

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 34/35/93

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UA 177/93 Fear of torture\Fear of "disappearance"\
Fear of extrajudicial execution

1 June 1993

GUATEMALA: Azucena VARGAS MONTERROSO, trade union leader
Otto SEISSIG, trade union secretary
Sandra SAZO DE ALVAREZ (female), trade union member
Jorge Luis ESTRADA ORTIZ, trade union member

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the above four members of the Sindicato de Trabajadores del Organismo Judicial (STOJ), Workers Union of the Judiciary, who were reportedly detained on 27 May 1993 during a demonstration in Guatemala City, the capital.

According to reports, the demonstration, which took place outside the Supreme Court, was in protest against measures announced by President Serrano on 25 May 1993 including the suspension of key provisions of the Guatemalan Constitution, the dissolution of Congress and the Supreme Court, the dismissal of Constitutional Court judges, and the replacement of the rule of law by rule by decree. Police used tear gas to disperse the crowd and some people were beaten, including Azucena Vargas Monterroso, Otto Seissig, Sandra Sazo de Alvarez and Jorge Luis Estrada Ortiz. According to witnesses these four trade union members were then arrested and taken to an unknown destination. Relatives have been unable to locate them as their detention has not been acknowledged by the authorities and rights to *habeas corpus* have been suspended.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Further to President Serrano's announcement on 25 May 1993 of the above new measures, bodies with responsibility for human rights protection have been suspended and attempts have apparently been made to arrest certain government officials associated with official human rights initiatives.

The Guatemalan Government issued radio warnings that the right to demonstrate or hold public meetings had been suspended. Freedom of expression has been severely restricted, including the suspension of certain television channels, radio stations and newspapers. Warrants have been reportedly issued for the detention of journalists.

See UA 172/93, AMR 34/30/93 of 27 May 1993 for details of the attempt to arrest leading officials following the President's announcement on 25 May 1993.

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

- expressing concern at the reported detention of Azucena Vargas Monterroso,

Otto Seissig, Sandra Sazo de Alvarez and Jorge Luis Estrada Ortiz, all members of the Sindicato de Trabajadores del Organismo Judicial (STOJ);

- urging the authorities to clarify their whereabouts and their legal situation;
- asking that while held in detention they be humanely treated and given access to an independent lawyer and a doctor;

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- urging that they either be released or brought promptly before a competent court.

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
Faxes: + 502 2 518 105

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
Faxes: + 502 2 537472
Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) 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

2) Workers Union of the National Electricity Institute:
Sindicato de Trabajadores del Instituto Nacional de Electrificación
7a. Av., 2-29
Zona 9, Edificio La Torre
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 13 July 1993.