

EXTERNAL

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Fear for safety

24 April 1997

GUATEMALA Silverio Pérez de León, Mayor of Santa Cruz del Quiché César
Augusto Gómez Rodríguez

Leonardo Álvarez

- all political opposition party members

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Silverio Pérez de León, César Augusto Gómez Rodríguez and Leonardo Álvarez, members of the political party, *Frente Democrático Nueva Guatemala* (FDNG), New Guatemala Democratic Front in Santa Cruz del Quiché, department of El Quiché, following a series of death threats, harassment and intimidation allegedly by members of the security forces over the last few months.

On 11 April 1997, Silverio Pérez de León, Mayor of Santa Cruz del Quiché, received a letter signed in the name of the "*Jaguar Justiciero*", a death squad which had links to the armed forces during the 1980s, with the signing-off, "*atentamente Ángel*", "yours faithfully, Ángel" and bearing the symbol of the hammer and sickle. The letter accused him of providing food to the nearby camp of demobilized members of the *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG), Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, and said that he had to leave Santa Cruz de El Quiché within 15 days.

This is the latest in a series of verbal, written and telephone threats that Silverio Pérez de León has received over the last eight months. In August and November 1996, unidentified men broke into his house and robbed some belongings and animals that he had in the garden. He has also received at least two letters accusing him of being a member of the guerrilla forces and threatening him with death if he did not leave Santa Cruz del Quiché. In January 1997, a man in civilian clothes, allegedly linked to the military base in El Quiché, told him: "*fíjate que estás en problemas, es mejor que te vayas del país o de la municipalidad*", "You are in trouble, you'd better leave the country or the area". From January to April 1997, he received death threats via repeated telephone calls to his office in Santa Cruz del Quiché.

On 28 March 1997, at 11pm, César Augusto Gómez Rodríguez, the FDNG's electoral campaign coordinator, was detained by members of the National Police of Santa Cruz de El Quiché while he was driving with two other people. He was detained for more than eight hours in the National Police Station and released without charge. In February 1997, César Augusto Gómez reported to the Public Ministry [*Ministerio Público*] that since October 1996 he had been intimidated by the police and military members because of his connection with the FDNG. On 8 February 1997, he was followed by a uniformed man and four others in plain clothes as he left a well-known restaurant in Santa Cruz de El Quiché.

Although César Augusto Gómez has presented the Public Ministry with a list of 14 people, among them members of the security forces whom he had recognized as the originators of the death threats, to date none of them have been called upon to give statements.

During the night of 20 April 1997, unidentified men broke into the home of Leonardo Álvarez, a well-known FDNG activist in Santa Cruz de El Quiché. According to the information received by Amnesty International the men searched the house, but took nothing.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Silverio Pérez de León, César Augusto Gómez Rodríguez and Leonardo Álvarez members of FDNG
- calling for immediate and adequate measures to guarantee the safety of Silverio Pérez de León, César Augusto Gómez Rodríguez and Leonardo Álvarez and all members of FDNG;
- calling for an immediate and thorough investigation into the reported incidents, including deaths treats of members of FDNG, and urging that those responsible be 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) Lic. Rodolfo Mendoza

Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
Despacho Ministerial, Of. N° 8
Palacio Nacional
6ª Calle y 7ª Avenida, Zona 1
Guatemala , GUATEMALA
Tel: +502 221 4428 Ext.1500
Fax: +502 251 5368
Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Sr. Miguel Medrano Bulux

Gobernador Departamental
Santa Cruz de El Quiché
El Quiché GUATEMALA
Telefax: +502 755 1433
Telegrams: Gobernador Departamental de El Quiche, Guatemala
Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

1) Attorney General

Lic. Héctor Hugo Pérez Aguilera
Fiscal General de la Nación, Ministerio Público
18 Calle 10-36, Zona 1
Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telefax: +502 331 7066

2) COPREDEH

Licda. Marta Altolaquirre
Sra. Presidenta de la Comisión Presidencial
Coordinadora de la Política del Ejecutivo en Materia

de Derechos Humanos
15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13
Guatemala , GUATEMALA
Fax: +502 334 1615/334 1407

3) El Quiché Auxiliary Human Rights Procurator
Lic. Oscar E. Cifuentes Cabrera
Procurador Auxiliar de
Derechos Humanos de El Quiché
Procuraduría Auxiliar
de Derechos Humanos del Quiché
Santa Cruz de El Quiché , El Quiché
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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 5 June 1997.