

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 34/038/2003

UA 192/03

Fear for Safety/Death Threats

27 June 2003

GUATEMALA Thelma de Lam (f), *Fiscal Especial para los Defensores de los Derechos Humanos*,
Special Prosecutor for Human Rights Defenders;
Marines Martínez (f), *Fiscal Auxiliar para los Defensores de los Derechos Humanos*,
Assistant Special Prosecutor for Human Rights Defenders

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Thelma de Lam, the newly appointed *Fiscal Especial para los Defensores de los Derechos Humanos*, Special Prosecutor for Human Rights Defenders and for Marines Martínez, one of her assistant Special Prosecutors, who have both been the subject of death threats and harassment in the last two weeks.

On 20 June, three armed men entered the house of Marines Martínez, in the capital, Guatemala City, and demanded to see her. After one of the domestic servants told the men that she was not at home, they told her to tell Marines “if you carry on with your investigations, you’re going to get a surprise tonight” (*‘si siguiera investigando va a recibir una sorpresa esta noche’*).

On the same day, unknown men attempted to enter Thelma de Lam’s house in Guatemala City. They claimed to be electricians and insisted threateningly that they needed to have access to the house in order to mend a fault. However, no fault had been reported. As a result, the men were refused access and they left shortly afterwards.

On 23 June, Thelma de Lam received two anonymous calls on her mobile phone. The first caller told her “you should be careful with what you’re doing” (*‘Tuviera cuidado con lo que esta haciendo’*), and the second caller told her to stop her work with the *Ministerio Público* (MP), Public Prosecutors Office (*‘termine su trabajo con el Ministerio Público’*).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Thelma de Lam was appointed as Special Prosecutor for Human Rights Defenders in May 2003. The unit is mandated by the Guatemalan state to investigate crimes carried out against human rights activists. The previous Special Prosecutor in the unit, Tatiana Morales Valdizón, was also subject to death threats and harassment. Investigations into this case are still ongoing (See UA 26/03, 27 January 2003, AMR 34/003/2003).

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

- urging the authorities to offer immediate protection to Thelma de Lam and Marines Martínez from the *Fiscalía Especial para los Defensores de los Derechos Humanos* (MP), Office of the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights Defenders;
- calling on the authorities to carry out an immediate, exhaustive and impartial investigation into these incidents and to make the results public;
- urging the authorities to support publicly the state-mandated work of the Special Prosecutor’s Office for Human Rights Defenders.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic of Guatemala
Lic. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera

Presidente de la República de Guatemala
6a. Avenida "A" 4-41, Zona 1
Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: + 502 238 3579

Salutation: Dear Mr President/Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente

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: Dear Attorney General/Senor Fiscal General

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Adolfo Reyes Calderón
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
6ª Avenida 4-64, Zona 4
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: + 502 362 0239 / 362 0237

Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Director General of the National Civil Police

Comisario General Raul Arquimedes Manchame Leiva
Director General de la Policía Nacional Civil
6a Avenida 13-71, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: + 502 251 9382

Salutation: Dear Director/Señor Director

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Sergio Morales
Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos
12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala 01001, Guatemala

Fax: + 502 238 1734

Newspaper

Diario Prensa Libre
13 Calle 9-31, Zona I
Ciudad de Guatemala 01001, Guatemala

Fax: + 502 251 8768/ 230 2193/ 230 2257

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 8 August 2003.