

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety / Death threats

21 October 1998

CHILECARMEN SORIA and her family

On 17 October 1998, Carmen Soria received several anonymous telephone death threats, raising serious concerns about her and her young family's safety.

Amnesty International believes that the threats are related to Carmen Soria's public campaign to bring to justice those involved in the assassination of her father, the United Nations official Carmelo Soria, in Chile in July 1976. It may also be linked to the arrest of former General Augusto Pinochet in London, UK, on 17 October.

The following day, Carmen Soria publicly denounced the death threats at a demonstration in Santiago relating to the arrest of Augusto Pinochet. Amnesty International understands that she has been provided with a police guard (Carabineros) by the authorities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Carmelo Soria, a dual Spanish-Chilean national working in Chile for the United Nations Latin American Centre for Demography CELADE, "disappeared" on 14 July 1976 in Santiago. He was found dead two days later in a canal.

Since the murder of Carmelo Soria, his family have pursued all legal possibilities for the perpetrators to be brought to justice. The courts, however, have made numerous attempts to close the case by applying the "Amnesty Law" of 1978. This law, which amounted to a self-imposed amnesty, was enacted by the military government of General Augusto Pinochet to prevent prosecution of individuals implicated in certain criminal acts committed between 11 September 1973 and 10 March 1978.

On 23 August 1996 the Supreme Court upheld a previous ruling which applied the Amnesty Law, in order to close the case. The ruling, while acknowledging that Carmelo Soria had been murdered, rejected the claim that he qualified as a person entitled to international protection granted by the Vienna Convention on Crimes Committed Against International Civil Servants and Other Diplomatic Officials, which would have prevented the closure of his case.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Carmen Soria and her young family following several anonymous death threats made to her on 17 October 1998;
- acknowledging that police protection has been granted to her by the authorities but asking for reassurances that they will take all other necessary measures to ensure that Carmen Soria and her family are fully protected;
- asking for the annulment of the Amnesty Law of 1978.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic
Señor Presidente de la República de Chile
Señor Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle
Palacio de la Moneda
Santiago, Chile

Telegrams: Sr. Presidente, Santiago, Chile

Faxes: + 562 694 5080

Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Dear President

Minister of Interior

Sr. Raul Troncoso
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Palacio de la Moneda
Santiago, Chile

Telegrams: Sr. Ministro del Interior
Faxes: + 562 696 8740 / 699 2165
Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

Minister of Justice

Sra. Maria Soledad Alvear
Ministra de Justicia
Ministerio de Justicia
Morandé 107
Santiago, Chile

Telegrams: Sra. Ministra de Justicia
Faxes: + 562 695 4558
Salutation: Sra. Ministra / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sr, Jose Miguel Inzulza
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Catedral 1158, Piso 3
Santiago, Chile

Faxes: + 562 696 8796 / 672 6274

Newspaper

La Nación
Agustinas 1269
Santiago, Chile

Faxes: + 562 698 1059

Human Rights Organization

Codepu
Brown Sur 150 - Nunoa
Santiago, Chile

Faxes: + 562 341 5041

and to diplomatic representatives of Chile accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 December 1998.