

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 101/94 Fear for safety

11 March 1994

HONDURAS: Jorge Alberto SIERRA MONCADA - human rights activist

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Jorge Alberto Sierra Moncada, a leading member of the *Comité para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos en Honduras (CODEH)*, Committee for the Defence of Human Rights in Honduras after he was threatened by an armed man in a bar.

On 4 March 1994, Jorge Alberto Sierra Moncada was writing notes in the *Pincho Palace* bar in San Pedro Sula. At about 17.20, a Mercedes Benz car drew up outside and an unidentified man got out and entered the bar. Passing Jorge Alberto Sierra Moncada, the man commented "*I see there are intellectuals in here*" (*veo que aquí hay intelectuales*). A few minutes later, Jorge Sierra noticed that the man was standing behind him trying to read what he was writing, and so he covered up the notes with his arm. The unknown man reportedly became angry and shouted "*you've done it now, now you'll see what's coming to you*" (*ya la planchaste, ya vas a ver*). He produced a 38 automatic pistol, waved it in front of Jorge Sierra's face and then fired it into the air. He asked Jorge Sierra if he would like him to fire the next one at him and then told him "*people like you have big mouths where a shot can go in and come straight out the back*" (*las personas como vos mueren por la boca y el tiro les sale por la espalda*).

The attacker then left, but returned five minutes later, firing another shot in Jorge Sierra's direction - which missed - and remained pointing the gun at him for several seconds.

Jorge Sierra made repeated attempts to register this incident and make a formal complaint on 4 March, but on each occasion, officials of the *Dirección Nacional de Investigaciones (DNI)* (the investigative branch of the *Fuerzas de Seguridad Pública (FUSEP)*, the Honduran Public Security Forces) and the *Dirección Regional de Tránsito*, the Regional Transport Directorate, were said to be unavailable.

On 5 March, he went again to the DNI and tried to speak to the San Pedro Sula regional director, but again to no avail.

The facts were finally presented to the *Juzgado Tercera de Letras*, Third District Court, by CODEH on 11 March. After the case was presented, several officials allegedly commented that the victim himself was to blame because of his activities and they implied that the incident was not serious.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This is the latest in a series of attacks against human rights activists, whom members of the police force are alleged to have referred to as "*agitators*" and protectors of common criminals. Amnesty International fears that members of the Honduran Public Security Forces may be attempting to discredit the work of human rights organizations and their members, thus putting their lives at risk.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Jorge Alberto Sierra Moncada, following the armed attack on him on 4 March in San Pedro Sula, and other human rights workers in Honduras;

- urging that every effort be made quickly to establish the identity of Jorge Sierra's attacker and that he be brought to trial without delay;
- asking for assurances that all official complaints of crimes of this kind are given due attention, so as to ensure the physical security of every Honduran citizen, and to increase public confidence in the public security forces.

APPEALS TO

1) President of the Republic

S.E. Carlos Roberto Reina
 Presidente de la República de Honduras
 Casa Presidencial, 6ª Avenida, 1ª Calle
 Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Telegrams: Presidente Reina, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Faxes: (504) 37 96 56

Telexes: 1120 MMRR HO/1429 HO

Salutation: Sr. Presidente/Dear Mr. President

2) President of the Supreme Court

Lic. Miguel Ángel Rivera Portillo
 Presidente de la Corte Suprema de Justicia
 Palacio de Justicia, Boulevard José Cecilio del Valle
 Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Faxes: (504) 31 28 66

Salutation: Sr. Presidente de la Corte Supreme/Your Honour

3) Minister of Defence and Public Security

Gral. Reynaldo Andino Flores
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional y Seguridad Pública
 Palacio de los Ministerios
 Tegucigalpa, Honduras
 Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Faxes: (504) 38 02 38

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Human Rights Commissioner

Lic. Leo Valladares Lanza
 Comisionado Nacional para la Protección de los Derechos Humanos
 Barrio La Granja, Calle 29, Casa 228, frente Escuela Club de Leones,
 Comayagueta, Honduras

Faxes: (504) 33 56 12

CODEH

Lic. Jorge Sierra
 Apartado Postal 3189,
 Tegucigalpa, Honduras

and to diplomatic representatives of Honduras accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 April 1994.