

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 374/92 Death Threats/Harassment

30 November 1992

**GUATEMALA: María Buthy DARDÓN TEJEDA (female)
 and members of her family**

Amnesty International is seriously concerned at the recent death threats and harassment of María (known as Miriam) Buthy Dardón Tejeda, who is the wife of Amílcar Méndez Urizar, the president of the Consejo de Comunidades Étnicas "Runujel Junam" (CERJ), Council of Ethnic Communities "We are all Equal".

According to information received by Amnesty International, on 21 November 1992 Miriam Dardón passed by a demonstration of approximately 150 members of the Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PAC), Civil Defence Patrols, which took place outside the house of the Governor of Santa Cruz del Quiché, El Quiché department. She was accosted by two members of the PAC who forced her to go to the microphone and told her to make denunciations against her husband. She was able, however, to escape from the demonstration. Sources in Guatemala report that the demonstrators, who came from various parts of the department of El Quiché including the city of Chichicastenango and the village of San Pedro Jocopilas, were organized to come by the armed forces. A witness reported seeing the PAC members from Chichicastenango assembled on a football field with several unmarked large military trucks waiting to transport them to Santa Cruz del Quiché.

Since the end of October 1992, Miriam Dardón has reported that, following her husband's departure from the country on a human rights tour of the United States, she and her family have been subjected to constant harassment, including telephone calls day and night. The callers have threatened to kill her and her family. Amílcar Méndez returned to Guatemala on 22 November.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 11 November 1992, Amílcar Méndez was among three human rights defenders singled out by President Jorge Serrano Elías and Minister of Defence General José García Samayoa and accused of among other things "responding to the proposals of the URNG" - Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional de Guatemala (URNG), Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit (See UA 358/92, AMR 34/48/92, of 16 November 1992).

On 6 November 1992, at the request of the Attorney General, an arrest warrant was issued against Amílcar Méndez who was in the United States at the time. The arrest warrant related to the arrest on 22 October 1992 of CERJ members Juan Ren González and Alberto Calvo González in Santa Cruz del Quiché by members of the National Police. The men were accused by the police of being in possession of a pamphlet bomb containing pamphlets of the URNG. Both men were taken before a judge on 23 October. Juan Ren denied all knowledge of the pamphlet bomb. Alberto Calvo reported being ill-treated in custody and while in court admitted to carrying the pamphlet bomb and stated that Amílcar Méndez had given him the bomb. The lawyers acting on behalf of the two stated that Alberto Calvo, a Quiché speaker with virtually no Spanish, was interrogated without an interpreter or a lawyer present. He later reported to them that he first became aware of the bomb when police showed it to him following his

arrest and that Amílcar Méndez had never given them any bombs. Alberto Calvo also stated to the court that he was tied up and blindfolded upon arrest.

Amílcar Méndez returned to the country on 22 November and following the intervention of foreign embassy officials it was agreed that he would not be arrested, but that he would appear before a judge. He was subsequently granted provisional liberty on grounds of lack of evidence, but further investigation is pending.

CERJ was formed in El Quiché by Amílcar Méndez on 31 July 1988. In August 1988 Indian peasants from El Quiché marched to Guatemala City calling for investigations into

Page 2 of UA 374/92

recent human rights violations against peasants who were petitioning for withdrawal from the ostensibly voluntary Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PAC), Civil Defence Patrols.

Since its formation CERJ leaders and members have been consistently accused of having links with the armed opposition and targeted by the security forces. Over 15 members of CERJ have apparently been extrajudicial executions, seven "disappeared", and hundreds of its members been threatened and/or harassed by members of the security forces or those working with them.

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

- expressing concern for the harassment and death threats against Miriam Dardón Tejeda and other members of her family;
- asking for an immediate investigation into these incidents and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- asking for guarantees for the physical security of Miriam Dardón Tejeda, Amílcar Méndez, their family and members of CERJ.

APPEALS TO

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías
Presidente de la República de Guatemala
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente /
Dear President**

Telegrams: Presidente Serrano, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 2 537472, + 502 2 519702
Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU

2) Minister of Defence:

Gral. José García Samayoa
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa, Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Salutation: Señor Ministro /
Dear Minister**

Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU

3) Minister of Interior:

Lic. Francisco Perdomo
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro /
Dear Minister**

Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 2 518105
Telexes: 5085 MINGOB

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Human Rights Procurator:

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio
Procurador de los Derechos Humanos
12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Head of the Presidential Coordinating Commission of
the Policies of the Executive relating to Human Rights:

Sr. Bernardo Neumann
Presidente
Comisión Presidencial Coordinadora de la Política del Ejecutivo en
materia de Derechos Humanos (COPREDEH)
15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Council of Ethnic Communities "We are all Equal"

Consejo de Comunidades Étnicas "Runujel Junam" (CERJ),
5a Avenida 3-13,
Santa Cruz del Quiché, El Quiché, 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 11 January 1993.