

## Media Advisory

15 November 2000

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### **Meeting with the Press** **Where are the children?: The legacy of "disappeared" children in Guatemala**

*11:00 a.m. Monday 20 November 2000*

*Palais de Nations, Geneva*

*Speakers:*

*Adriana Portillo*

*Tracy Ulltveit-Moe*

*( Amnesty International Researcher on Guatemala)*

*Chairperson*

*(Amnesty International Representative: Switzerland)*

*On International Children's Day -- Monday 20 November -- Amnesty International will be hosting a meeting with the press on behalf of Adriana Portillo, a Guatemalan mother, who will be visiting Geneva to bring her case to the UN Committee against Torture.*

*Adriana Portillo's two young children and an 18-month-old half sister were kidnapped and "disappeared" by the Guatemalan security forces in 1981. Four other members of her family were also "disappeared" that day. Her case and her belief that "disappearance" constitutes a form of torture will be considered by the UN Committee against Torture the following morning, Tuesday 21 November.*

*Adriana Portillo hopes to use her visit to Geneva to sensitize UN bodies and the international community to the continuing suffering of those whose children have been "disappeared" and of the ongoing battle*

to establish their fate. Remarkably, several "disappeared" Guatemalan children have recently been relocated. The knowledge that even a few of the "disappeared" children have been found alive fuels the hopes of people like Adriana Portillo that she too may find her children.

On Tuesday 21 November, Guatemala will present its periodic report to the Committee against Torture at the Palais Wilson. Amnesty International has also submitted a report recommending that the Committee against Torture urge the Guatemalan government to establish a special commission to investigate the fate of "disappeared" Guatemalan children. Last year, the UN-sponsored Historical Clarification Commission recommended the creation of a special commission. The Guatemalan government has failed to comply with this recommendation.

Amnesty International is inviting the world's media to meet Adriana Portillo in an attempt to raise global awareness of the enduring effects of state-orchestrated "disappearances" on the families of tens of thousands of victims. Their level of suffering is compounded by the failure of the Guatemalan government to adequately investigate the fate of their loved ones.

Adriana Portillo, who has recently founded an organization called "Where are the Children?/Watch", will be available for interview (in English or Spanish) immediately following the Meeting with the Press. To book an interview, please contact Som Leung at the Amnesty International UN Geneva office. Tel: 022-798 2500, or call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566. website: <http://www.amnesty.org>

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