

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/62/96

11 October 1996

Further information on UA 200/96 (AMR 41/43/96, 13 August 1996) and follow-ups (AMR 41/51/96, 29 August 1996 and AMR 41/56/96, 26 September) - Death Threats / Fear for safety

MEXICO Pilar Noriega (f), lawyer
Digna Ochoa (f), lawyer
 Enrique Flota, lawyer

new name: Gracia Moheno (f), lawyer

On 7 October 1996, Pilar Noriega and Gracia Moheno, two human rights lawyers and members of the *Centro de Derechos Humanos Agustín Pro-Juárez (PRODH)*, Human Rights Centre Agustín Pro-Juárez, received death threats. Particular concern for their safety was raised by the fact that the threats were received in the PRODH office in Mexico City while the two lawyers were on a plane to Washington, USA, where they were to attend a meeting with the Interamerican Human Rights Commission for a presentation of the case of three extrajudicial executions by the Mexican army in Chiapas in 1994. The two women eventually arrived safely in Washington.

On 9 October, another member of PRODH received anonymous death threats against him and his family.

Amnesty International remains deeply concerned for the safety of these and other members of PRODH, who are apparently being targeted because of their human rights work. These threats are the latest in a series against members of PRODH, and form part of a sharp increase in the targeting of human rights defenders throughout Mexico. In scores of cases such threats contain extensive details about the victims' personal and professional lives, suggesting intelligence work, including telephone tapping. Amnesty International believes that such activities cannot happen without the authorities acquiescence.

While civil and human rights activists are being particularly targeted, the recent rapid deterioration in the human rights situation in Mexico has led to violations against people from all walks of life, including journalists and lawyers, members of ethnic minorities, children, and even members of the public apparently selected at random. Abuses have included death threats, illegal arrests, torture and "disappearance" carried out by members of the security forces, and paramilitary groups reportedly operating with official tolerance.

Amnesty International is following the human rights situation in Mexico with alarm and fears that the situation will deteriorate further unless the government takes immediate and effective action to halt the violations and bring those responsible to justice.

Appeals based on the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (see previous update) may continue, and in addition:

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

- expressing deep concern at the further death threats against members of the *Centro de Derechos Humanos Agustín Pro-Juárez (PRODH)*, in Mexico City, and

urging that the authorities now take effective action to put a stop to the threats and guarantee the safety of these human rights defenders;
 - politely asking what measures the authorities took in response to earlier appeals;
 - expressing alarm at the rapid deterioration in the human rights situation in Mexico, and calling on the government to adopt urgent and effective measures, including its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Convention Against Torture, to halt the pattern of human rights violations and the impunity benefitting perpetrators.

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, or 515 1794 or 542 1648 (voice line: ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Dear President

2) Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Antonio Lozano Gracia

Procurador General de la República

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Telegrams: Procurador General de la República, México D.F., México

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Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear Attorney General

3) Attorney General of the Federal District

Lic. José Antonio González Fernández

Procurador del Distrito Federal

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Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear Attorney General

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2) daily newspaper

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La Jornada

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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 30 November 1996.