

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear for Safety

5 July 1993

GUATEMALA: Elizabeth RECINOS ALVAREZ DE LEON (female), trade union leader
Eluvia DE SALAM (female), trade union leader

Amnesty International believes that the lives of Elizabeth Recinos Álvarez de León and Eluvia de Salam may still be in danger following their abduction on 17 June 1993 and subsequent release. Elizabeth Recinos Álvarez de León and Eluvia de Salam are believed to be in hiding and there are serious concerns for their safety.

According to reports, the two women were abducted in Guatemala City, the capital, by unidentified men who immediately blindfolded them. The two women were reportedly bundled into separate cars which were dark blue or black with smoked glass windows. Eluvia de Salam was released on 18 June, but the whereabouts of Elizabeth Recinos remained unknown until 23 June when she was found unconscious outside the house of Eluvia de Salam.

According to the testimony of Elizabeth Recinos, she was driven for some three to four hours and taken to a small room where she was drugged. She was then beaten and kicked repeatedly and told "Sing me the song. I want you to tell me who are the corrupt ones". (This is believed to be a reference to widespread allegations by grassroots organizations in the aftermath of Guatemala's recent attempted *'autogolpe'* (self-imposed or self-initiated coup) that many prominent officials and congress people are deeply involved in corruption). After her release she was taken to the police hospital where it was found that she had two broken ribs. She was then taken to the San Vicente hospital where she remained for several days.

Before the release of Elizabeth Recinos a *habeas corpus* petition was filed on her behalf and the Secretary of the Presidency, Hector Luna Trocolli, apparently promised to take steps to establish her whereabouts.

Elizabeth Recinos is a leader of the Sindicato del Hospital San Vicente, Union of San Vicente Hospital, and a member of the Asamblea Nacional de Trabajadores de Salud Pública (ANTSP), National Assembly of Public Health Workers. Eluvia de Salam is a leader of the Sindicato de Bienestar Social, Social Welfare Union, and a member of the Federación Nacional de Sindicatos de Trabajadores de Guatemala (FENASTEG), National Federation of Guatemalan Union Workers. Both women were active in the demonstrations that took place following the *autogolpe* of ex-President Serrano on 25 May 1993. On 6 June 1993 the two women were reportedly followed by two men in civilian clothing after attending the inauguration of President de León Carpio.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 6 June 1993 Ramiro de León Carpio, previously the Human Rights Procurator, was voted president by Congress, following his near unanimous selection by Congress to serve out the remaining term of President Jorge Serrano Elías. Ex-president Serrano had been forced from office after trying to seize near-dictatorial powers on 25 May

1993.

For many years Amnesty International has been concerned about human rights violations directed against targeted groups, including trade unionists, student leaders, journalists and those working with non-governmental organizations, particularly those attempting to investigate and protect human rights, who have been long-term targets of abuses in Guatemala, including harassment, threats, torture, "disappearances", and extrajudicial executions. Such abuses have sometimes been preceded by acts of intimidation and surveillance, such as in this instance.

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

- expressing concern at the harassment and abduction of Elizabeth Recinos Álvarez de León and Eluvia de Salam;
- expressing concern at the ill-treatment of Elizabeth Recinos Álvarez de León;
- asking that these incidents be immediately investigated and that those found responsible be brought to justice;
- asking for guarantees for the security of both women.

APPEALS TO

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Ramiro de León Carpio
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. Arnoldo Ortiz Moscoso
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 2 518105
Telexes: 5085 MINGOB

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. Mario Enríquez Morales
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) Workers Union of the National Electricity Institute:
Sindicato de Trabajadores del Instituto Nacional de Electrificación (STINDE)
7a. Av., 2-29
Zona 9, Edificio La Torre
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

2) 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

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 16 August 1993.