

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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PLEASE ORGANIZE APPEALS FROM TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS.

UA 218/91

Death Threats

26 June 1991

PERU: Bertha ROJAS LOPEZ, 43-year-old school teacher
Fritz Elias CERRON ROJAS, aged 22
Vladimir Roy CERRON ROJAS, aged 21
Waldemar José CERRON ROJAS, aged 18

Amnesty International is concerned about the physical safety of Bertha Rojas López, a school teacher, and her sons Fritz Elias, Vladimir Roy and Waldemar José Cerrón Rojas.

According to reports, Bertha Rojas and her sons have been subject to death threats from unidentified persons after she began pressing for an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the abduction and subsequent killing of her husband, Jaime Cerrón Palomino. Her husband, who was Vice-rector of the Universidad Nacional del Centro, the National Central University in the city of Huancayo, Junín department, was found dead on 17 June 1990 together with his driver, Armando Tapia Gutiérrez (see UA 252/90, AMR 46/43/90, 20 June 1990). The body of Jaime Cerrón had multiple gunshot wounds and his hands and feet had been cut off. His abduction was carried out by armed and hooded men believed to be members of the security forces, or men acting with the acquiescence of the security forces. He had been arrested previously, accused of being linked to "terrorist" activities, but released due to lack of evidence. He had also received anonymous death threats.

The telephone threats to Bertha Rojas reportedly began in June 1990. She believes that the threats are an attempt to stop her from reporting her husband's illegal detention, and subsequently to prevent her from demanding an investigation by the authorities. She believes that they are from the same people who killed her husband.

In a written testimony to a human rights group Bertha Rojas states:

"The tragedy began for us on 8 June 1990, when they abducted my husband while on his way to work at the National Central University. Since then things have been terrible, especially because of the threats I am getting".

"Empezó la tragedia para nosotros el 8 de junio de 1990, cuando secuestraron a mi esposo cuando se dirigía a su centro de trabajo en la Universidad Nacional del Centro. Desde aquella vez vivo unos momentos bastantes terribles, sobretodo por las amenazas que me hacen".

As a result of these threats, Bertha Rojas and her sons had to abandon their home in Huancayo to take refuge in Lima. But, as a result of economic difficulties, they were forced to return to Huancayo. According to reports, in June 1991 the family started to receive death threats again on a daily basis, sometimes as much as three times a day. In her testimony, Bertha Rojas states:

"I had a terrible shock because they started calling me again and they said to me: good night because you may never see daybreak again".

"Sufrió un shock nervioso, porque me volvieron a llamar y me dijeron muy buenas noches porque tal vez ya no vuelvas a amanecer".

The case has been reported to the Fiscalía Provincial de Huancayo, the Provincial Attorney of Huancayo and to the Policía Técnica, the investigative police, but no response

has been received.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Bertha Rojas and her sons.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International continues to receive reports of threats and attacks on those trying to make enquiries about their "disappeared" or dead relatives, as well as on witnesses, those carrying out investigations, lawyers, judges and human rights defenders. The day after the "disappearance" of Jaime Cerrón Palomino and Armando Tapia Gutiérrez, a bomb was planted in the house of Rosa Mandujano, the human rights secretary of the Frente de Defensa de Huancayo, the Huancayo Defence Front, a human rights group. More recently, Amnesty International has received reports of the intimidation on the part of the armed forces of Dr. Moisés Ochoa, Inspecting Judge of Huanta (see UA 195/91, AMR 46/27/91, 10 June 1991). The latter is the Judge in a trial against the army officers accused of the murder in 1988 of journalist Hugo Bustíos. The danger involved in reporting "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions often stops relatives from directly denouncing the facts to the authorities. This, in turn, contributes to the pattern of impunity which so often surrounds human rights violations in Peru.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the death threats received by Bertha Rojas López and her sons, Fritz Elias, Vladimir Roy and Waldemar José Cerrón Rojas;
- asking that all the necessary measures be urgently taken to guarantee their physical safety;
- asking for an investigation into the threats and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- asking for guarantees that Bertha Rojas López may carry out her legitimate attempts to press for an investigation into the death of her husband, Jaime Cerrón Palomino.

APPEALS TO:

Presidente Alberto Fujimori
(Salutation: Sr. Presidente)
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio de Gobierno
 Plaza de Armas
 Lima 1, Perú

Telegrams: Presidente Fujimori, Lima, Peru
Telexes: 20167 PE PALACIO; 20331 PE SEC PRE

General Jorge Torres Aciego
(Salutation: Sr. Ministro)
 Ministro de Defensa
 Ministerio de Defensa
 Avenida Boulevard s/n
 Monterrico
 Lima 33, Perú

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa Torres, Lima, Peru
Telexes: 25438 PE COMGREGJ

COPIES TO:

Señores
CEAPAZ (human rights group)
Centro de Estudios y Acción para la Paz
Apartado 11-0764
Lima 11, Perú

and to diplomatic representatives of Peru in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 August 1991.