

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 34/11/94  
Distr: UA/SC

UA 74/94      Fear for Safety

23 February 1994

GUATEMALA

Axel MEJÍA  
Coralia PÉREZ (f), 17

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Amnesty International fears for the safety of Axel Mejía, an educator with *Casa Alianza*, Covenant House, a refuge for street children, following renewed death threats against him. Amnesty International is also concerned for the safety of Coralia Pérez from *La Casa del Niño*, a "Mothers and Babies" residence, run by Covenant House, following an attack on her by two men. Both incidents took place in Guatemala City.

On Sunday 20 February 1994 at approximately 8.00 p.m. an anonymous woman telephoned the refuge situated in Zone 1 of Guatemala City and left a message for Axel Mejía, saying "*Dígale que le quedan pocos días de vida*" ("*Tell him that he has only a few days to live*").

In a separate incident on 18 February 1994, at approximately 6.00 p.m., Coralia Pérez reported that she was returning with her 10-month-old baby to the Mothers and Babies residence, also in Zone 1 of Guatemala City, when two men approached her from two jeeps, one a beige colour with polarised windows and the other grey. Both vehicles were parked outside the residence and the men got out as Coralia Pérez was nearing the residence. They grabbed her and threw her against a wall saying "*Tengan cuidado, porque están pendientes*" ("*Take care, we will get you [all]*"). The men then told her to put her head down and drove away from the scene of the incident. Coralia Pérez noted the licence plates of both vehicles, which were identified as being of the type used by members of the security forces.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For almost four years Covenant House has been denouncing human rights violations against street children in Guatemala, including beatings, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial executions, reportedly carried out by official security force agents. Since that time its workers, and those involved in Covenant House have been repeatedly targeted. Educators like Axel Mejía have been subjected to harassment and intimidation, either because of their work protecting street children from abuse, or because they have provided evidence as witnesses in judicial proceedings against members of the security forces. Axel Mejía has been repeatedly intimidated and threatened with death since November 1990, when he was the principal witness to an incident involving abuse of street children by members of the National Police and Mobile Military Police. (see UA 65/93, 09/03/93, AI Index AMR 34/07/93 and *Guatemala: Children in Fear*, AI Index: AMR 34/24/92, May 1992)

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in Spanish or in your own language:

- expressing concern at the renewed death threats made against Axel Mejía;
- asking that these threats be investigated and those found responsible be brought to justice;
- calling for protection for Axel Mejía and all those working to protect street children;
- expressing concern at the attack and threats against Coralia Pérez and asking for guarantees for her physical safety;
- asking that this incident be investigated and those responsible 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 de León Carpio, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Faxes: + 502 2 347 364**

**Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU**

**Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente /Dear President**

2) Minister of Defence:

Gral. Mario Enríquez Morales  
 Ministro de Defensa  
 Ministerio de Defensa

Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Faxes: + 502 2 21906**

**Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

3) Director of National Police

Lic. Mario René Cifuentes Echeverría  
 Director General de la Policía Nacional  
 6 Avenida 13-71, Zona 1  
 Guatemala, Guatemala

**Telegrams: Director General de la Policia Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Telephone: + 502 2 516268, 519429**

**Faxes: + 502 2 519382**

**Salutation: Sr. Director / Dear Director**

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Human Rights Procurator:

Lic. Jorge García Laguardia  
 Procurador de los Derechos Humanos  
 12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1,  
 Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Faxes: + 502 2 81734**

Head of the Presidential Commission Coordinating the Policies of the Executive relating to Human Rights:

Lic. Jorge Gonzalo Cabrera Hurtarte  
 Presidente  
 COPREDEH

15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13  
 Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Covenant House

Casa Alianza  
 Apartado Postal 2704  
 Zona 1, Guatemala  
 Guatemala

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 6 April 1994.