

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Threats

12 May 1992

GUATEMALA:

Londy URÍZAR, (female) aged 22
and Covenant House workers and children

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Londy Urizar after she reportedly received recent telephone death threats. Londy Urizar is the receptionist at the Administrative Office of Covenant House (*Casa Alianza*), an organization working with street children in Guatemala.

According to information received by Amnesty International, on 8 May 1992 at 08.35 a.m., a man with a deep voice ("*voz ronca*") called the Administrative Office of Covenant House, and asked for Londy Urizar. When she replied the unidentified man stated "*sólo queremos decirle que está sentenciada. Si no se va de Casa Alianza la vamos a asesinar*" ("we just want to tell you that you have been sentenced. If you do not leave Casa Alianza we are going to kill you"). The anonymous caller then hung up.

In recent weeks Covenant House have reported receiving threats. On three separate occasions in April 1992 an unidentified man driving the same vehicle each time stopped outside the Covenant House refuge in Zone 1 of Guatemala City and made threats against Covenant House. In one instance which took place on 25 April 1992, the car stopped in front of the refuge and the driver got out. He was accompanied by three other men who remained in the car. He went to the gate of the refuge and shouted "*lo mejor es que voy a poner una bomba y acabar con todos estos niños, ya que yo podría matar a cualquiera y en una media hora podría salir de preso*" ("the best thing I could do is to plant a bomb and finish with all of these children, I could kill anyone and in a half-an-hour I would be out of jail"). The nightwatchman at the refuge has stated that on each occasion the man was well-dressed. Covenant House believe these threats are related to the legal suits being filed by the Legal Office of Covenant House against members of the security forces accused of human rights abuses against street children and those working with Covenant House.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the past two years, Amnesty International has received an escalating number of reports of human rights violations against street children in Guatemala City, including beatings, torture, "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions, reportedly carried out by official security force agents, particularly the police, acting sometimes in plain clothes and sometimes in uniform (see Guatemala: Extrajudicial Executions and Human Rights Violations against Street Children, AMR 34/37/90, August 1990).

Approximately 62 legal suits against more than 50 National Police are currently pending with the Guatemalan courts and only in isolated cases have investigations resulted

in the prosecution of those responsible. Children who have witnessed or given information concerning abuses directed against other street children have been subjected to reprisals, and those working with street children have also been subjected to harassment and intimidation. On 28 April 1992, four Guatemalan police officers were found guilty, after a retrial, of homicide, for the killing of 13-year-old street child Nahamán Carmona López in March 1990. They were sentenced to between 12 and 18 years imprisonment. (See follow-up to UA 294/90, AMR 34/21/92, 5 May 1992). It is believed that these latest threats may be related to the conviction of these policemen.

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

- expressing concern at the death threats made against Londy Urizar, as well as the threats made against the children and workers of Covenant House;
- asking for an immediate and impartial investigation into these incidents and that those found responsible be brought to justice;
- asking for guarantees for the safety of Londy Urizar, the children and the workers of Covenant House.

APPEALS TO:

1. President of the Republic

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías
Presidente de la República
de Guatemala
Palacio Nacional
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Telephone: + 502 2 21212;
+ 502 2 22266
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[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
Telephone: + 502 2 21212 ext. 500
518105-6 (direct) **Faxes:**
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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
Telephone: + 502 2 21212;
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Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU
[Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear
Minister]

4. Director General of the National Police

Lic. Carlos Enrique Samayoa Cifuentes
Director General de la
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Telephone: + 502 2 20221;
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[Salutation: Sr. Director
General/Dear Director General]

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

President of the Human Rights

Commission of Congress

Lic. Oliverio García Rodas
Presidente
Comisión de Derechos Humanos
Congreso Nacional de la República
9 Av. 9-48, Zona 1
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Covenant House
Casa Alianza
Apartado Postal 2704,
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Human Rights Procurator
Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio
Procurador de Derechos Humanos Avenida
Simeón Cañas 10-60 Zona 2,
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Diario Prensa Libre
13 Calle 9-31, 50 Nivel
Edificio Prensa Libre
Zona 1, 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 23 June 1992.