

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 34/07/95  
Distr: UA/SC

UA 70/95

Fear for safety

16 March 1995

GUATEMALA                      Catarina Terraza Chávez (f), indigenous leader, aged 28

Catarina Terraza Chávez, an Ixil Maya from La Laguna, Nebaj, El Quiché department has been threatened and harassed by a named member of G-2, military intelligence, since her return to Nebaj after participating in an Ixil caravan from Nebaj to Guatemala City from 6 to 12 March 1995. She is a leader of the *Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala* (CONAVIGUA), National Coordinating Committee of Widows of Guatemala, which brings together women who lost their husbands during the army's ferocious counter-insurgency campaign in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The G-2 agent reportedly broke into the building from which a broadcast was being made to inform residents about the results of the caravan and accused Catarina Terraza Chávez of having been to visit the guerrillas in the mountains.

Previously in January 1994, when she was seven months pregnant, the same member of the G-2 and one of his colleagues, also named, assaulted her. Since then, she has been a constant target of their threats and now fears for her life and the lives of members of her family.

The caravan had been organized by CONAVIGUA and other indigenous groups to draw national and international attention to the human rights violations which the participants said continued to be suffered by the indigenous people of the area. They named the military - particularly members of G-2 -military commissioners and the civil patrols as responsible. The Ixiles also called for those responsible for new and past abuses to be brought to trial, and for their area, the "Ixil Triangle", to be demilitarised. They reported that army presence in the Triangle has in fact increased in recent months, apparently in reaction to the ongoing return to the area of refugees and displaced people who had fled the army's counter-insurgency campaign of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

While in Guatemala City, the Ixiles met with a wide range of national as and international organizations and representatives. However, on their return to their villages, the army once again began to threaten and harass caravan participants.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The area known as the "Ixil Triangle," bounded by the villages of Nebaj, Chajul and Cotzal was a frequent target of the Guatemalan military's counter-insurgency campaign of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Many inhabitants were extrajudicially executed by the Guatemalan army and the civilian defence squads formed at army order and acting under their command. Few, if any, of these killings have been investigated by the Guatemalan government, and abuses continue, directed against members of indigenous groups such as CONAVIGUA, and those who have joined their call for inquiries into past abuses and for an end to forced recruitment into the Guatemalan army and the civil patrols.

The late 1970s and early 1980s also saw a mass exodus from the area, as indigenous people fled before the army's advance, to seek refuge abroad or to become displaced elsewhere in Guatemala. Some refugees and displaced persons are now returning under plans agreed by refugee representatives, the Guatemalan

government, representatives of the armed opposition and United Nations (UN) representatives in the context of ongoing peace negotiations. The agreements have specified that the safety of all returned refugees and displaced communities was to be assured. Yet, since returns began in 1993, there have been numerous reports of threats, attacks and harassment of returnee communities, particularly in El Quiché, reportedly carried out by members of the army and their civilian adjuncts.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please telephone, or send telegrams, telexes, faxes, express and airmail letters either in Spanish or in your own language:**

- calling for an immediate investigation into the reported threats and harassment against Catarina Terraza Chávez and that those found responsible be brought to justice, and urging that steps immediately be taken to ensure her safety and the safety of all participants in the recent Ixil caravan;
- calling for similar steps to ensure the security of all refugees and displaced persons returning to the Ixil triangle, in accordance with agreements to that effect reached between the government and other parties in the context of Guatemala's ongoing peace talks.
- calling for an end to impunity, and that those responsible for the gross violations suffered in past years by the indigenous people of the Ixil Triangle be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO**

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Ramiro de León Carpio  
 Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Presidente, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 537472/515667**  
**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**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 515 368 / 518 105**  
**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

3) Minister of Defence

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

4) Coordinator of Government Peace Commission

Lic. Héctor Rosada Granados  
 Comisión de La Paz  
 Presidencia de la República

Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Telephone: (502) 2 516201/516253/515773**

**Faxes: (502) 2 501967**

**Telegrams: Lic. Rosada, Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Salutation: Licenciado / Dear Sir**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

1) Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Jorge García Laguardia

Procurador de los Derechos Humanos

12 Avenida 12-72

Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Telephone: (502-2) 300874 to 76**

**Faxes: (502 2) 81734**

2) Human and Indigenous Rights Group

Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala (CONAVIGUA)

8a. Avenida 2-29

Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Tel & Fax: 010 502 2 25642**

3) Human and Indigenous Rights group

Defensoría Maya

32 av. 1-56

Zona 7

Guatemala, Guatemala

**Tel: (502) 2 94 65 75**

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 2 May 1995.