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Fear of Extrajudicial Execution

10 June 1991

ARGENTINA:

Fernando 'Pino' SOLANAS

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Fernando 'Pino' Solanas, a well-known Argentine film director, who was shot several times by an unidentified gunman.

On 22 May 1991, Fernando Solanas was walking with a colleague in the parking lot of a film studio in the locality of Olivos, 30 kms from Buenos Aires, when several shots were fired at him by a gunman in disguise. It was reported that the gunman warned Fernando Solanas' companion to move away and warned Fernando Solanas to keep his mouth shut. The gunman subsequently escaped in a car with another individual. Fernando Solanas was reportedly wounded in both legs and taken initially to a local emergency clinic and subsequently transferred to a hospital in the capital, Buenos Aires, for treatment.

The shooting took place three days after the publication in the newspaper Página 12 of an interview given by Fernando Solanas in which he publicly criticized the Argentine President Carlos Menem. President Menem filed a legal complaint against Fernando Solanas for "defamation" (calumnia). The article was published on 19 May 1991. Two days later Fernando Solanas reiterated the opinions he expressed in the interview, to the judge in charge of the investigation opened against him following President Menem's complaint.

Lawyers acting on behalf of Fernando Solanas have requested a full investigation into the shooting, and immediately after the attack requested police protection for him and his family. Press reports stated that President Menem has requested that the Ministry of Interior open an investigation into the shooting, which he considers to be politically motivated. However, reports indicate that the police are treating the case as 'attempted robbery' (intento de robo) and it has been reported that the Minister of Interior has refused to agree to the presidential request, arguing that the Ministry's intervention is inappropriate. Police protection was initially refused and only granted after the lawyers threatened to report the initial refusal to members of the press awaiting information on the health condition of Fernando Solanas.

Amnesty International believes that there should be a full investigation into the shooting of Fernando Solanas and that those responsible should be brought to justice.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Recently there has been a noticeable increase of violent attacks and other forms of harassment against organizations and individuals who have publicly criticized or expressed their disagreement with government policies. Explosive devices have reportedly been planted on newspaper premises and journalists have been threatened. Members of human rights organizations, like the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, have been the target of anonymous telephone death threats, their premises have been broken into and confidential written material and office equipment stolen. The same day as the shooting of Fernando Solanas, the President of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, Sra. Hebe de Bonafini, received a threat against her life in an anonymous telephone call.

Although there is no direct evidence of the involvement of the security forces in these incidents, the nature of the attacks, the fact that the victims appear to have been selected on account of their criticisms of the government and the fact that no one has been brought to justice for these incidents suggest that these attacks, at minimum, are being tolerated by authorities.

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

- expressing concern at the shooting of Fernando Solanas;
- requesting that all necessary steps be taken to protect the physical integrity of Fernando Solanas and his family;
- urging that a full inquiry into the shooting of Fernando Solanas be carried out and that those responsible be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente de la República Argentina  
Dr. Carlos Saúl Menem  
Casa Rosada  
Balcarce 50  
Buenos Aires C.F., Argentina

**Telegrams: Presidente Menem, Buenos Aires, Argentina**  
**Telexes: 21194 (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)**  
**Faxes: +54 1 311 1249**  
**(via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)**

Sr Ministro del Interior  
Dr Julio Mera Figueroa  
Ministerio del Interior  
Casa de Gobierno  
Balcarce 24  
Buenos Aires C.F., Argentina

**Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Buenos Aires, Argentina**  
**Telexes: 21194 (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)**  
**Faxes: +54 1 311 1249**  
**(via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)**

**COPIES TO:**

CELS  
**(Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales)**  
Rodriguez Peña 286, 1er piso  
1020 Buenos Aires  
Argentina

Diario Página 12 **(newspaper)**  
Avda Belgrano 671/77  
1092 Buenos Aires  
Argentina

and to diplomatic representatives of Argentina in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,

or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 July 1991.