

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 46/37/97

22 September 1997

Further information on UA 279/97 (AMR 46/34/97, 20 August 1997) -
Intimidation/Death threats/Fear for safety/Torture (note new concern)

PERU Elba Greta MINAYA CALLE, judge (f)
Francisco SOBERON GARRIDO, human rights defender
Manuel BALUARTE, human rights journalist
Staff of the *Asociación pro Derechos Humanos*
and new names: María Jesús GARCIA SANCHEZ (f)
Julio SALAS CÁCERES, police captain

Amnesty International has received information about further death threats directed at Francisco Soberón Garrido, a human rights defender and director of the independent human rights organization, *Asociación pro Derechos Humanos*, APRODEH, Association for Human Rights.

Around midday on 4 September 1997, an unidentified man arrived at the offices of APRODEH in Lima, the capital, asking for Francisco Soberón, and leaving an envelope. The envelope contained a message which referred to APRODEH's work in favour of Peruvian police captain Julio Salas Cáceres (see below), and telling Francisco Soberón: "*deja de meterte en lo que no te importa y es más estas advertido, hijo de perra*", "stop meddling in what is of no concern to you; what's more, you've been warned, you son of a bitch."

Amnesty International has also received information about acts of intimidation, including death threats, directed at María Jesús García Sánchez, the wife of captain Julio Salas, and their children. María Jesús García was also targeted on 4 September. A written message was left at her home by an unidentified man answering to the same description as the person who delivered the death threat to Francisco Soberón. The message, directed to captain Julio Salas, stated: "*estamos tras los pasos de tu mujer que es una cualquiera que se acuesta con todo el mundo también cuida a tus hijos*", "we are following your wife, she's a nobody who will get into bed with anybody, look out for your children too". On 5 September, Francisco Soberón received a telephone call from a woman stating that she was going to kill María Jesús García. Three weeks earlier, on 14 August, María Jesús García was targeted on two separate occasions. In the morning, she was approached by a man driving a taxi who told her "*vas a morir como rata aplastada*", "you're going to die like a squashed rat". In the evening she was assaulted in the street by two men who got out of an unmarked car, pulled her hair, hit her in the face, and stole her handbag.

In addition, Amnesty International has learned that prior to fleeing to the United States of America (USA), captain Julio Salas was the target of a series of acts of intimidation, including being tortured and threatened with death. On 15 April, he was taken to, and then released the same day from, the *División de Criminalística de la Policía*, Police Criminal Investigation Division, in Lima. While in custody, he was reportedly beaten on the face and subjected to electric shocks. During the latter part of April, he received several death threats over the telephone.

FURTHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The targeting of Francisco Soberón, María Jesús García and captain Julio Salas has taken place in the context of a Peruvian television company, *Frecuencia*

Latina - Canal 2, having become a source of persistent criticism about President Alberto Fujimori's administration. Over the past months, *Frecuencia Latina - Canal 2* has taken a lead in exposing human rights violations by members of the security forces and large scale corruption involving military personnel and civilians working for the government.

According to Peruvian and foreign political analysts, as a result *Frecuencia Latina - Canal 2* has come under systematic pressure from the authorities to halt the criticism. Firstly *Frecuencia Latina - Canal 2* discovered an undercover police operation designed to accuse the company of defrauding the tax authorities. Secondly, a leading news broadcaster working for the company allegedly received anonymous death threats. Thirdly, Baruch Ivcher, a Peruvian citizen of Israeli origins and a majority share owner in the company, on learning last May that there was an order for his detention and after reportedly receiving death threats, fled to the USA. Fourthly, Baruch Ivcher was also recently stripped of his shares in the company and his Peruvian citizenship, on the grounds that his naturalization papers contained irregularities and Peruvian law prohibits foreigners owning media outlets in Peru.

The measures against Baruch Ivcher and *Frecuencia Latina - Canal 2* reflect a pattern of intimidation, including death threats, directed at journalists, radio and TV stations, politicians and others critical of President Fujimori's government, the intelligence services and the upper echelons of the Peruvian army. This pattern began to emerge in October 1996, when a bomb was detonated outside the installations of a television and radio station in the city of Puno. Members of the army's intelligence services, who carried out the attack, were subsequently charged with the crime of terrorism and found guilty by a military court.

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

- expressing concern about reports that Francisco Soberón Garrido, director of the independent human rights organization *Asociación pro Derechos Humanos* was the target of renewed death threats on 4 September;
- expressing concern about reports that María Jesús García Sánchez and her husband, police captain Julio Salas Cáceres, have repeatedly been intimidated, including receiving death threats, since last April;
- calling on the authorities to take the necessary steps to guarantee the safety of Francisco Soberón and Maria Jesús García;
- requesting a full, prompt and independent investigation into the above acts of intimidation, and that the findings be made public and those responsible be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic
 Presidente Alberto Fujimori
 Palacio de Gobierno
 Plaza de Armas
 Lima 1, PERU

Fax: + 511 426 6770/426 1120 (if someone answers, say "por favor, me puede dar tono de fax")

Telegrams: Presidente Fujimori, Lima, Perú

Salutation: Sr. Presidente/ Dear President

President of Congress
 Dr. Carlos Torres y Torres Lara

Presidente del Congreso
Plaza Bolívar s/n
Lima 1, PERU

Fax: + 511 426 8290

Telegrams: Dr. Carlos Torres y Torres Lara, Congreso, Lima, Perú

Salutation: Señor Presidente del Congreso/ Dear President of Congress

COPIES TO:

Human rights organization

APRODEH,

Jr. Pachacutec 918,

Jesús María, Lima 14, 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 4 November 1997.