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Fear for Safety

3 June 1994

GUATEMALA Fernando QUEZADA TORUÑO, Vice-President of weekly magazine, *La Crónica*, brother of:

Rodolfo QUEZADA TORUÑO, Catholic bishop

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On 31 May 1994 two bombs exploded in the City of Guatemala. Sources in Guatemala indicate that they may be an attempt by hardline elements of the government to sabotage the Guatemalan peace talks currently taking place in Mexico City, by undermining the stability of the country. Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Rodolfo and Fernando Quezada Toruño and all those linked to the peace process. One of the bombs was planted opposite Fernando Quezada Toruño's residence. (The other, planted on the property of a private clothing company named Sandra Zaid Zaid, is also alleged to be part of the destabilization strategy). No one was injured in either explosion.

Bishop Rodolfo Quezada Toruño is the former mediator of the peace talks between the Guatemalan Government and the armed opposition coalition, the *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG), Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity. He is now the president of the *Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil* (ASC), Civilian Sectors Assembly, which is made up of religious, indigenous, trade union, political and academic sectors of society. The ASC recently made recommendations on the resettlement of people displaced by the armed conflict, which apparently formed the basis for both a URNG proposal and a United Nations compromise document in the context of the current peace talks. The May 1994 talks in Mexico on the resettlement of refugees (one of a series of topics being discussed within the overall peace process talks) were apparently suspended because the URNG opposed the government proposal to implement a ceasefire in areas where refugees have returned.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In July 1993 President de León announced a new proposal in the stalemated peace talks which began in April 1991, but this was rejected by right-wing elements. In October 1993 the President announced a national peace plan, but this was rejected by the URNG. This plan excluded Bishop Rodolfo Quezada from participating in the negotiations and replaced him with a United Nations mediator. The URNG, the Catholic church and civic groups had requested that Rodolfo Quezada continue as mediator.

On 29 March 1994, a human rights accord was signed in Mexico City by the government and representatives of the URNG. This is to be followed by a series of peace talks, covering different topics each month, including the resettlement of refugees (suspended in May 1994), indigenous people, a cease-fire accord, constitutional reforms, and finally, in December 1994, a peace treaty. In addition to the talks in Mexico, some meetings are planned to take place in Norway on 11 June 1994 to discuss human rights issues, including the possible establishment of a commission to clarify past human rights violations.

Tens of thousands of Guatemalans, many of them indigenous peasants, fled Guatemala in the late 1970s and early 1980s, escaping the Guatemalan army's scorched earth counter-insurgency campaign which claimed many thousands of non-combatant victims. Many of the refugees fled to Mexico (see UA 439/93, AMR 34/87/93, 22 December 1993 for further information).

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

- expressing concern about the two bombs that exploded on 31 May opposite the residence of Fernando Quezada Toruño and on the property of the company Sandra Zaid Zaid;
- urging the government to carry out a full investigation into these attacks, that the findings be made public and those responsible be brought to justice;
- calling for the government to take steps to guarantee the safety of Fernando and Rodolfo Quezada Toruño and all those involved in the peace process.

**APPEALS TO**

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Ramiro de León Carpio  
 Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Presidente de León Carpio, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 347364 / 527 472**  
**Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU**  
**Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente /Dear President**

2) Minister of Interior:

Lic. Danilo Parrinello Blanco  
 Ministro de Gobernación  
 Ministerio de Gobernación  
 Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 515 368 / 518 105**  
**Telexes: 5085 MINGOB**  
**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. Mario Enríquez Morales  
 Ministro de Defensa  
 Ministerio de Defensa  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
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**Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU**  
**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Jorge García Laguardia  
 Procurador de los Derechos Humanos  
 12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1  
 Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Faxes: +502 2 81734**

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

Lic. Jorge Gonzalo Cabrera Hurtarte  
 Presidente  
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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 15 July 1994.