

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 53/04/91

Distr: UA/SC

22 November 1991

UA 409/91

Death in Custody/Killings in Disputed Circumstances

VENEZUELA: Darwin Duncan Capote Rondón, 17, secondary school student

José Gregorio Delgado, 17, secondary school student

José Humberto López Arias, 21, conscript

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about the killing of three people on 20 November 1991 in circumstances that suggest they were the victims of extrajudicial execution. They occurred in the context of widespread demonstrations by students that have been taking place in Caracas and other major Venezuelan cities in the last few days.

According to reports, Darwin Capote Rondón, a student at the Francisco Fajardo School was wounded after members of the Metropolitan Police (PM, *Policía Metropolitana*) opened fire with shot guns during a student demonstration on 20 November 1991 in the Macarao suburb of Caracas. He was reportedly kicked by the police while lying on the ground, handcuffed and pushed into a jeep belonging to the PM. His handcuffed body was later found on the street near the Caricuao social security office, with a wound in his back.

José Gregorio Delgado was reportedly shot in the neck by a police officer as he was running down the street. According to eye witnesses the shot was fired without any prior warning. Minutes later, José López Arias, who reportedly approached the same police officers, was shot at close range and wounded. He died later in a side street.

Five policemen have reportedly been arrested in connection with these killings.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A series of demonstrations started in mid-October 1991 after the government announced rises in fuel prices and a sharp increase in transport fares. At least three other students have been shot dead in disputed circumstances by police since the beginning of the year. They include Raúl Contreras, 18, a student at the Cecilio Acosta University College, in Los Teques, State of Miranda, who died on 29 October 1991 after being shot by a state police sniper.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned at frequent reports of disputed killings by police in Venezuela. In February and March 1989 several hundred people died after the government suspended a wide range of constitutional guarantees in response to widespread protests. Although many died in the context of widespread violence and disorder, a number of people were the victims of deliberate and unlawful killings by the police and military personnel.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters, preferably in Spanish:

- expressing serious concern at the recent killings in disputed circumstances of Darwin Duncan Capote Rondón, José Gregorio Delgado and José Humberto López Arias;

- welcoming reports that five policeman have been arrested in connection with these killings but urge that judicial investigations proceed without delay and that those responsible for unlawful killings be brought to justice;
- requesting that urgent measures be taken to ensure that all police personnel comply with the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials [spanish: *Código de las Naciones Unidas para el Personal Encargado de Hacer Cumplir la Ley*].

APPEALS TO:President:

Sr. Carlos Andrés Pérez
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio Miraflores, Caracas, Venezuela
Telegrams: Presidente Pérez, Caracas, Venezuela
Telex: 26429 EXTER VC

Sr. PresidenteMinister of the Interior:

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Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Caracas, Venezuela
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 Fiscal General de la República
 La Candelaria, Caracas, Venezuela
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Sr. Fiscal GeneralMinister of Defence:

General Fernando Ochoa Antich
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional
 Fuerte Tiuna
 Conejo Blanco
 El Valle, Caracas, Venezuela
Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Caracas, Venezuela

Sr. Ministro**COPIES TO:**

Sres.
 Provea
 Apartado Postal 5156
 Caracas, Venezuela
 (Human Rights organization)

Sres.
 Federación de Centros
 Universitarios
 Ciudad Universitaria
 Los Chaguaramos
 Caracas, Venezuela
 (Students Federation)

El Diario de Caracas
 Final Av. Principal
 Boleíta Norte
 Caracas, Venezuela
 (daily newspaper)

and to diplomatic representatives of Venezuela in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 January 1992.