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**GUATEMALA**

Karlo Antonio CONTRERAS, aged 17

Amnesty International is concerned at the reported detention and subsequent ill-treatment of street child Karlo Antonio Contreras on 24 February 1992, carried out by uniformed members of the National Police.

According to eye-witnesses, seventeen-year-old street child Karlo Antonio Contreras was with several other street children in the Barrajuste market of Zone 1 of Guatemala City on 24 February 1992 when two uniformed members of the National Police approached, along with two people in civilian clothes. The men approached two of the children and started beating and accused them of stealing a pair of sunglasses. The children denied stealing the sunglasses. The four men then turned their attention on Karlo Antonio Contreras and grabbed him by the neck and accused him of stealing the sunglasses from one of the men in plain clothes. They then began beating him and dragged him towards a grey two-door car with California licence plates. When the other children tried to intervene, one of the policemen took his gun out of its holster and threatened to fire at the children. Karlo Contreras was then forced at gunpoint into the vehicle. He was taken to the General Cemetery, in Zone 3 of Guatemala City,<sup>1</sup> where the policemen again beat him and demanded that he return the sunglasses. They then abandoned him in the cemetery and left. Karlo Contreras is said to be suffering from a split lower lip and has swelling on the left side of his face as a result of the beatings he received.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In the past two years, Amnesty International has received an escalating number of reports of human rights violations against street children in Guatemala City, including beatings, torture, "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions, reportedly carried out by official security force agents, particularly the police, acting sometimes in plain clothes and sometimes in uniform. In other cases, abuses have been carried out by agents of private security firms (see Guatemala: Extrajudicial Executions and Human Rights Violations against Street Children, AMR 34/37/90 of August 1990, which documented many of these cases).

Approximately 62 legal suits against more than 50 members of the National Police are currently pending with the Guatemalan courts and only in isolated cases have investigations resulted in the prosecution of those responsible. Children who have witnessed or given information concerning abuses directed against other street children have been subjected to reprisals, and those working with street children have also been subjected to harassment and intimidation. On 20 January 1992, Felipe González, aged 14 and José Corrado Mendoza, aged 18, were severely beaten by two unidentified men, and left bleeding and unconscious on the pavement. Amnesty International was concerned at the alleged refusal of the National Police to investigate the incident without an order from a judge, after unidentified persons cleaned the blood stains from the pavement, thereby destroying potential incriminating evidence. (See UA 30/92, AI Index: AMR 34/05/92, 27 January 1992)

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<sup>1</sup> In June 1990, the tortured bodies of four street children were found in the Bosques de San Nicolás area, after they had been abducted and taken to the General Cemetery. Two policemen were acquitted for their part in the murder of the children. They remain in prison pending appeal.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern at the reported abduction and ill-treatment of Karlo Antonio Contreras by uniformed members of the National Police;
- asking for an immediate and thorough investigation into the incident and that the results be made public;
- asking that those found responsible for the incident be brought to justice;
- asking that immediate and adequate measures be taken to safeguard the physical integrity of Karlo Contreras.

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**APPEALS TO**

1) President:

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías  
Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala  
**Telegrams: Presidente Serrano, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 537472; + 502 2 519702**  
**Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President**

2) Minister of the Interior:

Lic. Fernando Hurtado Prem  
Ministro de Gobernación  
Despacho Ministerial  
Oficina No. 8, Primer Nivel  
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala  
**Telegrams: Ministro Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Telexes: 5085 MINGOB GU**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 518105**  
**Salutation: Señor Ministro / Dear Minister**  
**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Human Rights Procurator in charge of children:

Lic. Eunice Lima  
Procuradora de Menores  
Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos  
Avenida Simeón Cañas, 10-61  
Zona 2, Guatemala, Guatemala

Pro-children Commission of Congress:

Señor Presidente  
Comisión Pro-Niñez  
Congreso de la República  
7ta Avenida y 9a Calle  
Zona 1, Ciudad de Guatemala  
Guatemala

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala in your country.

3) Director of National Police:

Lic Carlos Enrique Samayoa Cifuentes  
Director General de la Policía Nacional  
6 Avenida 13-71,  
Zona-1, Guatemala,  
Guatemala  
**Telegrams: Director Policía, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Salutation: Señor Director/ Dear Director**

4) Attorney General:

Señor Acisclo Valladares  
Procurador General de la Nación  
Procuraduría General de la Nación  
18 Calle 10-36  
Zona 1, Guatemala, Guatemala  
**Telegrams: Procurador General, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Salutation: Señor Procurador General / Dear Attorney General**

Casa Alianza  
Apartado Postal 2704  
Guatemala, Guatemala

Newspaper

Siglo XXI (newspaper)  
7a Avenida 11-79  
Edificio Galerias España, 6o piso  
Zona 9, Guatemala, Guatemala

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section

office, if sending appeals after 11 April 1992.