

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 34/24/93

Distr: UA/SC

UA 143/93 Threats/Intimidation

6 May 1993

GUATEMALA: Members of La Asociación Indígena para el Desarrollo Integral (COINDI), Indigenous Association for Integral Development, including:
 Victor SALOJ POZ
 Martín PILO HOM
 Emilio SALOJ POZ
 Carlos CUMATZ
 Casimiro SICAJAU

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of members of La Asociación Indígena para el Desarrollo Integral (COINDI), Indigenous Association for Integral Development, who have recently had death threats made against them.

On 28 April 1993 an unsigned letter arrived at the offices of COINDI containing death threats against a number of its members, including those named above.

The letter stated that the threats would be carried out 72 hours later, as a punishment for their supposed links to guerrilla organizations. COINDI is a civil, non-political organization working to promote better living conditions for indigenous people living in rural areas.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Trade unionists, student leaders, journalists and those working with non-governmental organizations, particularly those attempting to investigate and protect human rights, have been long-term targets of abuses in Guatemala, including threats, harassment, torture, "disappearances", and extrajudicial executions. Such abuses have sometimes been preceded by anonymous death threats, such as in this instance. On other occasions, government officials, including President Jorge Serrano Elías himself, have made unsubstantiated public accusations that human rights defenders were linked to the armed opposition in Guatemala. In many cases, serious human rights violations have followed such statements from the authorities.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in Spanish, English or in your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of members of COINDI, including those named above, whose lives were recently threatened in an anonymous letter;

- urging that measures be taken to protect the security, personal integrity and freedom of expression of members of COINDI;

- asking that these threats be immediately investigated and that those found responsible be brought to justice.

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
Faxes: + 502 2 537472, + 502 2 519702
Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President

2) Minister of Interior:

Lic. Francisco Perdomo
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telephone: + 502 2 21212, ext 500;
+ 502 2 518105-6 (direct)
Telexes: 5085 MINGOB

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. José García Samayoa
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU
Faxes: + 502 2 537472

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Human Rights Procurator:

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio
Procurador de los Derechos Humanos
12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Faxes: + 502 2 81734

2) Head of the Presidential Commission Coordinating the Policies of the Executive relating to Human Rights:

Sr. Bernardo Neumann
COPREDEH
15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

3) Archbishop's Human Rights Office:

Oficina de Derechos Humanos del
Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHAG)
Apartado Postal 723
Guatemala, Guatemala

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 17 June 1993.