

GUATEMALA Víctor Hugo Cano Recinos, defence lawyer

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Víctor Hugo Cano Recinos, a defence lawyer who has recently received threats and been subjected to intimidation as a consequence of his involvement in a high profile case in Guatemala concerning three former policemen sentenced to death in May 1996 for murder and attempted murder (see UA 208/97, AMR 34/27/97, 10 July 1997).

The decision by Guatemala's Constitutional Court in April 1998, provisionally suspending the execution of the three men pending a further appeal, may have placed Victor Recinos in a greater position of vulnerability.

On 21 May 1998, Víctor Cano was approached by an armed man in Guatemala City who questioned him about the above case. On 5 June he received a number of threatening telephone calls warning him to withdraw from this case and from another one concerning a kidnapping. The caller claimed to have information which could implicate Víctor Cano in the recent murder of a district attorney and threatened to divulge this information to the press if he did not comply.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Former policemen Miguel Angel Revolorio Rodríguez, Miguel Angel López Calo and Aníbal Archila Pérez were sentenced to death in May 1996 for murder and attempted murder, crimes which they allegedly committed in 1995.

Víctor Recinos, and other lawyers acting on behalf of the three former policemen, contend that the proceedings against them fell far short of acceptable standards of due process and that the procedure under which they were identified as being responsible for the attempted murder was highly questionable as to make it invalid. They argue that these failings have thereby resulted in unfair convictions.

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

- expressing concern at the recent threats directed at defence lawyer Víctor Hugo Cano Recinos and urging the authorities to take all the necessary steps to guarantee his safety particularly during the course of further proceedings on the case involving the three former policemen;
- urging the authorities to investigate these threats and bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to ensure that Víctor Hugo Cano Recinos can freely and openly perform his legitimate duties as a defence lawyer in accordance with the 1990 United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, in particular principle 16 stating:

"Governments shall ensure that lawyers [...] are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; [...] and shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognised professional duties, standards and ethics."

APPEALS TO (Please note - fax tones may only be available during office hours local time. If voice answers, ask: "me puede dar tono de fax por favor"):

Minister of Interior

Lic. Rodolfo Mendoza Rosales
 Ministro de Gobernación
 Ministerio de Gobernación
 Despacho Ministerial, Of. N° 8
 Palacio Nacional, 6ª Calle y 7ª Avenida, Zona 1
 Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Ministro Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 251 5368
Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister

Attorney General
 Lic. Adolfo González Rodas
 Fiscal General de la República
 Ministerio Público, 6ª Avenida 3-11, Zona 4
 Ciudad de Guatemala , GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Fiscal General, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 250 0076 / 362 7223 / 331 7066 / 331 5549
Salutation: Señor Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

Procurator General
 Carlos García Regás
 Procurador General de la Nación
 Procuraduría General de la Nación
 15 Avenida 9-69, Zona 13
 Ciudad de Guatemala , GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Procurador General, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 334 8465
Salutation: Señor Procurador General / Dear Procurator General

Director General of the National Police
 Lic. Ángel Antonio Conte Cajulún
 Director General de la National Civil Police
 Policía Nacional Civil, 6ª Avenida 13-71, Zona 1
 Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Faxes: + 502 232 7721
Salutation: Señor Director / Dear Director

Presidential Coordinating Commission of the Executive's Policies on Human Rights (COPREDEH)
 Licda. Marta Altolaquirre
 Comisión Presidencial Coordinadora de la Política del Ejecutivo en Materia Human Rights de Derechos Humanos
 13 calle 15-33, Zona 13
 Ciudad de Guatemala , GUATEMALA
E-mail: coprekeh@guate.net
Faxes: + 502 334 1615 / 334 1407
Salutation: Señora Presidenta / Dear President

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Procurator, Lic. Julio Eduardo Arango Escobar
 Procurador de los Derechos Humanos, Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos
 12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1, Ciudad de Guatemala , GUATEMALA
Faxes: + 502 238 1734 / 251 7769 / 230 0773

Bar Association
 Colegio de Abogados y Notarios de Guatemala

0 Calle 15-46 , Zona 15, Colonia el Maestro, Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Faxes: + 502 369 3714

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 23 July 1998.