Threats, Diego Rodríguez Laguens and others).

Although police and judicial investigations have been opened in a number of recent 'disappearances' and killings of youths, allegedly by the police in incidents known as '*gatillo fácil*' (trigger happy), witnesses of such incidents have reported a high level of intimidation. AI has urged the authorities to guarantee the safety of the relatives and witnesses and that lawyers be allowed to carry out their work without fear or intimidation.

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

- expressing concern at the shooting of Alejandro Mirabet;
- urging that a thorough and independent investigation be carried out and that those found responsible be brought to justice;

- expressing concern for the safety of witnesses to the incident and of members of the Mirabet family, following their complaints of intimidation.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Interior

Sr. Ministro del Interior

Dr. Carlos Corach

Casa de Gobierno

Balcarce 50

Buenos Aires, C.F.

Fax: + 541 331 7354

Telegrams: Ministro Corach, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/ Dear Minister

Human Rights Sub-Secretariat

Subsecretaria de Derechos Humanos

Dra. Alicia Pierini

Moreno 711, Piso 5

Buenos Aires, C.F.

Argentina

Faxes: + 541 343 2326

Telegrams: Dra. Alicia Pierini, Subsecretaría Derechos Humanos, Buenos Aires

Salutation: Sra Subsecretaria/Dear Dra Pierini

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organization

Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)

Rodríguez Peña 286 - piso 1

1020 Buenos Aires, Argentina

Faxes: + 541 371 3790

and to diplomatic representatives of ARGENTINA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 April 1996.