

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 34/14/97

UA 91/97

Ill-treatment / Fear for safety

3 April 1997

GUATEMALA Luis Alfredo Bonilla Juárez, aged 17, street youth

The safety of Guatemalan street youth Luis Alfredo Bonilla Juárez is feared to remain at risk since he identified two members of the National Police who allegedly arbitrarily detained and beat him on 18 March 1997 in Guatemala City.

On 18 March, the two police officers, dressed in full uniform, stopped Luis Bonilla and another street youth, known as "Dientudo", in the middle of Guatemala City asking them to show identification. When the youths failed to do so, the policemen reportedly forced Luis Bonilla into the back of their patrol car and began to beat him. "Dientudo" was not detained. The policemen then drove for a few blocks and stopped. They took Luis Bonilla out of the car and started kicking, punching and beating him with their batons. They then released him.

Luis Bonilla reportedly has several cuts and bruises as a result of the beating. According to information received by Amnesty International, the policemen neither reported the detention, nor took the minor to a juvenile detention centre as required by Guatemalan law.

Covenant House's [Casa Alianza] legal aid office filed a complaint with the Office of Professional Responsibility of the National Police where it was reportedly confirmed that Luis Bonilla had been beaten by the two policemen and an investigation into the case was opened.

On 21 March Luis Bonilla reported that he was being followed by the police. That morning, policemen in a patrol car from the same police station as the two officers above, were watching him when he was with other street youths. He feared that the police were looking for him and asked to be hidden. He was taken to one of the Covenant House centres until 31 March when he went back on to the street.

According to the information received by Amnesty International, the two police officers allegedly responsible for the arbitrary detention and beating of Luis Bonilla have not yet been arrested, heightening concern for the youth's safety.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has repeatedly received information about human rights violations against street youths and children in Guatemala. In some cases the perpetrators of these crimes are members of the National Police, private security guards or members of vigilante groups acting with the complicity of the security forces. Unlike other cases of human rights violations, there have been a few recent convictions in cases of human rights violations against street children. Nonetheless, the majority of these cases are not investigated by the authorities. In cases that have led to the trial of those responsible, relatives, witnesses, lawyers and others involved in the prosecution have been subjected to threats and intimidation. For further information please see *Guatemala: extrajudicial executions and human rights violations against street children*, AMR 34/37/90, August 1990 and *Guatemala: Children in fear*, AMR 34/24/92, May 1992; also UA 153/95, AMR 34/20/95, 29 June 1995; UA 334/94 AMR 34/39/94, 9 September 1994; 105/94, AMR 34/14/94, 15 March 1994 and follow-up AMR 34/36/94, 16 August 1994; UA 273/93, AMR 34/54/93, 13 August 1993; UA 120/93, AMR 34/18/93, 21 April 1993.

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

- expressing deep concern about the reported arbitrary detention and beating of Luis Alfredo Bonilla Juárez on 18 March 1997 in Guatemala City;
- expressing concern for his safety and calling on the authorities to take immediate measures to guarantee his safety;
- calling on the authorities to conduct full and prompt investigations into the case and to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) President of the Republic

S.E. Álvaro Arzú Irigoyen  
Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
Palacio Nacional,  
6ª Calle y 7ª Avenida, Zona 1  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Fax: +502 221 4537**

**Telegrams: Presidente, Guatemala, Guatemala**

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

2) Attorney General

Lic. Héctor Hugo Pérez Aguilera  
Fiscal General de la Nación, Ministerio Público  
18 Calle 10-36, Zona 1  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Tel/Fax: +502 231 7066**

**Telegrams: Fiscal General, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Salutation: Sr. Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General**

3) Director of the National Police

Lic. Ángel Antonio Conte Cajulún  
Director General de la  
Policía Nacional  
6ª Avenida 13-71, Zona 1  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Tel/Fax: +502 232 7721**

**Telegrams: Director Policía Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Salutation: Sr Director General/Dear Director General**

**COPIES TO:**

1) Casa Alianza

3ª Avenida 11-28  
Zona 1, Guatemala  
GUATEMALA

**Telefax: +502 250 0366**

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 16 May 1997.