

EXTERNAL

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Fear for safety

29 January 1996

GUATEMALA Oswaldo Enríquez, member of Guatemala Human Rights Commission

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Oswaldo Enríquez, member of the executive board of the Guatemala Human Rights Commission (*Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala, CDHG*) and Vice-chairperson of the International Federation of Human Rights.

According to reports, at 9pm on 23 January 1996, Oswaldo Enríquez was driving home with his 15-year-old son, when his car was pursued by two men in a blue minibus, marked "Astrovan", from zone 7 to zone 5 in Guatemala City. The minibus tried to get close to them during the journey and when they reached the house the same car passed by at least twice in front of the house before eventually disappearing.

The Human Rights Procurator has reportedly initiated an investigation on the case and MINUGUA, the United Nations Mission in Guatemala, has been informed of the incident, which follows earlier death threats against Oswaldo Enríquez (see below).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 24 December 1995, when he was out of the country, Oswaldo Enríquez was reportedly named in a death threat telephoned to the office of the Guatemala Human Rights Commission. The message said: "Stop it damned Oswaldo, this year you are going to die for sure" (*Pará Oswaldo, maldito, maldito, este año que viene sí te vas a morir*).

Earlier, on 21 July 1995, the Guatemala Human Rights Commission reported a death threat, again by phone: "Tell Mr Oswaldo Enríquez that he should look after himself carefully because he is keeping company with people from the past and he is being watched" (*El Sr. Oswaldo Enríquez que se cuide porque anda con gente del pasado y lo están vigilando*).

Following elections on 14 January 1996, a new government took over in Guatemala under the Presidency of Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen. In his opening speech the President said: "We believe it is necessary for the state to directly fight impunity so as to fulfil its human right duties. We know there are people and groups that commit their crimes while enjoying the protection of sectors of power that often have links with the state apparatus".

In 1995 Amnesty international continued to document extrajudicial executions, "disappearances", death threats, and torture. People linked to organizations or activities attempting to protect and investigate human rights issues were among those targeted for death threats in the last 12 months.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Oswaldo Enríquez;
- calling for immediate steps to be taken to guarantee the his safety;
- calling for an immediate and thorough investigation into the reported incident on 23 January 1996, and earlier threats against him, and for those responsible be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Álvaro Arzú Irigoyen
Presidente de la República de Guatemala
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Faxes: 502 2 537472

Telegrams: Presidente, Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President

2) Minister of Interior

Sr. Rodolfo Mendoza
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8,
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala

Faxes: 502 2 537 472

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Minister of Defence

Gral. Julio Arnoldo Balconi Turcios
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala

Faxes: 502 2 537 472

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

4) Presidential Human Rights Commission

Lic. Jorge Gonzalo Cabrera Hurtarte
Head of the Commission
Comisión Presidencial Coordinadora
de la Política del Ejecutivo en
Materia de Derechos Humanos (COPREDEH),
15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13,
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Faxes: (502) 2-347364

Telegrams: Presidente, COPREDEH, Guatemala, Guatemala

Salutation: Señor Presidente / Dear President

COPIES TO:

Attorney General

Fiscal General de la Nación
Ministerio Público
18 Calle 10-36, Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Faxes: 502 2 537 554 / 530 482

Human Rights Procurator

Procurador de los Derechos Humanos
12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Human Rights Organization

Señores Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala (CDHG)
7a Avenida 8-56
Zona 1, Edificio El Centro, Of. 9-12

Guatemala, Guatemala

and to diplomatic representatives of GUATEMALA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 March 1996.