

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/07/96

UA 42/96

Fear for safety

21 February 1996

MEXICONinfa Deandar (f), and her family, newspaper owners
Raymundo Ramos, journalist
Jesús López Tapia, editor

The people named above, all associated with the independent daily newspaper, *El Mañana de Nuevo Laredo*, in Tamaulipas State, have received anonymous threats, apparently as a result of the paper's reporting of alleged local government corruption. The paper has named the Governor of the State in connection with recent incidents of corruption and drug-trafficking.

On 2 February 1996 Ninfa Deandar and her family, owners of the paper, reportedly received telephone death threats at her home. The caller stated that Ninfa would be killed with a single shot to the forehead, and also threatened harm to her four sons, three of whom work on the paper. On 20 February, at Nuevo Laredo town hall, unknown people distributed a leaflet carrying a photo of Ninfa Deandar, and stating that she was the "*mercenaria, gangster and prostituta del periodismo*", "mercenary, gangster and prostitute of journalism".

On 13 February Raymundo Ramos, a reporter for the paper, reportedly received an anonymous call, in which the caller said that he wanted to meet with Raymundo to give him a warning (*una advertencia*). As he was leaving the offices of the newspaper later that day, Raymundo Ramos was forced into a car by two men and driven around for two hours, during which time he was warned to stop writing articles about the Governor of Tamaulipas.

On 27 December 1995 Jesús López Tapia, editor of the paper, had also received threats over the phone.

The paper has denounced the incidents to the press and non-governmental organizations. It has also made an official complaint to President Ernesto Zedillo and the Minister of Interior Emilio Chuayffet Chemor, so far without response.

El Mañana de Nuevo Laredo has suffered threats and violence against it before: in 1976, a son of Ninfa Deandar was killed in unknown circumstances and its editor was killed in a bomb explosion at its offices.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The harassment of government critics and human rights monitors is one of Amnesty International's main concerns in Mexico at present. 1996 has seen a huge increase in harassment against human rights defenders, most of whom are being targeted for their work in behalf of the community (for example, see UA 37/96, AMR 41/06/96, 15 February 1996; UA 27/96, AMR 41/04/96, 2 February; UA 12/96, AMR 41/02/96, 22 January; and UA 09/96, AMR 41/01/96, 16 January).

Amnesty International has recorded a long-term pattern of harassment and threats related to professional groups such as journalists, lawyers, church members (for example see UA 203/95, AMR 41/19/95, 18 August 1995 and update AMR 41/28/95, 6 October).

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

- calling for an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the recent threats and harassment against Raymundo Ramos, Ninfa Deandar and her family, and Jesús López Tapia, in the context of *El Mañana de Nuevo Laredo*'s denunciation of alleged local government corruption, and to bring to justice those responsible for them;
- calling for immediate steps to guarantee the physical safety of those threatened; requesting to be kept informed of any relevant developments in this case;
- expressing concern that such threats fall within a pattern of harassment and intimidation of human rights monitors who have publicly denounced abuses by government authorities.

APPEALS TO:1) President of the Republic

Lic. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio Nacional
 06067 México D.F., MEXICO

Telegrams: Presidente Zedillo, México D.F., México

Telexes: 170937 sppnme; 1774468 sppnme

Faxes: + 52 5 271 1764

Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Dear President

2) Minister of the Interior

Lic. Emilio Chuayffet Chemor
 Secretario de la Gobernación
 Secretaría de la Gobernación
 Bucareli 99, 1er piso
 Col. Juárez
 06699 México DF, MEXICO

Telegrams: Secretario Gobernación, Mexico DF, Mexico

Salutation: Sr. Secretario / Dear Minister

3) State Governor

Lic. Manuel Cavazos Lerma
 Gobernador del Estado de Tamaulipas
 Palacio de Gobierno
 Ciudad Victoria
 Tamaulipas, MEXICO

Telegrams: Gobernador de Tamaulipas, México D.F., México

Faxes: + 52 131 25732

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador/Dear Governor

COPIES TO:1) Daily newspaper

Sr. Editor
 La Jornada
 Balderas 68
 06050 México D.F., MEXICO

2) Daily newspaper

Sr. Editor
 La Mañana de Nuevo Laredo
 Perú 2104 y Juárez

Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas
MEXICO

3) Human rights organization
Srs. Centro de estudios fronterizos y
de promoción de los Derechos Humanos, A.C.
Zaragoza 650, 1er piso, despacho N#4
Ciudad Reynosa, Col Centro
88500 Tamaulipas
MEXICO

and to diplomatic representatives of MEXICO accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 April 1996.