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RAPID MEDICAL ACTION
GUATEMALA: Manuel Martínez Coronado

Amnesty International has learned that the execution of Manuel Martínez Coronado is now scheduled for 6 am (12 hours GMT) on Tuesday 10 February 1998. The execution method prescribed in Guatemala is lethal injection. This would be the first such execution in Guatemala and would make Guatemala the fourth country to use this method.

The Inter-American Commission for Human Rights (IAHCR) wrote to the Guatemalan authorities twice requesting that the execution be delayed until the Commission has reviewed the case of Manuel Martínez Coronado. Amnesty International believes that the Guatemalan authorities have not cooperated with the Commission.

If the execution goes ahead, Manuel Martínez Coronado would be the first Guatemalan to be executed by lethal injection following the adoption by the Guatemalan Congress of a decree by 100 votes to 96 in October 1996, authorizing executions to be carried out in this way.

Guatemala is out of step with the rest of Latin and Central America where the death penalty is rarely used and is not a lawful punishment in the vast majority of countries. It also goes against the world wide trend towards abolition.

Manuel Martínez Coronado was sentenced to death in October 1995 for the multiple homicide of seven members of a family which happened in May 1995.

For further information on this case see EXTRA 101/97 (AMR 34/28/97, 15 July 1997, AMR 34/34/97, 4 September; AMR 34/38/97, 19 November 1997; AI Index: AMR 34/39/97, 20 November 1997). Please see also Lethal Injection: The Medical Technology of Execution (ACT 50/01/98, 30 January 1998).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send emails and/or faxes in Spanish or in your own language:

- recognizing the seriousness of the crime for which Manuel Martínez Coronado was convicted
- but expressing deep concern at the proposal to use of medical skills, medicines and technology to execute a human being (mention you are writing as a health professional)
- noting the trend in Latin America to abolish or not use the death penalty and express concern that Guatemala appears significantly out of step with most countries in the region

- urging that the death sentence imposed on Manuel Martínez Coronado be commuted and no further executions carried out in Guatemala;

- stressing that the death penalty, however inflicted, always amounts to cruel, degrading and inhuman punishment, and is brutalizing to all involved in its infliction;

APPEALS TO:

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Presidente de la República de Guatemala
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Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax: + 502 221 4537 / 230 1502 (if voice, ask "me
puede dar tono de fax, por favor")
E-mail: alvaroarzu@guateconnect.com
Salutation: Sr Presidente / Dear President

President of Congress
Sra. Arabela Castro Quiñones
Presidenta del Congreso Nacional de la República
9ª Avenida 9-48, Zona 1
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Fax: + 502 232 0556
Salutation: Sra. Presidenta

Procurator General
Lic. Acisclo Valladares Molina
Procurador General de la Nacion General
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de fax, por favor")
Salutation: Señor Procurador

COPIES TO:

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Sr. Eduardo Stein
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and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala accredited
to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.