

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 34/009/2007
23 February 2007

Further Information on UA 20/07 (AMR 34/003/2007, 26 January 2007) - Fear for safety

GUATEMALA

Flaviano Bianchini (m), environmental activist

Environmental activist Flaviano Bianchini, who received a series of threatening phone calls earlier this year, has returned to Italy, and is no longer in danger.

An Italian citizen who had been working on environmental issues related to mining activities in Guatemala and Honduras, he had received a string of anonymous threatening phone calls during January. These appeared to be connected with a report he had prepared on contamination of a river allegedly caused by a gold mine in Guatemala. The river was the main source of water for local indigenous people.

He received further threats after the UA was issued. On 2 and 5 February, he received phone calls, both repeating the same message he had received previously: *deje de chingar* ("Stop fucking around").

He arrived in Honduras on 8 February to present a study on the impact of mining activities in the Valle de Siria region. There he was told that men connected with a mining company featured in the report had been asking where he was. For his own safety, he decided not to travel outside the capital. He returned to Guatemala the same day, and shortly afterwards decided to bring forward the date of his return to Italy, also for his own safety.

The investigation into the threats and intimidation suffered by Flaviano Bianchini is not known to have produced any results.

Flaviano Bianchini has asked for his thanks to be passed on to the UA network. The Guatemalan NGO he was working for, MadreSelva, have made the same request.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.*****