

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

**AI Index: AMR 29/16/93**

**Distr: UA/SC**

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**EXTRA 81/93**

**Death threats**

**23 September 1993**

**EL SALVADOR**      **Dr René Madecadel PERLA JIMENEZ, lawyer, professor at the Law Faculty of the Universidad Nacional de El Salvador (National University of El Salvador)**

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Dr René Madecadel Perla Jiménez, a prominent lawyer and driving force behind the process of judicial reform in El Salvador, has received threats to his life.

On 14 September 1993, Dr Perla Jiménez received a telephone message from an individual claiming to be from the *Asociación de Abogados de El Salvador*, the Salvadorian Lawyers' Association. It said that Dr Perla Jiménez would be killed if he did not leave the country within three days, because he was involved with the *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (FMLN - the former armed opposition group which became a political party after signing a peace accord in January 1992).

On 16 September he received another message from individuals identifying themselves as members of the notorious "death squad", *Brigada Maximiliano Hernández Martínez*, who said that Dr Perla Jiménez was an advisor to the FMLN and that they would kill him within two days. Since then he has not received any further threats.

Dr Perla Jiménez was recently elected representative of the University Law Faculty to the *Consejo Nacional de la Judicatura*, the National Judicial Council. The Council was appointed earlier this year under the terms of the peace accords to supervise the implementation of a series of judicial reforms aimed at making the judiciary more independent and more efficient.

In recent weeks the Council has been undertaking an evaluation of current judicial officials, an evaluation which Dr Perla Jiménez was involved in planning. Since early September, the Salvadorian Lawyers' Association has mounted a campaign questioning the credentials of certain members of the Council which it accuses of being unfit to carry out the evaluation.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since the end of the war in January 1992, the *Brigada Maximiliano Hernández Martínez* and other so-called "death squads" have continued to issue death threats against people it identifies as FMLN sympathizers. Several unclarified killings of FMLN and other left wing activists this year have been attributed to shadowy "death squads", believed to be associated with hardline sectors of the military and the ruling party.

Amnesty International has long called for reforms to the judiciary, whose lack

of impartiality and unwillingness to investigate human rights violations were highlighted by the Truth Commission (a body appointed by the UN to investigate human rights abuses during the war). Sectors of the judiciary, including the Salvadorian Lawyers' Association, have repeatedly voiced their resistance to many aspects of the judicial reform process.

Amnesty International has also been calling for an urgent investigation into the continuing activities of the "death squads". President Cristiani has so far disregarded the Truth Commission's recommendation to set up such an enquiry, arguing that "death squads" are a phenomenon of the past. Human rights groups claim that the *Brigada Maximiliano Hernández Martínez*

**page 2 of EXTRA 81/93**

operates within or in connection with the National Police. Despite the recent overhaul of the police and army, the National Police has yet to be disbanded, as the accords demand.

Dr Perla Jiménez is the brother of internationally known human rights activist Mirna Perla de Anaya, whose husband Herbert Anaya was assassinated in 1987 when President of the non-governmental human rights commission.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send faxes/telexes/telegrams and airmail letters in Spanish, English or your own language:**

- expressing concern at the death threats against Dr René Madecadel Perla Jiménez issued in the name of the Salvadorian Lawyers' Association and the *Brigada Maximiliano Hernández Martínez*;
- asking that immediate steps be taken to identify those responsible and bring them to justice;
- urging that the government open a special commission of inquiry to investigate the continuing activities of the so-called "death squads" and other illegal armed groups, as recommended by the Truth Commission, so that they can be dismantled and those responsible for killings and death threats can be brought to justice;
- urging that steps be taken to ensure that members of *Consejo Nacional de la Judicatura* can carry out the important task of supervising the judicial reforms agreed to in the peace accords without intimidation or threat to their safety.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) President  
Lic. Alfredo Cristiani  
Presidente de la República de El Salvador  
Casa Presidencial  
San Salvador, El Salvador  
**Telegrams: Presidente Cristiani, San Salvador, El Salvador**  
**Faxes: + 503 81 0018**  
**Telexes: 20245 RS SAL or 20522**  
**PRES SAL**  
**Salutation: Su Excelencia/Your Excellency**

2) Minister of Justice  
Dr. René Hernández Valiente  
Ministro de Justicia  
Ministerio de Justicia  
Av. Masferrer N° 612-b  
Colonia Lomas Verde  
San Salvador, El Salvador  
**Telegrams: Ministro Justicia, San Salvador, El Salvador**  
**Telexes: 20179 or 20599**  
**Salutation: Sr Ministro/Dear Minister**

3) National Counsel for the Defence of Human Rights  
Dr Carlos M. Molina Fonseca  
Procurador para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos  
Procuraduría para la Denfensa de los Derechos Humanos

9<sup>a</sup> Avda. Norte y 5<sup>a</sup> Calle Pte.  
Edificio AMSA, N° 535  
San Salvador, El Salvador

**Faxes: + 503 71 2886**

**Telegrams: Procurador DDHH, San Salvador, El Salvador**

**Salutation: Sr. Procurador/Dear Dr Molina**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

University Law Faculty:

Facultad de Derecho  
Universidad de El Salvador (UES)  
Final 25 Avda. Norte  
Apartado Postal 1383  
San Salvador, El Salvador

Opposition newspaper:

Diario Latino  
23<sup>a</sup> Avenida Sur, 225  
Apartado Postal 96  
San Salvador, El Salvador

National Police:

Director General de la Policía Nacional  
6<sup>a</sup> Calle Oriente  
San Salvador, El Salvador

and to diplomatic representatives of El Salvador accredited to your country

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 October 1993.