

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 170/00 (AMR 13/09/00, 22 June 2000) and follow-up (AMR 13/10/00, 5 July 2000) - "Disappearance" / Fear for Safety

ARGENTINA José Segundo Zambrano
Pablo Marcelo Rodríguez

The Mendoza Province authorities have told Amnesty International that judicial investigations into the killings of José Segundo Zambrano and Pablo Rodríguez are now underway. Lawyers representing the men's relatives believe that appeals from the Urgent Action network have obliged the authorities to act in the case.

The two men "disappeared" on 25 March 2000 after they apparently went to meet an officer of the Mendoza Investigations Police (*Dirección de Investigaciones de la Policía*). José Zambrano's blood stained car was later found abandoned, and the two men's bodies were discovered 5 kilometres from it. After taking up the case, the lawyers representing the two men's relatives faced a campaign of harassment, and defamatory claims about them were circulated to the press.

In a letter to Amnesty International the Mendoza Ministry of Justice and Security have assured the organisation that the lawyers will have all the guarantees their profession merits, and expressed the authorities' respect for their work:

"En cuanto a la situación de los abogados que patrocinan a las familias de estas víctimas...[cuentan] con todas las garantías inherentes al ejercicio de su profesión, la que merece el mayor respeto por parte de las autoridades ministeriales."

"As for the situation of the lawyers who are working with the relatives of the victims...they can count on all the essential guarantees necessary to carry out their profession, which merits the greatest respect from the ministerial authorities."

In a recent letter, the human rights lawyers representing the men's relatives thanked Urgent Action writers, whom they believe helped avoid impunity in the case.

"Queremos sinceramente agradecerle... y todas las demás personas y compañeros que han ayudado a evitar la impunidad una vez más. La acción urgente tuvo muchísima difusión y el diario Los Andes publicó ... ejemplos de algunas de ellas."

"We really want to thank you... and all the other people and friends who helped avoid impunity once again. The Urgent Action was widely distributed and the [local] newspaper Los Andes published ... copies of some of them [the letters]."

No further action is required. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.