

GUATEMALA Clara Arenas (f)]
Miguel Angel Albizurez]
Miguel Angel Sandoval]
Nery Rodenas] human rights defenders
Frank La Rue]
Mario Polanco]
Helen Mack (f)]

Abner Guoz]
Marielos Monzón] journalists
Ronaldo Robles]
Rosa Maria Bolaños (f)]

A clandestine organisation with apparent links to the army high command faxed a death threat to several of Guatemala's most prominent human rights organisations on 7 June, describing the human rights activists and journalists named above as *enemigos a la patria* (enemies of the state), and saying they would soon be killed.

Those named are among the most prominent human rights activists in Guatemala. They and their organizations have played a critical role in efforts to prosecute former military leaders for human rights abuses, including "disappearances" and massacres of Guatemala's indigenous people, during the civil conflict which began in the 1960s and was not formally ended until 1996.

Guatemalan human rights activists have been experiencing a heightened wave of abuses during the last two years. The human rights organisations represented by those named above recently united to form the *Movimiento Nacional de Derechos Humanos* (National Human Rights Movement), which met with the Vice President to demand that the government investigate and dismantle the illegal and clandestine bodies believed to be responsible for the threats and intimidation.

The government undertook to produce a report on the matter, which it presented while the UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, Ms. Hina Jilani, was visiting the country. The report acknowledged that the police, but not the army, were involved in the clandestine bodies.

Ms. Jilani interviewed government officials and human rights organisations, and concluded that the illegal and clandestine organisations responsible for the threats and intimidation were linked to the Guatemalan army and national police.

The 7 June fax was signed "*Guatemaltecos de Verdad*" (True Guatemalans). It accused those named, and the organizations they work for, of damaging Guatemala's image abroad through their work. It said that local human rights groups "*están lideradas por personajes cuyas ambiciones personales son antepuestas por encima de los intereses de la Patria... Esto quedo en evidencia con la visita al país de Hina Jilani, a quien le besaron los pies y se pusieron de alfombra...*" (are led by people who put their own ambitions before the interests of the country... This was clear with the visit to Guatemala of Hina Jilani, whose feet they kissed and whom they let walk all over them...)

"La lista de los enemigos de la patria es grande y si las mentiras que contaron a la vieja Jilani tienen un efecto en el país los pajaros deberán pagarlo con

su sangre..." (The list of the country's enemies is long and if the lies they told to that old lady Jilani have an effect on the country, the wankers will pay for it with their blood." It said that those named above would be "*los primeros en sentir el sabor del acero de nuestras balas*" (the first to experience the taste of the steel of our bullets). The message said that until now it had been possible to restrain someone within the Military Chiefs of Staff, referred to as "Captain Nova", from acting against them, but "*estos malditos no aprenden ahora el y su equipo de cuaces tendra que echar punta*" (these bastards have not learnt their lesson and so he (Captain Nova) and his men should take action).

Also named on the list was Helen Mack, whose sister, anthropologist Myrna Mack, was stabbed to death in 1990. Helen Mack has battled ever since to bring the army officials who ordered her sister's death to justice. Myrna had been studying the plight of Mayan war refugees for the Guatemalan social science research institute AVANSCO.

Journalists Rosa Maria Bolaños and Abner Guoz work for the daily newspapers *siglo Veintiuno* and *El Periódico* respectively. Both newspapers have been prominent critics of the government of President Portillo. Marielos Monzón and Ronaldo Robles host a morning radio show that often focuses on human rights issues.

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

- expressing concern for those named above, who were threatened with death in a fax sent on 7 June by someone apparently connected to the army Chiefs of Staff, and asking the authorities to take action to guarantee their safety;
- calling on the authorities to publicly condemn this death threat, and to order an immediate investigation, making the results public and bringing those responsible to justice;
- pressing the authorities to put maximum efforts into investigating and dismantling the illegal clandestine organisations believed to be behind such threats.

APPEALS TO:

Vice-president of the Republic of Guatemala

Lic. Juan Francisco Reyes López

6^a Avenida 'A' 4-18

Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

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

Fax: + 502 239 0090 (please keep trying)

Salutation: Dear Vice-president/Señor Vicepresidente

Secretary of Strategic Affairs

Lic. Edgar A. Gutiérrez

Secretario de Asuntos Estratégicos

Secretaría de Asuntos Estratégicos

6a Avenida "A" 3-53, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: + 502 2322886

Salutation: Señor Secretario/Dear Secretary

Attorney General

Lic. Carlos David de León Argueta

Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General del Ministerio Público
8a. Avenida 10-57
Tercer nivel
Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax:+ 502 221 2718
Salutation:Señor Fiscal/Dear Sir

Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces
General de Brigada Robin Malconi Moran Muñoz
Jefe del Estado Mayor de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
2 Avenida 4-63, Zona 10
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax:+ 502 339 2478
Salutation:Señor General de Brigada/Dear General

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organisation
Alianza Contra la Impunidad (ACI)
1a Calle 0-11
Colonia El Sauce
Zona 2
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Phone/fax:+ 502 251 3023/ 232 2651

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.