

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 34/023/2003

11 April 2003

UA 97/03

Fear for Safety

GUATEMALA

Ileana Alamilla (f), director of the *Centro de Reportes Informativos sobre Guatemala* (CERIGUA), Centre for Information on Guatemala  
Other staff members of CERIGUA

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Ileana Alamilla, director of the press agency *El Centro de Reportes Informativos sobre Guatemala* (CERIGUA), Centre for Information on Guatemala, was targeted in a robbery on 9 April. Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Ileana Alamilla and other staff members of CERIGUA. It is feared that this could be the latest incident in a growing wave of harassment of human rights activists and organizations that investigate human rights violations.

On 9 April, a group of unidentified men stole Ileana Alamilla's car from outside the offices of CERIGUA in the capital Guatemala City. The car has not yet been recovered. Ileana Alamilla's briefcase, which contained a considerable amount of confidential case and project files, was stolen. Members of staff of CERIGUA are fearful for their safety and believe the incident to be part of a broader strategy to intimidate and threaten human rights movements and journalists in Guatemala.

This is the third case of robbery and intimidation against human rights defenders in Guatemala in the last five days. On 4 April, Waldemar Barrera, regional representative of the *Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos* (PDH), Human Rights Ombudsman's Office in Izabal department, was targeted in a similar car theft. A number of important documents relating to his human rights work were stolen (see UA 94/03, 8 April 2003, AMR 34/021/2003). Amnesty International is concerned that human rights defenders are being threatened and attacked by or with the complicity of the official security forces, in order to intimidate or silence those reporting or lobbying on human rights, corruption or other issues considered to constitute criticism of the authorities in Guatemala. The escalation of these incidents coincides with government moves to establish an international commission to investigate threats against human rights activists, the activities of illegal armed groups, and Guatemala's clandestine security apparatus. The commission will be known as the *Comisión para la Investigación de Cuerpos Illegales y Aparatos Clandestinos de Seguridad* (CICIACS), Commission to Investigate Illegal Armed Groups and Clandestine Security Apparatus.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

CERIGUA was founded on 8 August 1983 and since then has reported extensively on the human rights situation in Guatemala. As a result it has been subject to constant intimidation. While reporting in the town of Santa Cruz del Quiché in February 2002, a CERIGUA journalist was threatened by unidentified men who stole his cassettes and money and told him to leave the area or they would kill him. In July 2002 a regional outpost of CERIGUA in the department of Jutiapa was raided and the hard disk containing important information was stolen.

On 23 February 2003, Isabel Enríquez, a reporter from CERIGUA, was attacked by two men as she approached the CERIGUA offices in Guatemala City. The attackers assaulted her and stole her keys and her bag. During the previous week, two other CERIGUA journalists were also assaulted (see UA 66/03, AMR 34/014/2003, 7 March 2003).

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

- expressing grave concern for the safety of Ileana Alamilla and other staff members of the *Centro de Reportes Informativos sobre Guatemala* (CERIGUA);

- urging that immediate measures be taken to ensure the safety of all members of CERIGUA;
- pressing the authorities to carry out an immediate, impartial and exhaustive investigation into the theft of important documents relating to CERIGUA's work from Ileana Alamilla's car;
- expressing concern at the recent escalation of attacks against and intimidation of human rights defenders in the wake of the signing of the *Comisión para la Investigación de Cuerpos Illegales y Aparatos Clandestinos de Seguridad* (CICIACS), document;
- calling on the authorities to move forward swiftly with the establishment and implementation of CICIACS whilst ensuring its independent and international nature.

**APPEALS TO:**

Special Prosecutor for Crimes against Journalists and Union Members

Lic. Víctor Hugo Garrido

Fiscal de delitos contra periodistas y sindicalistas

7ª. Avenida 11-20 Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala.

**Fax: + 502 220 6873 (if someone answers please say "fax por favor")**

**Salutation: Dear Special Prosecutor/Señor Fiscal Especial**

Director General of the National Civil Police

Comisario General Raul Arquimedes Manchame Leiva

Director General de la Policia Nacional Civil

6a Avenida 13-71, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

**Fax: + 502 251 9382**

**Salutation: Dear Director/Senor Director**

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Adolfo Reyes Calderón

Ministro de Gobernación

6ª Avenida 4-64, Zona 4

Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

**Fax: + 502 362 0237**

**Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro**

**COPIES TO:**

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Sergio Morales

Procurador de Derechos Humanos

Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos

12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala 01001, Guatemala

**Fax: + 502 238 1734**

Press Agency

CERIGUA

2a Calle 1-42, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

**Fax: + 502 221 2521 (if someone answers please say "fax por favor")**

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 May 2003.