

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 46/13/98

23 July 1998

Further information on UA 143/98 (AMR 46/08/98, 6 May 1998) - Fear for safety

PERU Heriberto Benítez Rivas, human rights lawyer
Isabel Rivas Ramírez (f), mother of the above

Threats continue to be made to the physical safety of Heriberto Benítez Rivas, a human rights activist and president of the *Colegio de Abogados de Lima*, Lima Bar Association, and his mother Isabel Rivas Ramírez.

Around two weeks ago a domestic employee working at Heriberto Benítez' home answered the telephone to someone claiming to represent César Hildebrandt, a prominent Peruvian journalist and critic of the government of President Alberto Fujimori. Hours later the caller apparently turned up at his home but, on finding Heriberto Benítez was not there, departed. Later that day he again telephoned.

On learning of this, Heriberto Benítez contacted César Hildebrandt who assured him that he had not requested anyone to contact him. Heriberto Benítez reported the matter to the *Delegación Policial de San Isidro*, San Isidro Police Station, and then took precautionary measures by staying away from his home for a few days.

Following his return home, Heriberto Benítez received another threatening telephone call in which the caller informed him that "*ya te jodiste*", "he was done for". Again Heriberto Benítez reported the matter to the police but is not aware of any investigation being initiated. In another call taken by Isabel Rivas, Heriberto Benítez' ageing mother, the caller told her: "*Dígale a su hijo que ya se fregó y deje de joder al Gobierno*", "Tell your son that he's done for and to stop undermining the Government". Isabel Rivas, who suffers from high blood pressure, subsequently required medical assistance.

These events are believed to be linked to Heriberto Benítez' work as a human rights lawyer in a climate of numerous acts of intimidation and harassment against human rights defenders and others. This is in the context of revelations of human rights violations committed by members of *Servicio de Inteligencia del Ejército* (SIE), Army Intelligence Service, allegations also of corruption by individuals linked to the government and armed forces, and wide opposition to the government. Heriberto Benítez has been involved in representing ex-agents of the SIE, including one woman who was tortured by SIE members for allegedly leaking security plans.

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

- expressing profound dismay that, despite previous appeals in May 1998 for the safety of Heriberto Benítez Rivas and his mother Isabel Rivas Ramírez, they continue to receive threats to their physical and psychological integrity;
- expressing concern that despite these latest threats being reported to the *Delegación Policial de San Isidro*, San Isidro Police Station, in Lima, apparently no investigation has been initiated;
- calling for an immediate, full, and independent investigation into the threats, for the findings to be made public, and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Attorney General

Dr. Miguel Aljovin Swayne
Fiscal de la Nación
Fiscalía de la Nación
Av. Abancay, Cuadra 5
Lima 1, PERU

Telegrams: Fiscal Nación, Lima, Peru

Faxes: + 511 426 2474

Salutation: Dear Attorney General / Sr. Fiscal de la Nación

Minister of the Interior

General (EP) Jose Villanueva Ruesta
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Plaza 30 de Agosto 150
Lima 27, PERU

Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Lima, Peru

Faxes: + 511 224 2407 (if voice, say "me da tono de fax por favor")

Salutation: Dear Minister/Sr. Ministro

Minister of Justice

Sr. Alfredo Quispe Correa
Ministro de Justicia
Ministerio de Justicia
Scipion Llona 350
Lima 18, PERU

Telegrams: Ministro Justicia, Lima, Peru

Faxes: + 511 422 3577

Salutation: Dear Minister / Sr. Ministro

COPIES TO:

Lima Bar Association

Colegio de Abogados de Lima
Av. Santa Cruz 255
Esquina Jirón Santander
Miraflores
Lima, PERU

and to diplomatic representatives of Peru accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 September 1998.