

1 May 2001

Further information on UA 73/01 (AMR 28/010/2001, 29 March 2000 and update AMR 28/012/2001, 4 April 2001) - Fear for safety/Death threats

ECUADOR Human rights defenders:*Quitogay, Quito**Equidad (Equality), Quito**Fundación Amigos por la Vida (FAV - Friends for Life Foundation), Guayaquil**Fundación Ecuatoriana de Minorías Sexuales (FEMIS - Ecuadorean Sexual**Minorities Foundation), Guayaquil and Quito**Neptali Arias Zambrano, Director, FAV, Guayaquil***Members of the FAV AIDS prevention group *Juventud Arco Iris* ("Rainbow Youth")***Cristhian Landeta, Rainbow Youth Coordinator**Other FAV members*

New name: Orlando Montoya, Director, Equidad, Quito

Organizations defending the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Ecuador continue to receive death threats.

Throughout April, Director of *Equidad* Orlando Montoya received several death threats. E-mails addressed to him accused him of being an "ideologist of human scum" and promised that he would "be the first" (*Orlando Montoya mentalizador de la escoria humana seras el primero*). Orlando Montoya is a well know human rights defender and was a co-founder of the first LGBT organisation in Ecuador, *Sociedad Gay*, Gay society. He has been advocating LGBT people's rights detentions without charge and police raids since 1985.

Amigos por la Vida, Friends for Life, has received at least five telephone threats in the last two weeks. A anonymous male caller said "we are keeping an eye on you" (*los estamos vigilando*).

On 30 April 2001, a number of Ecuadorean human rights organizations from Quito and Guayaquil presented a letter to the authorities informing them of the death threats that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people and defenders of their rights have been receiving since March. They expressed concern that the threats could be a sign of a wider homophobic movement like the one that took hold of the country in 1993 and 1994. At that time, more than 20 LGBT people were killed in individual attack. They also asked the Attorney General to take action to find those responsible for the threats and bring them to justice.

A similar letter was sent to the Ecuadorean Ombudsman, asking him to publically condemn the threats. Another letter was sent to the Human Rights Congressional Commission, asking them to do everything in their power to support the investigation.

In a resolution adopted in June 1999, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) stated its intention to implement the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The resolution called on member states 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".

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

- expressing concern for the safety of all the people and organizations named above;
- asking the authorities to do everything necessary to protect them, so they can continue their legitimate activities in safety;
- calling for an immediate investigation into the alleged death threats;
- reminding the authorities of their duty to ensure that human rights violations are investigated and punished;
- urging the Ecuadorean government to adhere to its obligations regarding human rights defenders, as laid out in the *UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, and the *OAS Human Rights Defenders in the Americas* resolution [AG/RES. 1671 (XXIX-O/99)].

APPEALS TO: Please note that it can be difficult getting through to fax numbers in Ecuador. Please be patient and keep trying.

Attorney General

Dra. Mariana Yépez de Velazco
Ministra Fiscal General de Estado
Robles 731 y Av. Amazonas
Quito
ECUADOR

Fax: + 593 2 560 355 (when voice answers, ask "por favor, me puede oír o dar tono de fax")

Salutation: Señora Fiscal General/ Dear Attorney General

Congressional Human Rights Commission

Dr. Bolívar Sánchez Ribadeneira
Presidente de la Comisión Especializada
Permanente de Derechos Humanos
del H. Congreso Nacional
Luis Saá y Sodiro
Edificio Daniel Cadena, 1er Piso, oficina 108
Quito
Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 504 295

Salutation: Señor Presidente

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organizations

Fundación Amigos por la Vida
Pedro Carbo 1106 y Colón, 10° piso
Guayaquil
Ecuador

E-mail: famivida@yupimail.com

Equidad Quito
Rabida N 26-32 y Santa María
Quito, Ecuador
E-mail: equidad@ecuanex.net.ec

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 12 June 2001.