

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 34/37/97

2 December 1997

Further information on UA 137/97 (AMR 34/19/97, 8 May 1997) - Fear for safety

GUATEMALA María Francisca Ventura Sican (f), human rights defender
Mildred Saquic (f) 8-year-old daughter

On 26 November 1997 at 10pm, María Francisca Ventura Sican and her eight-year-old daughter, Mildred Saquic were sitting at home, when shots were fired from outside. One of the shots grazed Mildred Saquic's arm, wounding her slightly.

In the days leading up to the attack, several unidentified men in army uniforms visited Maria Francisca Ventura's father's house and asked for her.

This incident follows a series of threats and acts of intimidation against María Francisca and her family in April and May 1997, carried out by individuals presumed to be members of the security forces or those acting on their behalf

It is believed that these threats were related to Maria Francisca Ventura giving testimony to Amnesty International delegates who visited the country in April 1997.

María Francisca Ventura is the widow of evangelical pastor Manuel Saquic Vásquez, whose body was found in an unmarked grave on 7 July 1995. He was coordinator of a Kaqchikel Maya Human Rights Committee in Panajabal, Chimaltenango Department. He "disappeared" after being abducted by alleged members of the security forces on 23 June 1995. Residents of Panajabal believe that Manuel Saquic was killed in reprisal for his human rights work and because he was also the sole witness to the abduction by security forces of another member of the Human Rights Committee in Panajabal.

María Francisca Ventura, her relatives and other human rights defenders have been pressing for those responsible for Manuel Saquic's death to be brought to justice. As a result of their efforts, they have been subjected to a number of threats. To date those responsible for the killing of her husband and the threats against her, her family and those working on Manuel Saquic's case, have not been brought to justice.

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

- expressing serious concern about the latest attack against María Francisca Ventura and her family;
- expressing concern for the safety of María Francisca Ventura and family and calling on the authorities to take immediate measures to guarantee their safety;
- calling on the authorities to conduct full and prompt investigations into the intimidation, harassment and previous death threats and to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.
- urging that those responsible for killing Manuel Saquic are brought to justice without further delay.

APPEALS TO:

1) Minister of Interior
Lic. Rodolfo Mendoza
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación

Despacho Ministerial, Of. N° 8
Palacio Nacional
6ª Calle y 7ª Avenida, Zona 1, Guatemala , GUATEMALA
Tel: +502 221 4428 Ext.1500
Fax: +502 251 5368
Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

2) Attorney General

Lic. Héctor Hugo Pérez Aguilera
Fiscal General de la Nación, Ministerio Público
18 Calle 10-36, Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Tel/Fax: +502 331 7066
Telegrams: Fiscal General, Guatemala, Guatemala
Salutation: Sr. Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. Héctor Mario Barrios Zelada
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional
6ª Calle y 7ª Avenida, Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax: +502 332 5118 (if voice, ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")
Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Julio Eduardo Arango
Procurador de los Derechos Humanos
12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1
Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax: +502 238 1734

COPREDEH

Licda. Marta Altolaquirre
Sra. Presidenta de la Comisión Presidencial
Coordinadora de la Política del Ejecutivo en Materia
de Derechos Humanos
15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13
Guatemala , GUATEMALA
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Human Rights Office of the Archbishopric

Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala
6 Calle 7-70, Zona 1, Guatemala 01001, 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 January 1998.