

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Threats / Intimidation

23 February 1995

GUATEMALA

José Rubén ZAMORA MARROQUÍN, newspaper director

Amnesty International is concerned about reports that, on 13 February 1995, José Rubén Zamora Marroquín, director of the Guatemalan newspaper *Siglo Veintiuno*, was followed and threatened by persons driving a grey Mazda pick-up, registration number P-192875. On 14 February, Carlos René Barrientos Vásquez, commissioned officer in the armed forces, went to the *Siglo Veintiuno* offices with documents proving his ownership of the pick-up, and his permit to carry arms. However, he denied any participation in the incident of the day before, stating that his vehicle was parked at the time.

Siglo Veintiuno played an important role in publicizing developments during the attempted *auto-golpe* (self-imposed coup) of 1993, and since then, members of its staff have periodically been subjected to threats and harassment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since former Human Rights Procurator, Ramiro de León Carpio, took over the presidency of Guatemala in May 1993, human rights violations including extrajudicial executions, "disappearances," arbitrary arrests, torture, and an increasing incidence of harassment and death threats have continued. This is despite the government's purported commitment to respect and promote human rights and to take firm action against impunity, as affirmed in a human rights accord agreed by the government and the armed opposition in March 1994. Victims have included women and children, indigenous leaders and activists, human rights monitors, journalists, students, trade unionists, jurists and politicians. Those responsible remain largely unpunished and there has been no evidence of any genuine efforts to investigate the vast majority of violations that occurred under previous administrations.

Journalists have been a consistent target of human rights violations, including threats and attempts on their lives. In December 1993, Víctor Cruz, a journalist with *Tinamit* magazine for example was killed in circumstances suggesting that he was extrajudicially executed. In January 1994, the wife and daughter of Marco Vinicio Mejía, also a journalist with *Tinamit* magazine, who had previously worked for *Siglo Veintiuno* died in similar circumstances (see UA 34/94, AMR 34/05/94, 2 February 1994). On 3 July 1993, Jorge Carpio Nicolle, the owner and publisher of the major Guatemalan newspaper *El Gráfico* was shot and killed with three others in El Quiché department. The families of those killed, some of whom were survivors of the attack believe that those responsible for the killings, acted under the orders of the armed forces. (See *Guatemala: Denial of Justice*, December 1994, AMR 34/47/94.)

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

- expressing concern at the threats and intimidation against José Rubén Zamora Marroquín;
- asking for an immediate and thorough investigation into the incident of 13 February, the results of which should be made public, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging that all possible measures be taken to protect the life of José Rubén Zamora Marroquín and the staff at *Siglo Veintiuno* so that they can carry on their work without fear.

APPEALS TO1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Ramiro de León Carpio
 Presidente de la República de Guatemala
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Presidente de León Carpio, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 2 515667
Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President

2) Minister of Interior:

Lic. Carlos Enrique Reynoso
 Ministro de Gobernación,
 Ministerio de Gobernación
 Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. Mario Enríquez Morales
 Ministro de Defensa
 Ministerio de Defensa
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 2 537472
Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

4) Head of the National Police

Lic. Angel Antonio Conte Cajulún
 Director General de la Policía Nacional
 6 Avenida 13-71, Zona 1
 Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Director General Policia Nacional, Guatemala
Salutation: Sr. Director General / Dear Director General

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:Fiscal General

Lic. Ramses Cuestas Gómez
 Fiscal General de la Nación
 Ministerio Público
 18 Calle 10-36, Zona 1
 Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Faxes: + 502 2 537554; + 502 2 530482

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Jorge García Laguardia
 Procurador de los Derechos Humanos
 12 Avenida 12-72
 Zona 1, Guatemala
 GUATEMALA

Siglo Veintiuno

7a Avenida 11-63

Edificio Galerías España, 6° Piso
Zona 9, Guatemala
GUATEMALA

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 April 1995.