

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear for safety

13 August 1993

GUATEMALA: Street children in Guatemala city including:

José Humberto SANDOVAL GUILLO

Carlos MAYEN

Axel Danilo VASQUEZ

~~Juan Carlos CALDERON~~

Henry MOLINA

Fransisco TZIAC

Amnesty International continues to be concerned for the safety of street children in Guatemala city, and those who work with them, in light of recent reports of human rights violations committed against them by members of the police.

On 8 August 1993 at approximately 1am four policemen in civilian clothes reportedly started beating two street children, Carlos Mayen and Axel Danilo Vasquez, who were outside the hotel "La Estación" in Zone 1 of Guatemala city. The noise woke up another street youth José Humberto Sandoval Guillo, who was sleeping inside the hotel. He went outside to see what was going on and apparently one of the policeman had fired at least two shots at the feet of the two street children. José Humberto urged the police to stop beating Carlos Mayen and to stop firing shots at his feet. One of the policemen tried to hit José Humberto over the head with his pistol butt. The other two street children, Carlos and Axel, then apparently started hitting the policeman. According to reports two of the policemen reportedly ran off. Another policeman ran off and José Humberto ran after this policeman who then turned and shot at José Humberto in the left side of his face. A bullet went straight through his jaw, exiting the back of his head. He was later transferred to hospital and is undergoing treatment.

According to reports, also on 8 August, at about 3pm three street children, Juan Carlos Calderon, Henry Molina and Fransisco Tziac, were sleeping in the street close to the Covenant House refuge, also in Zone 1, when three uniformed members of the National Police came across them. (Covenant House (Casa Alianza) is an organization which works with street children.) The policemen searched the children and took off them two glass jars containing shoe glue and some money. The policemen reportedly started to pour the glue from the jars over the heads and faces of the street children.

One of the workers from Covenant House saw what was going on, approached the policemen and asked them to stop which they did and they left the area. However, when the Covenant House worker left the refuge at about 9.30pm he noticed several policemen waiting closeby. He feared that they might be waiting for him and so he left with another counsellor and no action was taken by the police against him.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has repeatedly received information about human rights violations carried out by official security force agents against street children in Guatemala. For documentaiton on many of these cases see Amnesty International's reports Guatemala extrajudicial executions and Human Rights Violations against Street Children, AI Index: AMR 34/37/90 of August 1990, and Guatemala: Children in Fear, AI Index: AMR 34/24/92 of May 1992, and more recently Urgent Action 120/93, AMR 34/18/93 of 21 April 1993, which gives information on the killing of street youth Henry Yubani Álvarez Benítez.

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

- expressing concern at the reported beating and shooting of José Humberto Sandoval Guillo, a street youth, on 8 August 1993 in Guatemala city;
- expressing concerned at continuing reports of the ill-treatment of street children carried out by the members of security forces;
- asking for a full investigation to determine the perpetrators of these incidents and bring them to justice;
- urging the government to take immediate steps to protect the lives of street children and those working with them.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Ramiro de León Carpio
Presidente de la República de Guatemala
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr.
Presidente /
Dear Mr. President

Telegrams: Presidente de León Carpio, Guatemala, Guatemala

Faxes: + 502 2 537472, + 502 2 519702

Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU

2) Minister of Interior:

Lic. Arnoldo Ortiz Moscoso
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

3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. Mario Enríquez Morales
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Salutation: Sr. Ministro /
Dear Minister

Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala

Faxes: + 502 2 537472

Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU

COPIES OF YUOR APPEALS TO:

1) Human Rights Procurator:

Lic. Jorge García Laguardia
Procurador de los Derechos Humanos
12 Avenida 12-72, zona 1
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Faxes: + 502 2 81734

3) Covenant House:

Case Alianza
Apartado Postal 2704
Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

2) Archbishop`s Human Rights Office:

Oficina de Derechos Humanos del
Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHAG)
Apartado Postal 723
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 24 September 1993.