

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Intimidation

5 February 1992

GUATEMALA: Members of the Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios,
University Students Association of the Universidad de San Carlos,
University of San Carlos

Amnesty International is concerned at the recent bomb attack on the offices of the Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios (AEU), University Students Association of the Universidad de San Carlos (USAC), University of San Carlos, and for the security of AEU members.

On 30 January 1992, at approximately 10.00pm, a bomb exploded outside the offices of the AEU at the USAC. The bomb was reportedly left outside the AEU meeting room and seriously damaged the building, furniture and office equipment.

The AEU believes the bombing may have been linked with two recent meetings organized by the AEU. These were on the subject of the recent peace accords signed in El Salvador and the ongoing peace negotiations taking place between the government and the left-wing opposition in Guatemala. The meetings took place on 28 and 29 January and were attended by the Ambassador of El Salvador in Guatemala. The AEU also believes that the bomb attack may be linked with their participation in the march on 31 January held to commemorate the 12th Anniversary of the Spanish Embassy siege in which at least 37 people were burned to death when security forces attacked the building. The AEU was organizing accommodation for members of the Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC), Committee of Peasant Unity, who had come from the countryside to attend the march.

Following the attack, the AEU issued a written press communiqué denouncing the attack and citing the armed forces and the government as being responsible. An armed forces' spokesperson publicly replied and accused Otto Peralta, the AEU General Secretary, of slander and defamation. The Minister of Defence, General José García Samayoa, has now reportedly initiated legal proceedings against Otto Peralta for defamation against the armed forces. The AEU sees these proceedings as a means of intimidation against their association.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the past week, leaders of human rights and trade union organizations in Guatemala have been the subject of a renewed wave of threats and intimidation. On 31 January 1992, Rosa Pu Gómez, a member of the Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala (CONAVIGUA), National Coordinating Committee of Widows of Guatemala, was held at gunpoint by a man who asked her about her supposed links with armed-opposition groups. She was about to take part in the 12th Anniversary march at the time. On 26 January leaders of human rights and trade union organizations in Guatemala were cited by name in a death threat issued by a so-called "death squad" Unidad Anticomunista, Anti-communist unit. (See UA 39/92, AMR 34/07/92, 4 February 1992.)

President Jorge Serrano Elías came to power in January 1991. During his presidential campaign he had pledged to ensure protection of human rights. However, Amnesty International remains seriously concerned at continuing human rights violations in Guatemala, including extrajudicial executions, death threats, torture and "disappearances". As in past years, the choice of victim and the manner in which the abuses have been carried

out suggest the involvement of members of the official security forces.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the bomb attack on the offices of the AEU;
- asking that the circumstances surrounding the attack be investigated and that those found to be responsible be brought to justice;
- asking for guarantees for the safety of AEU members.

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APPEALS TO

1) President:

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías
Presidente de la República de Guatemala
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telegrams: Presidente Serrano, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU
Faxes: + 502 2 537472; + 502 2 519702

Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente /
Dear President

2) Minister of Defence:

General José García Samayoa
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU
Faxes: + 502 2 537472

Señor Ministro /
Dear Minister

3) Minister of the Interior:

Lic. Fernando Hurtado Prem
Ministro de Gobernación
Despacho Ministerial
Oficina No. 8, Primer Nivel
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telegrams: Ministro Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telexes: 5085 MINGOB GU
Faxes: + 502 2 518105

Señor Ministro /
Dear Minister

4) Attorney General:

Señor Acisclo Valladares
Procurador General de la Nación
Procuraduría General de la Nación
18 Calle 10-36
Zona 1, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telegrams: Procurador General, Guatemala, Guatemala

Señor Procurador General /
Dear Attorney General

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Supreme Court:

Lic. Juan José Rodil Peralta
Presidente de la Corte
Suprema de Justicia
Centro Cívico
21a Calle y 7a Avenida
Guatemala, Guatemala

2) Human Rights Procurator:

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio
Procurador de Derechos Humanos
Avenida Simeón Cañas 10-61
Zona 2, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: +502 2 512026

3) Minister of Education:

Sra. María Luisa Beltranena de Padilla
Ministro de Educación
Ministerio de Educación
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala

4) Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios
Ciudad Universitaria
Zona 12, Guatemala, Guatemala

5) Newspaper:
Diario Siglo XXI
7a Avenida 11-79
Edificio Galerias España, 6o piso
Zona 9, Guatemala, Guatemala

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 March 1992.