

UA 269/02

Fea.

ECUADOR Members of the human rights group *Fundación Regional de Asesoría en Derechos Humanos* (INREDH)

Amnesty International fears for the safety of the members of the *Fundación Regional de Asesoría en Derechos Humanos* (INREDH), a well known human rights organization in Ecuador after receiving reports that on the evening of 23 August, unknown individuals broke into their office in the capital, Quito.

Amnesty International has received reports that INREDH's Presidency, Legal Team and Communications offices, all located within the same building, were broken into. Confidential information from their manual archives and from four of their ten computers was accessed and tampered with by the intruders. A security box was also broken into and money stolen. However, the burglars left other valuable objects which were at hand.

This incident appears to be part of a pattern of intimidation and threats against human rights organizations, civil society leaders and critics of the government. In the last two years, Amnesty International has received several reports of death threats and intimidation against human rights defenders and non-governmental organizations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In June 1999, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted a resolution stating their intention to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which the UN passed on 9 December 1998. In this resolution, the UN agreed to "recognize and support the work carried out by Human Rights Defenders and their valuable contribution to the promotion, observance, and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms in the Americas". The resolution called on state members to provide "Human Rights Defenders with the necessary guarantees and facilities to continue freely carrying out their work of promoting and protecting human rights", as well as to adopt "the necessary steps to guarantee their life, liberty, and integrity".

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

- expressing concern for the safety of all members of the *Fundación Regional de Asesoría en Derechos Humanos* (INREDH);
- requesting a prompt and effective investigation into the break-in at the office of INREDH on 23 August,
- demanding that the findings are made public and those responsible will be brought to justice;
- urging the Ecuadorian Government to adhere to its obligations regarding the protection of human rights defenders, as laid out in the UN Declaration of Rights and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups, and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the Human Rights Defenders in the Americas resolution of the Organisation of American States (OAS).

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic of Ecuador
Dr. Gustavo Noboa Bejarano

Presidente Constitucional de la República
del Ecuador

Palacio de Carondelet
García Moreno 1043
Quito, ECUADOR

Telegrams: Presidente Constitucional de la República, Quito, Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 2580735

Salutation: Señor Presidente/ Mr. President

Minister of the Interior

Ministro de Gobierno y Policía
Ing. Rodolfo Barniol Zerega
Ministerio de Gobierno y Policía
Benalcázar y Espejo
Quito, Ecuador

Telegrams: Ministro de Gobierno y Policía, Quito, Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 2580067

Salutation: Sr Ministro/Dear Minister

Head of the National Police

Ing. Jorge Guillermo Molina Nuñez
Comandante General de la Policía Nacional
Ramírez Dávalos 612 y Av. 10 de Agosto
Quito, Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 231121

Telegram: Comandante General Policia Nacional, Quito, Ecuador

Salutation: Señor Inspector General/Dear Chief Inspector

COPIES TO:

Fundación Regional de Asesoría en Derechos Humanos - INREDH

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Quito, Ecuador

E-mail: inredh@ecuanex.net.ec

Newspaper

El Comercio
Casilla 17-0131
Quito, Ecuador

E-mail: redaccion@elcomercio.com

and to diplomatic representatives of Ecuador accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 9 October 2002.