

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 53/05/00

UA 63/00

Fear for safety/Death threat

20 March 2000

VENEZUELA

Alí Eduardo Sojo Díaz (aged 16)

Flor Díaz Rangel (f)

Freddy Sojo

Yolima Díaz Rangel (f)

Police officers have threatened 16-year-old Alí Eduardo Sojo Díaz with death. He, his parents Flor Díaz Rangel and Freddy Sojo, and his aunt, Yolima Díaz Rangel, fear for their safety. Amnesty International believes that the threat was made to intimidate Alí Sojo and other members of his family because of their efforts to bring to justice those responsible for the death, 19 months ago, of Freddy Díaz, Yolima Rangel's son.

On 7 March 2000, at about 8:00 p.m., Alí Sojo was near to his grandmother's home in Barrio La Cruz, a neighbourhood in Petare, Municipality of Sucre, Miranda State. He was hailed by three hooded men in a green car with tinted windows but he ignored the call and ran to his grandmother's home.

Five days later, on 12 March, Alí Sojo's parents, Flor Díaz Rangel and Freddy Sojo, received a visit from a neighbour who told them that agents attached to the *Policía Municipal de Sucre*, Sucre Municipal Police, had asked him where Alí Sojo was living because "they wanted to kill him" ("*querían matarlo*").

Yolima Rangel's son, Freddy Díaz, was reportedly shot dead by a member of the *Policía Municipal de Sucre* in August 1998. Alí Sojo and Yolima Rangel, who was also shot and injured in the incident, were eye-witnesses to the killing. After the killing Freddy Diaz's family was taken into custody and held for 24 hours. They were told by police that if they pressed charges against the police then the police would "make their lives impossible" ("*hacerles la vida imposible*") (see UA 221/98, AMR 53/07/98, 14 August 1998).

On 16 November 1998 the Director of Human Rights, on behalf of the Attorney General of the Republic (*Fiscal General de la República*), sent a communication (Ref. No: DDH-16 40486) to Amnesty International. In it the Director informed the organization that, following a complaint filed by Yolima Díaz Rangel, Dr. Antonio Mastroprieto, Attorney No.14 of the National Public Ministry (*Fiscal No.14 del Ministerio Público a Nivel Nacional*) "was conducting the preliminary enquiries in order to verify the complaint", ("*se encuentra realizando las averiguaciones preliminares para constar la veracidad del hecho*"). Since then Amnesty International has received no further information as to the outcome of the investigation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the years, Amnesty International has received many reports of individuals killed by Venezuelan security forces in circumstances where firearms were used. Amnesty International has also documented attacks and extrajudicial killings of minors (see *Venezuela: The silent cry - Gross human rights violations against children*, AMR 53/13/97, October 1997). These incidents are rarely fully investigated and in very few cases have those responsible been brought to justice.

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

- expressing concern that Alí Eduardo Sojo Díaz, aged 16, was reportedly threatened with death on 12 March 2000 by members of the Sucre Municipal Police, in Petare, Municipality of Sucre, Miranda State;
- requesting that all the necessary steps be taken to guarantee the safety of Alí Eduardo Sojo Diaz, his parents Flor Díaz Range and Freddy Soto, and his aunt Yolima Díaz Rangel;

- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the death threat, that the results be made public, and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- stating that Amnesty International believes the death threat could be linked to the unresolved killing in August 1998 of Freddy Díaz in Petare, reportedly by members of the Sucre Municipal Police;
- calling on the authorities to update Amnesty International on the outcome of the investigations into the death of Freddy Díaz.

APPEALS TO:

Attorney General

Dr. Javier Elechiguerra

Fiscal General de la República

Fiscalía General de la República

Parque Carabobo, Av. Universidad

Caracas, Venezuela

TEL: + (58 2) 509 8091 / 509 8092

FAX: + (58 2) 577 2144 (Ask: "Por favor, me da tono de fax)

+ (58 2) 576 4419

Salutation: Sr. Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

Minister of the Interior

Sr. Luis Alfonso Dávila

Ministro del Interior y Justicia

Ministerio del Interior y Justicia

Torre Norte, Piso 18

Centro Simón Bolívar

Caracas, Venezuela

Tel: + (58 2) 862 9728 / 964 7675

Fax: + (58 2) 861 1967 / 864 8973 / 864 8452

Salutation: Señor Ministro/ Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Human rights organization

Red de Apoyo por la Justicia y la Paz

Apartado Postal 17.

Caracas, Venezuela

and to diplomatic representatives of Venezuela accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 May.