

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Please bring this action to the attention of the person in your section responsible for indigenous issues and outreach (teachers target sector)

UA 87/92

Threats/Harassment

13 March 1992

GUATEMALA

Pedro US SOC

Floridalma IXTAHUALÁN (female)

Amnesty International is concerned at a reported series of threats made against university lecturer Pedro Us Soc and his wife Floridalma Ixtahualán, Secretary at the *Hermandad Presbiterios Mayas* (Mayan Presbyterian Fraternity).

Pedro Us Soc, worked as an assistant with Manuel Estuardo Peña, a professor of History at the *Universidad de San Carlos* (USAC), San Carlos University. Manuel Estuardo Peña was killed on 10 February 1992, when two men came to his home and shot him as he approached his apartment in Zone 21 of Guatemala City. The fact that the assailants carried a photograph of Manuel Peña and the manner in which the killing was carried out may have indicated security force responsibility. (See UA 56/92, AI Index: AMR 34/09/92, 17 February 1992)

According to testimony given to human rights sources in Guatemala, on 20 February 1992 Floridalma Ixtahualán received an anonymous telephone call at the Mayan Presbyterian Fraternity. The caller said "*atiendan la advertencia o sufrirán las consecuencias*" ("you should [both] heed the warning or you will suffer the consequences"). On 26 February 1992, Floridalma Ixtahualán received another anonymous telephone call. The caller on this occasion said "*Advertencia, recuerde lo que le sucedió a su compañero, no estamos jugando*" ("This is a warning, remember what happened to your friend, we are not joking"). The couple believe the friend they were referring to was Manuel Estuardo Peña. Again on 3 March at approximately 7.00 pm several unknown men called at the offices of the Mayan Presbyterian Fraternity, and asked to speak with Floridalma Ixtahualán, but she refused to see them, believing them to be linked to the series of threats being made against them. Following this latest event, the couple have gone into hiding.

Prior to the above-mentioned incidents, in September 1991 several anonymous calls were received at the *Escuela de Historia* (School of History) at the USAC. The caller would ask for "Peña" (referring to Manuel Estuardo Peña) and "Pedro" (referring to Pedro Us Soc). Manuel Estuardo had also reportedly received several telephone calls. The caller in each case said "*Abandonen sus actividades, los vamos a matar*" ("abandon your activities, we are going to kill you").

Pedro Us Soc, who along with his wife, belongs to the Quiché indigenous ethnic group, is originally from the municipality of Chinique, El Quiché department. Besides working at the USAC, he is an assistant-professor at the Faculty of Theology of the Mariano Gálvez Catholic University. He is also a leader of the *Asociación Magisterial Guatemalteca* (AMG), Association of Guatemalan Teachers, and the *Asamblea Nacional del Magisterio* (ANM), National Teachers' Assembly, and represented the teachers as a delegate at the *Campaña Continental de los 500 años de Resistencia Indígena, Negra y Popular* (Continental Campaign of the 500

years of Indigenous, Black and Popular Resistance), in their *Segundo Encuentro Continental de Organizaciones Indígenas y Populares* (Second Continental Encounter of Indigenous and Popular Organizations), held in Guatemala from 7-12 October 1991.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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In the past weeks, leaders of human rights, trade union organizations and students have been the subject of a renewed wave of threats and intimidation. On 26 January 1992, 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. 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. (See UA 39/92, AMR 34/07/92, 4 February 1992). On 30 January, a bomb exploded outside the offices of the Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios (AEU), Association of University Students of the USAC. (See UA 41/92, AMR 34/08/92, 5 February 1992).

President Jorge Serrano Elías came to power in January 1991. During his presidential campaign he 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:

- express concern at the death threats made against Pedro Us Soc and his wife Floridalma Ixtahualán;
- asking that an immediate and independent investigation be carried out into the threats and that those found to be responsible be brought to justice;
- asking for guarantees for the safety of Pedro Us Soc and his wife, as well as members of the teachers' organizations in Guatemala.

APPEALS TO

1. President:

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías

Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente /

Presidente de la República de Guatemala
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, Guatemala

Dear President

Telegrams: Presidente Serrano, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU
Faxes: + 502 2 537472; + 502 2 519702
Tel No: + 502 2 21212, + 502 2 22266

2. Minister of Defence:

General José García Samayoa
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, Guatemala

Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU

Faxes: + 502 2 537472; + 502 2 519702
Tel No: + 502 2 21212, ext 2226

3. Attorney General:

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

**Señor Procurador General /
Dear Attorney**

Telegrams: Procurador General, Guatemala, Guatemala
Fax: + 502 2 64697
Tel No: + 502 2 64697, + 502 2 313656 or
+ 502 2 518385

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4. Minister of the Interior:

Lic. Fernando Hurtado Prem
Ministro de Gobernación
Despacho Ministerial
Oficina No. 8, Primer Nivel
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, Guatemala

Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

Telegrams: Ministro Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telexes: 5085 MINGOB GU
Faxes: + 502 2 518105
Tel No: + 502 2 21212, ext 500; 518105-6

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1. President of Human Rights
Commission of Congress:

Lic. Oliverio García Rodas
Presidente
Comisión de Derechos Humanos
Congreso Nacional de la República
9 Av. 9-48, Zona 1
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

2. Rector of University of San Carlos:

Sr. Rector
Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala (USAC)
Ciudad Universitaria
Zona 12, Guatemala
Guatemala

3. Human Rights Procurator:

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio
Procurador de Derechos Humanos
Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos
Avenida Simeón Cañas 10-61
Zona 2,
Guatemala, Guatemala

4. Association of Guatemalan Teachers:

Asociación Magisterial Guatemalteca
4 Avenida 5-54, Zona 1
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 24 April.