

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "Disappearance"

24 April 1992

GUATEMALA:

María Rosa ALFARO PEREZ (female) aged 29

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Amnesty International has just learned of and is concerned at the reported detention of María Rosa Alfaro Pérez by uniformed members of the armed forces, in Chiantla, Huehuetenango department, on 10 April 1992. The military authorities deny holding her and there are fears that she may "disappear".

María Rosa Alfaro Pérez was reportedly travelling to visit her sister at the Sagrada Familia Convent in Chiantla, Huehuetenango department from Guatemala City on 10 April 1992, when according to witnesses, she was detained near the main cemetery in the city of Huehuetenango by a number of soldiers in uniform. The witnesses, who did not want to be identified for fear of reprisal, stated that they also saw a man in traditional indigenous dress get into what they described as a look-out vehicle and then drive off at high speed.

Sources in Guatemala do not know the motive behind the reported detention of María Rosa Alfaro Pérez. In the early 1980's María Alfaro worked with the Sagrada Familia Convent in her home town of Chicamán, El Quiché department, but she left her home and her work at the convent after she and others received death threats. The convent was subsequently closed as a result of the repression against them during the counterinsurgency campaigns of the early 1980's in the countryside, including the department of El Quiché. More recently María Alfaro worked looking after children in Guatemala City.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

President Jorge Serrano Elías came to power in January 1991. During his presidential campaign he had 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". Even in cases where the identity of the perpetrators is unclear, the choice of victim and the manner in which the abuses have been carried out frequently suggest the involvement of members of the official security forces.

Tens of thousands of people have been victims of human rights violations such as forced "disappearances", torture and extrajudicial executions in Guatemala over the past 30 years. Those accused by the authorities as "guerrillas" and detained by military and police, or those acting under their orders have been "disappeared" - their families and friends cannot find out what has happened to them.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/telephone calls/express and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern at the detention of María Rosa Alfaro Pérez reportedly by uniformed members of the armed forces;

- asking that the authorities clarify her whereabouts and her legal situation;
- asking for assurances that her physical integrity will be respected in detention.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) President of the Republic:  
S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías  
Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
Palacio Nacional  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Presidente Serrano,**  
**Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Telephone: + 502 2 21212, 22266**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 537472, 519702**  
**Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU**

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

2) Minister of Interior:  
Lic. Fernando Hurtado Prem  
Ministro de Gobernación  
Ministerio de Gobernación  
Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8  
Palacio Nacional  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernacion,**  
**Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Telephone: + 502 2 21212 ext. 500,**  
**518105-6 (direct)**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 518105**  
**Telexes: 5085 MINGOB**

**Salutation: Señor Ministro /**  
**Dear Minister**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

1) President of the Human Rights  
Commission of Congress:  
Lic. Oliverio Garcia Rodas  
Presidente  
Comisión de Derechos Humanos  
Congreso Nacional de la República  
9 Av. 9-48, Zona 1  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

2) Human Rights Procurator:  
Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio  
Procurador de Derechos Humanos  
Avenida Simeón Cañas 10-60 Zona 2,  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

3) Minister of Defence:  
Gral. José García Samayoa  
Ministro de Defensa  
Ministerio de Defensa  
Palacio Nacional  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Guatemala,**  
**Guatemala**  
**Telephone: + 502 2 21212, 2226**  
**Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU**

**Salutation: Señor Ministro /**  
**Dear Minister**

4) Commander of No 19 Military Base:  
Sr. Comandante  
Base Militar No. 19  
Huehuetenango,  
Huehuetenango,  
GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Sr Comandante, Base Militar**  
**10, Huehuetenango, Guatemala**  
**Telephone: + 502 9 641261/641160**  
**Salutation: Señor Comandante /**  
**Dear Commander**

3) Religious Confederation of Guatemala:  
Confederación de Religiosos de Guatemala  
(CONFREGUA)  
10 Calle "A" 1-40  
Zona 1, Guatemala  
GUATEMALA

4) Daily newspaper:  
Siglo Veintiuno  
7a Avenida 11-79  
Edificio Galerías España, 6o Piso.  
Zona 9, 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 5 June 1992.