

PUBLIC

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UA 357/00 Fear for safety/possible "disappearance"

22 November 2000

ECUADOR Possible "disappearance: Elias Elint López Pita  
Luis Alberto Shinin Laso

**Fear for safety:** Carmen Imelda Velasteguí Ramos, wife of Elias Elint López  
Jorge Sánchez, bus driver  
Jorge Pérez, bus company owner

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One man has "disappeared" after police arrested him, and another man who testified that he saw him in police custody has been abducted. Other witnesses are believed to be in danger.

Elias Elint López Pita was arrested on 6 November, as he took a bus from his home town of Ambato to Esmeraldas. According to the bus driver, three policemen stopped the bus just outside Ambato. The policemen, two of them in plain clothes, asked him for the passenger list, picked out Elias Elint López and took him away. The owner of the bus company has confirmed the report, but the Ambato police have denied knowledge of any arrest.

The prosecutor investigating this "disappearance" heard testimony from Luis Alberto Shinin Laso, who said he had been held in the same cell as Elias Elint López at the police *Centro de Detención Provisional* (provisional detention center) in Ambato. Elias Elint López apparently told him on 7 November that he had been held on suspicion of robbery, and that he had been beaten up at the Ambato police station.

A few days after he gave evidence Luis Alberto Shinin Laso was admitted to hospital with serious injuries, in Guaranda, a town about 50 km from Ambato. According to hospital staff, on 19 November, six or seven armed men in balaclavas burst into the hospital and seized him. He has not been seen since.

The bus driver, Jorge Sánchez, and the owner of the CITA bus company, Jorge Pérez, say they fear for their lives, as does Elias Elint López's wife, Carmen Imelda Velasteguí Ramos.

Amnesty International has received many reports of police officers accused of human rights violations threatening victims, their relatives and lawyers.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Elias Elint López Pita and Luis Alberto Shinin Laso, who have not been seen since 6 November and 19 November respectively;
- expressing concern that according to reports, Elias Elint López Pita was last seen at the Ambato *centro de detención provisional* (provisional detention center), and that Luis Alberto Shinin Laso was abducted from hospital after he testified during the investigation into the "disappearance" of Elias Elint López Pita;
- urging the authorities to continue the investigation into the "disappearance" of Elias Elint López Pita;
- urging the authorities to carry out an impartial, independent and thorough investigation into the "disappearance" of Luis Alberto Shinin Laso, to publish the findings, and bring those responsible to justice;
- expressing concern for the safety of Carmen Imelda Velasteguí Ramos, Jorge Sánchez and Jorge Pérez;
- asking the authorities to do everything necessary to guarantee their safety.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of the Interior and Police

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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  
General Inspector  
Dr. Mario Romel Cevallos Moreno  
Comandante General de la Policía Nacional  
Ramírez Dávalos 612 y Av. 10 de Agosto  
Quito  
Ecuador  
**Fax: + 593 2 506-066**  
**Salutation: Señor Comandante General/Dear Commander General**

**COPIES TO:**

Non-governmental human rights organisation  
Comisión Ecuánica de Derechos Humanos (CEDHU)  
Carlos Ibarra 176 y 10 de Agosto  
Edificio Yuraj Pirca  
Piso 9  
Ecuador  
**Fax: +593 2 580-825**

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 3 January 2000.