

UA 109/99

Fear for**GUATEMALA** Julio Eduardo Arango Escobar, Human Rights Procurator

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the Human Rights Procurator of Guatemala, Julio Eduardo Arango Escobar, who has recently received death threats against him and his family.

According to reports, on one day alone, 11 April 1999, around 40 threatening phone calls were made to his home. During one call, a child's voice asked for his daughter-in-law, who was then told "Vamos a matar a tu suegro" "We are going to kill your father-in-law." The Procurator said he has periodically been receiving threats for a long time, but that since last week they had been constant.

He believes that these threats may be being orchestrated by government intelligence services, who are, he said, experts in psychological warfare.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Guatemala was the first country in Latin America to introduce a *Procuraduría* (Procurator's Office), having provided for such an office in its 1985 Constitution. The procurator is elected every five years by the Congress and is mandated to defend the human rights guaranteed in the Constitution, monitor the actions of the executive branch of government with respect to human rights issues and make an annual report on human rights matters.

Julio Arango Escobar was elected in August 1997. During his period in office he has published several reports criticising actions taken by the President and his advisors. He has expressed particular concern about the investigation into the murder of Bishop Juan José Gerardi, whose killers have not been brought to justice one year after his death (see UA 139/98, 1 May 1998, AMR 34/16/908 and follow-ups)

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

- expressing concern at the recent death threats directed at the Human Rights Procurator Julio Eduardo Arango Escobar, and urging the authorities to take all necessary steps to guarantee his safety;
- urging the authorities to investigate these threats and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to ensure that Julio Eduardo Arango Escobar can freely and openly perform his legitimate duties as Human Rights Procurator;
- as the threats to the Human Rights Procurator are a serious challenge to all human rights defenders in Guatemala, please also try and arrange messages to the Guatemalan authorities in the name of your Section as a whole, signed by the Section director. Also try and interest prominent authorities or personalities in your country in protesting against this attack on human rights protection in Guatemala.

**APPEALS TO:**

President of the Republic  
S.E. Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen  
Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
6ª Calle y 7ª Avenida, Zona 1  
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Faxes: +502 221 4537**

**Telegrams: Presidente, Guatemala, GUATEMALA**

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

**E-mail: AlvaroArzu@guate.net / alvaroarzu@guateconnect.com**

Minister of Interior

Lic. Rodolfo Mendoza Rosales

Ministro de Gobernación, Ministerio de Gobernación

Despacho Ministerial, Of. N° 8,

6ª Calle y 7ª Avenida, Zona 1, Palacio Nacional

Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Faxes: +502 232 1207/ 362 0239**

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

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

**COPIES TO:**

Human Rights Procurator:

Lic. Julio Eduardo Arango Escobar

Procurador de Derechos Humanos

Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos

12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala , Guatemala

**Faxes:+ 502 2535712 / 238 1734 / 251 7769**

Daily newspaper:

Diario Prensa Libre

13 Calle 9-31, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Faxes:+ 502 251 8768**

**E-mail:medioselectronicos@prensalibre.com.gt**

**Salutation: Estimados Señores/Dear Sirs**

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 25 June 1999.