

UA 283/01

Torture/F

ARGENTINA F.A. Rodríguez (f)
Nadia Echazú (f)

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of the two transvestites named above. They were both tortured and verbally abused in two separate incidents by members of the police in the city of Buenos Aires.

In the early hours of 19 October, F.A. Rodríguez was reportedly stopped by a police patrol and asked for her identity documents. She was then beaten up by four police officers who pulled her hair and pushed her to the ground where they continued to hit her around the head. She was then taken to Police Station No. 25 (*Comisaria 25*) in Buenos Aires, where other police officers joined as the assault on her continued.

F.A. Rodríguez was punched, kicked and hit with a truncheon for approximately one hour. Afterwards, a doctor was called to see her and although she was badly injured, the doctor did not examine her. She was eventually released after several hours, but her identity documents and money were not returned to her.

On 25 October, she filed a complaint about her treatment in custody, with the Buenos Aires Ombudsperson and also with the District Court No. 27 (*Juzgado de Instrucción No 27*) which has powers to investigate such complaints.

In an earlier incident, another transvestite called Nadia Echazú was arrested on 7 October by members of Police station No. 25 in Buenos Aires, as she carried out a street campaign for the Prevention of HIV/AIDS. One of three police officers asked for her identity documents and then spat at her. He also threatened to "break her" if she was found in the area again. She was beaten around the stomach, held by the hair, pushed to the ground and kicked as she lay there. She was then handcuffed, had tear gas sprayed in her face and reportedly insulted by one of the police officers who said "I am going to give you [human] rights, degenerate faggot" ("yo te voy a dar derechos a vos puto degenerado"). She was put in a police car and threatened with a gun as she was being taken to the police station. She was subsequently released and on 11 October filed a complaint with the Buenos Aires Ombudsperson.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed its concern to the authorities at reports of the harassment, death threats, ill-treatment, torture and deaths in disputed circumstances of members of sexual minority groups in Argentina. (See UA 237/00, AMR 13/11/00, 10 August 2000 and follow ups). The authorities still do not adequately investigate reports of ill-treatment and torture by members of the police. In many cases those who report such human rights violations may face reprisals that prevent any criminal complaint from being pursued effectively.

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

- expressing concern at reports that police officers have tortured F.A. Rodríguez and Nadia Echazú;

- expressing concern for the safety of both F.A. Rodríguez and Nadia Echazú;
- urging the authorities to order an independent, impartial and conclusive investigation into the police attacks on both F.A. Rodríguez and Nadia Echazú, and for those found responsible to be brought to justice;
- ask the government to adhere to its commitments to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Sr. Ministro de Justicia y Derechos Humanos
Dr. Jorge Enrique de la Rúa,
Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos
Sarmiento 329, 5 piso,
1041 Buenos Aires C.F. ARGENTINA

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

Faxes: + 54 11 4328 5395

Minister of Interior

Sr. Ministro del Interior
Sr. Ramón Bautista Mestre
Ministerio del Interior
Balcarce 50
1064 Buenos Aires, Argentina

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Fax: + 54 11 4331 4571

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/ Dear Minister

Minister de Relaciones Exteriores

Sr. Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
D. Adalberto Rodriguez Giavarini,
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto
Reconquista 1088 - Piso 14,
1003 Buenos Aires C.F. ARGENTINA

Telegrams: Foreign Minister, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/ Dear Minister

Fax: + 54 11 4819 7619

COPIES TO:

Under-Secretary for Human Rights

Subsecretaria de Derechos Humanos
Dra. Diana Conti
Sarmiento 329
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Fax: (54 11) 43 81 08 97

Buenos Aires Ombudsperson Office

Defensoría del Pueblo de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires
Dra. Alicia Oliveira
Venezuela 842
Buenso Aires Argentina
Fax: (54 11) 43 38 49 00

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 18 December 2001.