

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 34/28/92  
Distr: UA/SC

UA 177/92 Attempted Extrajudicial Execution/Death threats

29 May 1992

GUATEMALA: José Alberto NERIO OSORIO, teacher  
and other regional representatives of Centro de Investigación,  
Estudio y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (CIEPRODH), Centre for the  
Investigation, Study and Promotion of Human Rights

---

Amnesty International is concerned at the recent reported assassination attempt against teacher José Alberto Nerio Osorio on 17 May 1992 in Chiquimula City, Chiquimula department. He is a teacher and a delegate of Centro de Investigación, Estudio y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (CIEPRODH), Centre for the Investigation, Study and Promotion of Human Rights. Amnesty International is concerned that other regional representatives of CIEPRODH have also recently been subjected to threats and intimidation by armed men.

According to information from CIEPRODH, on Sunday 17 May 1992, José Alberto Nerio Osorio was on his way to his home in Zone 4 of Chiquimula City when two unidentified men intercepted him. One of the men stabbed him with a knife (verduguillo) on the left side of his stomach and immediately fled the scene of the attack. José Nerio was subsequently taken to hospital where he underwent emergency surgery to save his life.

CIEPRODH has stated that the motive for the attack was not robbery as the assailants made no attempt to steal from their victim. They believe that the attack is related to José Nerio Osorio's current involvement in investigations on behalf of the Centre into human rights violations carried out in the Chiquimula area, reportedly by members of the security forces. Amnesty International has learned of several incidents similar to that described above, where armed men in plain clothes who are believed to be members of the security forces or acting with their connivance, carry out acts of violence, which are made to look like common crimes, against people considered to be political opponents of the government. Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of José Nerio Osorio.

CIEPRODH has also reported that some of its regional representatives have been subjected to surveillance and intimidation by armed men, whom they believe may belong to the security forces, in San Marcos, San Marcos department, in Cobán, Alta Verapaz department and in Guatemala City.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Those attempting to investigate and protect human rights in Guatemala have been long-term targets of abuses, and members of human rights groups have been harassed, threatened, "disappeared" or subjected to extrajudicial execution. The Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo por el Aparecimiento con Vida de Nuestros Familiares (GAM), Mutual Support Group for the Appearance of Our Relatives Alive was formed in 1984 and is made up of relatives of "disappeared" people attempting to determine the fate of their missing relatives. Two of the group's founding members were killed in 1985 in circumstances strongly suggesting official involvement, and its leadership and members have continued to experience threats and harassment.

Other human rights groups have been continually targeted and members have been killed "disappeared" and threatened. These include CIEPRODH, the Consejo de Comunidades Étnicas "Runujel Junam" (CERJ), Council of Ethnic Communities "We are all Equal", founded to

protect the rights of Guatemala's indigenous people, and the Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala (CONAVIGUA), National Coordinating Committee of Widows of Guatemala, which is attempting to obtain compensation and financial assistance for widows whose husbands were killed in army counter-insurgency campaigns in the late 1970's and early 1980's. On 10 May 1992, a grenade exploded outside the home of CERJ president Amílcar Méndez. Two hours after the explosion Amílcar Méndez received a telephone call at his sister's home. The anonymous caller said that this was a "warning", which CERJ believed to be a reference to the earlier grenade attack on his home. (See further information on UA 289/91, AMR 34/26/92, 13 May 1992).

page 2 of UA 177/92

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

- expressing concern at the reported attempt to kill teacher and CIEPRODH representative, José Alberto Nerio Osorio, in circumstances suggesting the possible involvement of the security forces;
- expressing concern also at the reported threats and acts of intimidation of other CIEPRODH representatives;
- asking for an immediate and impartial investigation into the incidents and that those found to be responsible be brought to justice;
- urging that the safety of José Alberto Nerio Osorio and of all CIEPRODH representatives be guaranteed.

**APPEALS TO**

1. President of the Republic

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías  
Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
Palacio Nacional  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Telephone: + 502 2 21212; + 502 2 22266**

**Faxes: + 502 2 537472; + 502 2 519702**

**Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU**

**[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;  
+ 502 2 518105-6 (direct)**

**Faxes: + 502 2 518105**

**Telexes: 5085 MINGOB**

**[Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister]**

**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  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio  
Procurador de Derechos Humanos  
Avenida Simeón Cañas 10-60 Zona 2,

3. Minister of Defence

Gral. José García Samayoa  
Ministro de Defensa  
Ministerio de Defensa  
Palacio Nacional  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Telephone: + 502 2 21212; + 502 2 2226**

**Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU**

**[Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister]**

4. Commander of Chiquimula Military Base

Cnel. Carlos Enrique Pineda Carranza  
Comandante Base Militar No. 8  
Chiquimula GUATEMALA

**[Salutation: Sr. Comandante/Dear  
Commander]**

**Telegrams: Comandante Chiquimula  
Military Base, Chiquimula, Guatemala**

**[Salutation: Sr. Comandante / Dear  
Commander]**

Guatemala, GUATEMALA

President of the Supreme Court

Lic. Juan José Rodil Peralta  
Presidente de la Corte Suprema de Justicia  
Centro Cívico  
21a Calle y 7a Avenida  
Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Centro de Investigación, Estudio y  
Promoción de los Derechos Humanos  
en Guatemala (CIEPRODH),  
Apartado 491-I, Zona 7, Código 01907  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
Diario "Prensa Libre"  
13 Calle 9-31  
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 10 July 1992.