

13 March 2002

Further information on UA 68/02 (AMR 34/014/2002, 5 March 2002) - Death threats/fear for safety**GUATEMALA**Mariana Valdizón (f)

Fernando Moscoso (m),

Fredy Peccerelli (m), Director of FAFG

Frederico Reyes (m)

Leonel Paiz (m)

Francisco de León (m)

José Samuel Suasnavar (m)

Guillermo Meza (m)

Claudia Rivera (f)

Raul García (m)

Miguel Morales (m)

(All are forensic scientists, current or former employees of the *Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala* (FAFG), Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation, the *Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala* (ODHAG), Human Rights Office of the Archbishopric of Guatemala, and the *Centro de Antropología Forense y Ciencias Aplicada*, (CAFCA), Centre of Forensic Anthropology and Applied Sciences)

Several of those threatened have given key forensic testimony in proceedings against former government officials for past human rights violations.

Five of the 11 people who received death threats on 21 February received anonymous telephone death threats against themselves and their families on 7 March. Miguel Morales was held up at gunpoint on 6 March, by men who demanded his mobile telephone. This may be how the anonymous caller obtained the other scientists' numbers. Their phone lines appear to have been tapped.

Police protection was requested on their behalf by CALDH on 6 March and AI understands that 24-hour police protection is now in place. However, Amnesty International remains gravely concerned for their safety, given past incidents where people, also under police protection, have suffered renewed attacks (see UA 265/00, AMR 34/35/00, 5 September 2000).

Mariana Valdizón received an anonymous telephone call at 10.10am, warning her that she should watch out for her daughter. About five minutes later Federico Reyes received a call from a man who laughed as he warned him that if he had not already organised his funeral, he should do so straight away. He immediately called FAFG director Fredy Peccerelli at the FAFG offices.

Minutes later, a caller to the FAFG offices asked to speak to Fredy Peccerelli. When told that Fredy could not come to the telephone, he told the receptionist to pass on the message that "él a los demás hijos de puta" (him and the rest of the bastards) should watch out, as "les vamos a matar pronto" (we are going to kill them soon). From the background noise the receptionist believed the call was made from the street, either from a public telephone or a mobile. That night, Fredy Peccerelli saw a green pick-up truck with tinted windows pass his house repeatedly.

A few minutes after the call to the FAFG office, Fernando Moscoso took a call from a man who warned him to make arrangements for his funeral. Fernando Moscoso has told the police the telephone number from which the call was made.

At about the same time, an anonymous caller to the home of Francisco de León warned his wife that she should take care of her children, as they were very beautiful.

Leonel Paiz has also reported that on 4 or 5 March, he had found a message on his answering machine in which funeral march music was played, which Paiz has interpreted as a death threat.

The fire at the church in Nebaj on 21 February is now known to have destroyed most of the documents stored there, which contained information on 35 massacres recorded by the Catholic church between 1980 and 1983 in Nebaj alone. The day before the fire, forensic scientists from the FAFG had removed human remains that had been stored at the church after they were exhumed from a mass grave in the small village of Xecot.

The people behind the threatening letter issued that day had clear links to the military during Guatemala's civil conflict. At one point the letter reads: "*no hay responsables en la guerra y ustedes no son quien para juzgarnos*" (in a war there are no guilty parties, and it is not your place to judge us.) It also directly attacked the role of exhumations in combating impunity: "*no habrá procesos judiciales de ninguna exhumación hecha por ustedes hijos de puta, ni de ningún extranjero maldito primero los matamos cerote*" (There will be no legal proceedings because of any exhumations done by you bastards or any damned foreigner. We will kill you first, you piece of shit.)

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

- expressing grave concern for the safety of those named above;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety of the employees of FAFG, CAFCA, ODHAG and others involved in exhumations, as well as their families;
- urging the authorities to immediately investigate the reported threats against those named above and bring the perpetrators to justice;

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic of Guatemala
 Lic. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera
 Presidente de la República de Guatemala
 6a. Avenida "A" 4-41, Zona 1,
 Ciudad de Guatemala , GUATEMALA

Telegrams:Presidente de la República de Guatemala, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: + 502 239 0090 (please keep trying this number)

Email:mensajes@presidenteportillo.gob.gt

Salutation:Dear President/Señor Presidente

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

Peace Secretary (formally responsible for monitoring implementation of the peace accords)

Sr. Gabriel Aguilera
Secretario de la Paz
5a Calle 4-33, Zona 1
Edificio Rabi, 4 Nivel
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax:+ 502 230 1731

Salutation:Dear Secretary/Señor Secretario

Servicio Médico Forense del Organismo Judicial (Forensic Medical Service)
Avenida del Cementerio 18-26, Zona 3
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax: +502 230 4206 (if a voice answers, say "por favor, tono de fax")

COPIES TO:

Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (FAFG)
Avenida Simón Cañas 10-64, Zona 2,
01002 Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax: + 502 254 0882/288 7297/ 288 7302 (if a voice answers, say "por favor, tono de fax")

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

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 24 April 2002.