

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 34/005/2004

24 March 2004

Further Information on UA 192/03 (AMR 34/038/2003, 27 June 2003) Fear for Safety/ Death Threats

GUATEMALA **Thelma de Lam (f), *Fiscal Especial para los Defensores de los Derechos Humanos*, Special Prosecutor for Human Rights Defenders**

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Thelma de Lam, *Fiscal Especial para los Defensores de los Derechos Humanos*, Special Prosecutor for Human Rights Defenders, who has reportedly been followed and intimidated. Concerns are heightened by the fact that Ms. de Lam is pregnant and has been threatened in the past.

Thelma de Lam was followed by two men on a white Honda motorcycle in Guatemala City, at around 5:30 pm on 11 March. Her bodyguards stopped the two men, who identified themselves as being members of the Guatemalan Army and advised her to "leave things as they are" ("*dejen las cosas como están*"). Later the same day, at around 9pm, Thelma de Lam was followed in her car for over an hour by an olive green pick-up truck with dark windows and no licence plates.

Thelma de Lam is a Special Prosecutor for Human Rights Defenders at the Human Rights Office and is currently investigating what became known as "Black Thursday" and "Friday of Mourning", when on 24 and 25 July 2003, the presidential campaign in Guatemala City was rocked by political violence. Journalist Héctor Ramirez was killed during the disturbances and former Head of State, General Rios Montt and former President Alfonso Portillo have been implicated in his death. General Rios Montt has been placed under house arrest, whilst an international arrest warrant has been issued for former President Alfonso Portillo who fled the country in February 2004.

Amnesty International is concerned that Thelma de Lam is being threatened in order to stop her from continuing her investigations. There are also concerns at reports that due to lack of funds, the Public Ministry has reduced security measures and resources for the Special Prosecutor's Human Rights Defenders Office, as this may have serious consequences for the security of those who work there and may also restrict their capacity to carry out investigations in cases of abuses against human rights defenders.

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

- calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety of Thelma de Lam, *Fiscal Especial para los Defensores de los Derechos Humanos*, Special Prosecutor for the Human Rights Defenders;
- calling the authorities to carry out an immediate, exhaustive and impartial investigation into reports of intimidation against Thelma de Lam on 11 March 2004, and to make the results public;
- expressing concern at reports that security measures and resources of the Special Prosecutor's Human Rights Defenders Office, have been reduced which may have serious consequences for the security of those who work there and for their capacity to carry out investigations in cases of abuses against human rights defenders.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic of Guatemala

Licenciado Oscar Berger Perdomo

Presidente de la República de Guatemala

Casa Presidencial, 6 a. Avenida, 4-18 zona 1. Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegrams: Óscar Berger, Presidente de la República, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: +502 238 3579/239 0090

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President

Minister of the Interior

Licenciado Manuel Arturo Soto Aguirre
Ministro de Gobernación

6a.Avenida 4-64, zona 4, nivel 3.Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegrams: Manuel Arturo Soto, Ministro de Gobernación, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: +502 362 0237

Email: gobernación@mingob.gob.gt

Salutation: Señor Ministro/ Dear Sir

Attorney General

Luis Alfonso Rosales Marroquín
Procurador General de la Nación

15 Avenida 9-69, Zona 13

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegrams: Luis Alfonso Rosales Marroquín, Procurador General de la Nación, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: +502 248 3228

Email: pgndespacho@guate.net.gt

Salutation: Señor Procurador/Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Procurator

Dr. Sergio Fernando Morales Alvarado

Procurador de los Derechos Humanos

Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos (PDH)

12 Avenida 12-72, zona 1, Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegrams: Sergio Fernando Morales Alvarado, Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: +502 238 1734

Email: despacho.pdhg@correooficial.com; opdhg@inteln.net.gt

Salutation: Señor Procurador/ Dear Sir

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 5 May 2004.