

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 99/93 Possible Extrajudicial Execution/Death Threats

6 April 1993

GUATEMALA: Luis Arturo ÁLVAREZ CONCOA, aged 32, law student  
Herbert Alfonso JUÁREZ SANTIZO, aged 28, student  
Víctor Hugo GUIDEL, student leader

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Amnesty International is concerned at the killing of Luis Arturo Álvarez Concoa, the reported abduction and torture of Herbert Alfonso Juárez Santizo and at the recent death threats made against Víctor Hugo Guidel.

According to information received by Amnesty International, on 26 March 1993, Luis Arturo Álvarez Concoa, a student at the national Universidad de San Carlos (USAC), University of San Carlos in Guatemala City, reportedly "disappeared" after he left the USAC building in his car. His body was found on 1 April approximately 70 km north of Guatemala City.

His ears had been cut off and there were burns on his body. His family had reportedly searched for him in hospitals and detention centres, following his "disappearance" but the authorities denied holding him.

On 27 March, Herbert Alfonso Juárez Santizo, a student of the Academia Práctica Comercial (Commerce Academy), was abducted by three unknown men and so seriously ill-treated in their custody that he lost consciousness twice. During the interrogation, he was reportedly asked for information about the student leaders of the University of San Carlos, and particularly information relating to those students making preparations for the Huelga de Dolores, an annual student demonstration satirically portraying current political events in Guatemala, which traditionally takes place during Easter week. Although he repeatedly told them that he was not a student at the University, his captors did not believe him and continued torturing him. He was eventually released, with his hands and feet tied, on the evening of 30 March in Zone 18 of Guatemala City, and was immediately hospitalized. He also had wounds on his stomach, that appeared to have been caused with a razor blade. In his testimony, which was reported in the Guatemalan press on 1 April, Herbert Juárez said that he believed his captors mistook him for a leader of the Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios (AEU), Association of University Students.

Amnesty International is concerned that Herbert Juárez' abductors may have mistaken him for Víctor Hugo Gudiel, Secretary General of the AEU of the USAC. Víctor Hugo Gudiel's name appeared in the death threats issued on 27 March 1993 in a leaflet circulated in Guatemala which accused 24 people, including journalists, development workers, trade union leaders and members of non-governmental organizations of "having links with subversion and their destabilizing actions," and warned that as of 31 March, those named would be killed (see UA 96/93, AMR 34/14/93 of 2 April 1993).

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Trade unionists, student leaders, journalists and those working with non-governmental organizations, particularly those attempting to investigate and protect human rights have been long-term targets of abuses in Guatemala, including harassment, threats, torture, "disappearances", and extrajudicial executions. Such abuses have sometimes been preceded by anonymous death threats, such as those issued in this instance. On

other occasions, government officials, including President Jorge Serrano Elías himself, have made unsubstantiated public accusations that human rights defenders were linked to the armed opposition in Guatemala. In many cases, serious human rights violations have followed such statements from the authorities.

Students have been repeatedly targeted, especially during the weeks prior to the Huelga de Dolores. In April 1992 security forces opened fire on a group of students preparing for the Huelga de Dolores celebrations; one student was killed and seven others wounded. In November 1992, six members of the security forces were sentenced to over 12 years' imprisonment for their part in the killing and wounding of the students. (See UA 123/92, AMR 34/16/92 of 15 April 1992)

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

- expressing concern at the reported "disappearance" and subsequent apparent extrajudicial execution of Luis Arturo Álvarez Concoa;
- urging the authorities to open an immediate investigation into his "disappearance" and killing and that those found to be responsible be brought to justice;
- expressing concern at reports of the abduction and torture of student Herbert Alfonso Juárez Santizo;
- asking for an immediate investigation into his abduction and torture and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging the government to take immediate measures to protect the security of all those named in the threats issued on 27 March 1993, in particular USAC student leader Víctor Hugo Gudiel.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías  
Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

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

**Telegrams: Presidente Serrano, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Faxes: + 502 2 537472, + 502 2 519702**

**Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU**

2) Minister of Interior:

Lic. Francisco Perdomo  
Ministro de Gobernación  
Ministerio de Gobernación  
Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8  
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

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

**Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Telephone: + 502 2 21212, ext 500; + 502 2 518105-6 (direct)**

**Telexes: 5085 MINGOB**

3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. José García Samayoa  
Ministro de Defensa  
Ministerio de Defensa

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

Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

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

**Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Human Rights Procurator:

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio

Procurador de los Derechos Humanos

12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1, Guatemala,

GUATEMALA

**Faxes: + 502 2 81734**

Rector of San Carlos University:

Dr. Juan Alfonso Fuentes Soriano

Rector Magnífico de la

Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala (USAC)

Ciudad Universitaria Zona 12,

Guatemala GUATEMALA

Head of the Presidential Commission

Coordinating the Policies of the Executive

relating to Human Rights:

Sr. Bernardo Neumann

COPREDEH

15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13

Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Association of University Students:

Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios

"Oliverio Castañeda de León" (AEU)

Ciudad Universitaria

Zona 12, 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 18 May 1993.