

PUBLIC

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UA 73/01 Fear for safety/Death Threats

29 March 2001

ECUADOR *Quitogay*, Quito
Equidad (Equality), Quito
Fundación Amigos por la Vida (Friends for Life Foundation),
Guayaquil
Fundación Ecuatoriana de Minorías Sexuales (Ecuadorean Sexual
Minorities Foundation), Guayaquil

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) human
rights organizations

A homophobic group has said that in April it will start to kill members of the human rights organisation *Quitogay*, and to wipe out the rest of Ecuador's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) community. The threat comes at a time when the police themselves are accused of torturing and threatening to kill LGBT people. Amnesty International believes that the organisations named above, and other LGBT people in Ecuador, are in grave danger.

Quitogay, based in the capital, Quito, campaigns for the human rights of LGBT people. On 23 March they received an e-mail which read: "after hard investigative work, we know who you are, how you live and where you work, in fact all the bullshit you are involved in ... [we] have resolved to exterminate the human rubbish that you are, so our country will be seen as an example in the world, and we won't have to run into perverted queers."

("luego de arduas jornadas de investigación podemos saber quienes son ustedes, como viven y en que trabajan, sobre todo las huevadas en las que andan metidos ... se ha resuelto... se elimine esta basura humana ... así este país sea bien visto y un ejemplo para el mundo, y no andemos por ahí topándonos con tanto maricón pervertido.")

The message called LGBT people "mentally disturbed, queers and human rubbish" (*desequilibrados mentales, maricones and basura humana*) and blaming LGBT people for spreading disease.

The group said they were going to achieve "a total social cleansing in all the *Quitogay* sectors ... [LGBT] people will be shot in the ass when they don't expect it ... our objective is to exterminate this plague of queers ... we are well organized ... to achieve this social cleansing ... because this is the way we have to live, without you and without the risk that our children will follow your cursed example."

("...la limpieza sera total y en todos los sectores de *Quitogay*...donde menos lo esperen, les van a meter un tiro por el culo...el objetivo es eliminar toda esta plaga de maricones ... [nosotros] estamos bien organizados ... para efectuar esta limpieza total ... porque así se debe vivir sin ustedes y sin el riesgo de que nuestros niños sigan su maldito ejemplo)

Although the threat is directed to *Quitogay* and to the LGBT people in Quito, the message also refers to a "social cleansing of the whole country". This threat comes at a time when police officers have allegedly tortured and threatened to kill LGBT people. According to reports from human rights NGOs, at least 60 have been arbitrarily arrested in the last six months in Guayaquil alone. LGBT organisations such as those named above have reported these and other allegations to the authorities, but little progress has been made. Amnesty International is monitoring these reports of police abuses.

In January, when police officers were accused of harassing LGBT people, representatives of the Ecuadorean Sexual Minorities Foundation went to the national police headquarters to identify the officers responsible. As they went in, an officer threatened to kill them if they testified.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Homosexual acts between consenting adults were decriminalised in Ecuador in 1997. Under the Ecuadorian Constitution, all people shall be considered equal and shall enjoy the same rights, liberties and opportunities, without discrimination based on sexual orientation (article 23, paragraph 3).

Beyond this, under the Executive Decree implementing the Ecuadorean Government National Human Rights Plan, signed on 24 June 1998, the government shall "verify that the State security machinery and agents do not persecute and harass individuals on account of their sexual options." (Article 26)

Despite this, when the Friends for life Foundation organised a march to celebrate Gay and Lesbian Pride in June 2000, with permission from the authorities, the Guayas Chief of Police ordered them to disperse before the march began. He was apparently following orders from the Guayas State Governor. Police reportedly surrounded the 300 marchers, threw tear gas grenades and prevented the march from taking place.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of all the organizations named above;
- asking the authorities to do everything necessary to protect them, so they can continue their legitimate activities in safety;
- asking the authorities to order a prompt and effective investigation into the homophobic intimidation and threats they have been subjected to, to publish the findings and bring those responsible to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior and Police

Dr. Juan Manrique Martínez
Ministerio de Gobierno y Policía
Benalcázar y Espejo
Quito
ECUADOR

Fax: + 593 2 580-067

Salutation: Señor Ministro/ Dear Minister

Head of the National Police

Ing. Jorge Guillermo Molina Nuñez
Inspector General de la Policía Nacional
Ramírez Dávalos 612 y Av. 10 de Agosto
Quito
Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 508 724

Salutation: Señor Inspector General/Dear Chief Inspector

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organizations

Equidad Quito
Rabida N 26-32 y Santa María
Quito, Ecuador

E-mail: equidad@ecuanex.net.ec

Quitogay

E-mail: quitogay@quitogay.com

Fundación Amigos por la Vida

Pedro Carbo 1106 y Colón, 10° piso
Guayaquil
Ecuador

E-mail: famivida@yupi.com

and to diplomatic representatives of Ecuador accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 May 2001.