

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 106/92 Fear of "disappearance"

1 April 1992

ECUADOR:

Marco Antonio ROMERO CARRASCO, aged 16

Amnesty International is concerned about the reported unacknowledged detention of 16-year-old Marco Antonio Romero Carrasco, from the city of Esmeraldas, Esmeraldas province.

According to reports, Marco Antonio Romero was detained on 24 February 1992 by members of the Policía Nacional, National Police, at a bus stop in the city of Esmeraldas. A large group of people claimed to have witnessed the detention. Witnesses claimed that Marco Antonio Romero was then taken to the Cárcel de Detención Preventiva, Preventive Detention Prison. However, on enquiring the next day about Marco Antonio Romero at the Cárcel de Detención Preventiva, his relatives were apparently told that he was not being held in the prison.

Marco Antonio Romero's mother and the president of the independent Human Rights Commission in Esmeraldas went to talk to the commander of the National Police in Esmeraldas, who denied that the detention had taken place.

The case was denounced to the public attorney in Esmeraldas. When questioned by a representative from the Public Attorney's Office, the police reportedly denied having detained Marco Antonio Romero.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In Ecuador, reports of alleged "disappearances" by the authorities during the administration of President Rodrigo Borja Cevallos have not been frequent. However, occasional "disappearances" have been denounced to the authorities by local human rights organizations. In September 1991 a Comisión Especial Investigadora, Special Commission of Inquiry, appointed by the present government, published a report in which it found the Policía Nacional had been responsible for the "disappearance" and eventual death of two brothers, Carlos Santiago and Pedro Andrés Restrepo Arismendi in January 1988, during the administration of the previous government. In the wake of the report, the government extended the mandate of the Comisión to investigate other cases of "disappearances", although it is not known whether the Commission has done so.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the reported "disappearance" after detention by members of the police of Marco Antonio Romero Carrasco and urging that his whereabouts be immediately clarified;

- asking that he be brought before a judge, and that he either be charged with a recognizable criminal offence, or released;

- asking that while in detention he be humanely treated and given access to a lawyer, doctor and relatives;

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- asking what further steps the government has taken to conduct a thorough investigation into "disappearances", following the decree extending the mandate of the Comisión Especial Investigadora.

APPEALS TO

1) President

Dr. Rodrigo Borja Cevallos
Presidente de la República
del Ecuador

Palacio de Gobierno
García Moreno 1043
Quito, Ecuador

**Señor Presidente/
Dear President**

Telegrams: Presidente Borja, Quito, Ecuador

2) Minister of the Government and Police

Sr. César Verduga Vélez
Ministro de Gobierno y Policía
Ministerio de Gobierno y Policía
Espejo y Benalcázar
Quito, Ecuador

**Señor Ministro/
Dear Minister**

Telegrams: Ministro Gobierno Velez, Quito, Ecuador

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organization

Señores
CEDHU
Apartado 720 A
Quito, Ecuador

and to diplomatic representatives of Ecuador in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 May 1992.