

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 34/021/2002

26 March 2002

Further information on UA 67/02 (AMR 34/015/2002, 7 March 2002) - Death threats/fear for safety

GUATEMALA

**Father Juan José Aldaz, San José, El Rodeo, San Marcos
Alvaro Ramazinni, Bishop of San Marcos Diocese**

Other Church staff in the San Marcos Diocese

Church offices in the San Marcos Diocese have been burgled, and several offices have received anonymous telephone threats, in what appears to be an escalation of intimidation against Church figures in San Marcos.

On Sunday 17 March burglars broke into three offices in the *Casa Diocesana* (the Diocese's administrative centre). They stole 200-250,000 quezales (approx US\$25-30,000) from a safe in the office of the *Pastoral de la Tierra* (Land Ministry, which has been involved in mediation between landowners and the peasants occupying the San Luis *finca*), but left another 18,000 quezales (approx US\$2,300) from the safe lying on a desk, suggesting that the motive for the break-in was not simply robbery. The burglars also apparently searched computer files in the office.

The following day, several offices of the Casa Diocesana received anonymous calls saying, "*lo que esta pasando no es nada a lo que pueda suceder y que Monseñor se cuide*" (what's happening now is nothing compared to what could happen, and Monsignor [Bishop Ramazinni] should watch out).

Bishop Alvaro Ramazinni believes that, like the intimidation he has already experienced, the burglary and the threats are linked to the Church's role in local land disputes. The Guatemalan Chamber of Agriculture has openly accused Alvaro Ramazinni of inciting peasants to occupy an estate in San Luis.

Hundreds of peasant farmers had marched through the town of San José El Rodeo on 16 March to protest about the death threats received by Bishop Alvaro Ramazinni and Father Juan José Aldaz. The burglary and threats may have been a response to this.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish, English or your own language:

- calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety of Father Juan José Aldaz, Bishop Alvaro Ramazinni and other Church staff in the San Marcos Diocese;
- urging them to immediately investigate the 17 March burglary at the Casa Diocesana, and the threats and intimidation directed at the Church offices, making the results public and bringing those responsible to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Agriculture

Sr. Leopoldo Sandoval Villeda

Ministro de Agricultura, Ganadería y Nutrición

Ministerio de Agricultura

Ganadería y Nutrición

Edificio Monja Blanca

7^a Avenida 12-90 Zona 13

Ciudad de Guatemala , GUATEMALA

Fax:+502 332 8302
Salutation:Señor Ministro

Minister of the Interior

Eduardo Arévalo Lacs
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
6ª Avenida 4-64, Zona 4
Ciudad de Guatemala , GUATEMALA

Telegrams:Ministro de Gobernación, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
Fax:+ 502 362 0239/ 362 0237
Email: monica24@intelnet.net.gt
Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Public Prosecutor's Office

Ministerio Publico
7 Avenida A 8-06, zona 1
San Marcos, San Marcos
Guatemala,

Fax: + 502 760 1051
Salutation: Dear Sir/Estimado Señor

COPIES TO:

Newspaper

Diario Prensa Libre
13 Calle 9-31, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax: + 502 251 8768

Human Rights organisation

Oficina de Derechos Humanos del
Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHAG)
6a Calle 7-70,
Zona 1, Guatemala 01001, GUATEMALA
Fax:+502 232 8384
E-mail: ddhh@odhag.org.gt

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 7 May 2002.