

PUBLIC

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UA 326/06 Fear for safety/death threats

ARGENTINA **María Eva Arroyo (f)**
María Luz Piérola (f), human rights activist
María Cristina Saborido (f)
Martina (f)] her daughters
Agustina (f)]
Dozens of others

The three women named above are among dozens of people seeking justice for themselves or relatives for human rights abuses committed while Argentina was under military rule (1976-1983), who have been threatened by people who appear to have links with the former military government. Some are under police protection, but this does not appear to be adequate. Amnesty International believes their lives are in grave danger.

Friends of María Eva Arroyo received an anonymous phone call on 14 November from a man who told them, *Dígale a Eva que Lezcano esta mandando gente para hacerle algo* ("Tell Eva that Lezcano is sending people to do something to her.") Lezcano was the head of a police station in the northern province of Jujuy, and has been named in several trials as being allegedly responsible for human rights violations during the military government. María Eva Arroyo is an activist with an organization that works to bring to justice those responsible for "disappearances", and find their victims. She filed a complaint about the threat with the Federal Police later that day; the next day she filed a habeas corpus writ, which led to her receiving police protection. However, there are still concerns for her safety.

On 9 November, neighbours and relatives claim that two cars were parked opposite the home of human rights activist María Luz Piérola's house in Paraná city, Entre Ríos province, for hours at a time. When María Luz Piérola came home from work, one of the cars followed her for a short distance. On 20 November, anonymous notes were left in places she frequents in the area, reading *María Luz Piérola Q.E.P.D.* (María Luz Piérola R.I.P.). She has reported this to the Provincial Secretary of Justice, Security and Human Rights, and to the city's Federal Judge, and asked for police protection. This has not yet been put in place. María Luz Piérola's brother was extrajudicially executed in 1976. María Luz Piérola is now one of a group who have brought charges against those they allege are responsible for a series of "disappearances", now being investigated by the judicial authorities in the northern province of Chaco.

María Cristina Saborido was held at a secret detention centre in Buenos Aires province known as *el Pozo de Banfield* ("Banfield Well") in July 1977. She has been threatened, together with her daughters Martina and Agustina, and her daughters' boyfriends. On 8 October they received an anonymous letter at their home in the town of Adrogué, Buenos Aires Province, believed to have been aimed at Martina, which said, *"Zurda de mierda cuidate porque te vamos a meter picanas hasta en el orto, y cuida a tus hermanos porque también se la tenemos jurada y al zurdito del novio de tu hermana lo tenemos enlistado también ya vas a ver lo que le hacemos"* ("Filthy lefty, be careful because we're going to give you electric shocks, even up your arse, and watch out for your siblings because we've got it in for them too and that lefty boyfriend of your sister's, we've got him on the list too, wait and see what we do to him".) On 9 October, Martina's boyfriend was attacked a few blocks from his home by two men who slashed his arm and called him a "filthy lefty". On 5 November he was waiting for a bus when two men in a motorcycle stopped long enough to show him a photograph of Jorge Julio Lopez, who "disappeared" on 17 September (See UA 254/06, AMR 13/004/2006, 25 September 2006). Police protection is now in place at the house of María Cristina Saborido. However, Amnesty International believes that she and her family remain in danger.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Argentine government told Amnesty International in November that they had set up a system to protect witnesses and plaintiffs in trials of those accused of human rights violations during the military government, and that it will be supervised by the National Human Rights Secretariat. Several trials have begun around the country since June 2005, when the 1986 Full Stop Law (*Ley de Punto Final*) and the Due Obedience Law (*Ley de Obediencia Debida*) of 1987, which protected the security forces from prosecution, were declared null and void.

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

- acknowledging and welcoming the National Plan to protect victims and witnesses in trials of those responsible for human rights violations during the military government;
- expressing concern at reports that those named above (naming them) and others involved in these trials, have been threatened;
- asking what measures the authorities have taken to ensure effective protection for those named above;
- calling on the authorities to publicly condemn the threats and attacks;
- urging the authorities to exhaustively investigate all complaints of threats and attacks, and to bring those responsible to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of Province of Entre Rios

Dr Jorge Pedro Busti

Casa de Gobierno, Laprida y Cordoba, 3100 Parana, Entre Rios, ARGENTINA

Fax: + 54 343 423 0455

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires

Gobernador de la Provincia de Buenos Aires

Sr. Felipe Solá, Casa de Gobierno, Calle 6 Entre 51/53, 1900 La Plata, Prov. Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA

Fax: +54 221 429 4189

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador/Dear Governor

Governor of the Province of Jujuy

Gobernador de la Provincia de Jujuy

Dr. Eduardo Alfredo Fellner, Casa de Gobierno, San Martín 450, 4600 San Salvador de Jujuy, ARGENTINA

Fax: +54 388 423 9486

Salutation: Sr Gobernador/Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sr. Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto

Sr Jorge Enrique Taiana

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto

Esmeralda 1212, 1007 Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA

Fax: + 54 11 4819 7324

Salutation: Sr. Ministro /Dear Minister

Minister of Interior

Ministro del Interior

Sr. Aníbal Fernández

Ministerio del Interior, 25 de Mayo 101/145, 1002 Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA

Fax: + 54 11 4345 3336

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/ Dear Minister

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 14 January 2007.