

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 418/90 (AMR 34/62/90, 15 October, and follow-up AMR 34/73/90, 30 November) - Fear of "Disappearance"

GUATEMALA: María TIU TOJÍN

+ her one-month-old baby daughter María Josefa TIU TOJÍN

and new names: Victoria TIU TOJÍN

Magdalena PERPUAC MEJIA

On the morning of 29 August 1990 María Tiu Tojín and her one-month-old daughter María Josefa Tiu Tojín were detained by the army in the Santa Clara, in the Amakchel area of El Quiché department, along with a group of 85 peasants, including women and children, belonging to a *Comunidad de Población en Resistencia* (CPR), Community of Peoples in Resistance. They were forced to walk for nine hours, until they reached Amakchel. There they were taken to the village school and held for nine days. The only time they left the school was to undergo interrogation at the local military garrison. María Tiu Tojín, was accused by the authorities of belonging to an armed opposition group and reportedly subjected to prolonged interrogations during the time th group was detained at the school. On 9 September, the group was eventually transferred to the military garrison in central Nebaj. The group was then taken to the a refugee and displaced persons' centre nearby run by the Comisión Especial de Atención de Refugiados (CEAR), Special Commission for the Care of Refugees, a government refugee organization. However, María Tiu Tojín was separated from the group at the Nebaj military garrison, and were apparently taken to a military base outside Nebaj. They have not been seen since.

Those detained at CEARD remained there for about three months, and then were transferred by the authorities to "model villages" under strict army control or to their places of origin. One of those was Magdalena Perpuac Mejía, a friend of María Tiu Tojín, who was returned to her home village of Parraxtut, in El Quiché department. When Magdalena Perpuac returned to Parraxtut, a meeting was organized between military commissioners (*Comisionados militares*, civilian agents of the military), and the villagers, to decide whether she should be allowed to stay. Although the villagers originally refused her stay, it was decided that she should be allowed to stay, as members of the CPRs are generally regarded by the army as having close links with guerrilla organizations, on condition that she would not leave the village. However, on 24 January she went to Santa Cruz del Quiché to give testimony to judicial authorities about her friend's "disappearance". She was accompanied by Victoria Tiu Tojín, María Tiu Tojín's sister. Victoria Tiu Tojín, also a resident of Parraxtut, has been reportedly repeatedly threatened by military commissioners since she denounced the killing of one of her relatives, María Mejía, and the wounding of María Mejía's husband Pedro Castro Tojín in Parraxtut in March 1990, by a group of men in plain clothes, including two military commissioners. Other members of the family had also been threatened by four military commissioners because they had given information on the incident. (See UA 113/90 of 20 March 1990, UA 130/90 of 30 March 1990 and its follow-up of 27 April 1990).

The two women returned to Parraxtut on 25 January. In view of the previous threats directed against Victoria Tiu Tojín and against those who denounced human rights violations in Parraxtut, Amnesty International

is concerned for the safety of both Magdalena Perpuac Mejía and Victoria Tiu Tojín.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/telephone calls/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the continuing "disappearance" of María Tiu Tojín and her daughter María Josefa;
- expressing concern at the reported threats from military commissioners received by Victoria Tiu Tojín and expressing concern for her safety and the safety of Magdalena Perpuac Mejía;
- asking that steps be taken to guarantee their safety.

APPEALS TO:

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PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat or your section office if sending appeals after 12 March 1991.