

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 34/015/2001

Further information on UA 315/00 (AMR 34/43/00, 16 October 2000 - Fear for safety 8 May 2001

GUATEMALAUrias Bautista Orozco

Luz Margoth Tuy Jiatz (f)

Other staff of the Human Rights Procurator's Auxiliary Office in Sololá

Workers at the Human Rights Procurator's Auxiliary Office in the department of Sololá, who are investigating alleged police complicity in the killing of a demonstrator, have received threatening phone calls warning them to "get out of the way of the police", and one has been apparently illegally detained.

The *Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos* (PDH) is a government organisation which investigates human rights abuses by governmental authorities, that has an office in every major town. In October 2000 the Sololá office of the PDH began investigating the killing of Teodoro Saloj Panjoj, who had been taking part in a demonstration about land reform. Police had apparently refused to pursue the gunman. Since then workers at the office have been intimidated repeatedly by police and others have received threatening phone calls, warning them to "stop getting in the way of the police or else" (*Deje de estar chingando a la policía de lo contrario que se abstenga de las consecuencias*). On 2 May an anonymous caller threatened to kill the head of the office, Urias Bautista, if he would not leave the police alone.

Luz Margoth Tuy was mediating between demonstrators and the mayor at a protest on 26 March 2001, at the town hall. The National Civil Police (*Policía Nacional Civil*, PNC) were present, and when they were provoked by a group of juveniles the officers apparently responded with excessive force, firing tear gas.

The police blamed the Human Rights Procurator's Office for the violence. On 13 April they detained Luz Margoth Tuy, and charged her with inciting a riot, illegal demonstration and threats. She was released on 16 April, but the PDH offices have been under surveillance ever since. The PDH believes that its workers are being intimidated because they have tried to publicize their findings on the October killing, and because they are still acting as mediators in the land disputes.

Amnesty International takes no position on the complex issues involved in the local land disputes, but is concerned that the police apparently did not try to pursue a gunman who had fired on demonstrators.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Teodoro Saloj Panjoj was shot dead during a march in San Pablo La Laguna on 10 October 2000, protesting at the local authorities' failure to implement land reforms agreed to under the 1996 Peace Accords. Luz Margoth Tuy heard the shots, and thought they had come from a car, which drove off. She asked PNC officers who were nearby to give chase, but the officer in charge apparently refused.

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

- urging the authorities to do everything necessary to guarantee the safety of Urias Bautista Orozco, Luz Margoth Tuy Jiatz and all other workers at the *Procuraduría Auxiliar de Derechos Humanos* (PDH) office in Sololá;

- calling on the authorities to ensure that the police respect internationally agreed standards, such as the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, when responding to any future demonstrations, and that they take all necessary steps to ensure the safety of demonstrators;
- calling for a full investigation into the killing of Teodoro Saloj, including the role of the PNC in apparently refusing to pursue the perpetrators, and asking for those responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

Sr. Byron Barrientos
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
6a Avenida 4-64, Zona 4
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax:+ 502 362 0239 / 362 0237

Salutation:Senor Ministro / Dear Minister

Director General of the National Civil Police

Sr. Rudio Lecsan Merida
Director General de la Policía Nacional Civil
6a Avenida 13-71, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax:+ 502 251 9382

Salutation:Senor Director / Dear Director

Minister of Foreign Relations

Lic. Gabriel Orellana
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Avenida Reforma 4-47, Zona 10
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Fax:+ 502 3317938

Salutation:Senor Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Procurator's Office in Solola

Procurador Auxiliar de Derechos Humanos de Sololá
Procuraduría Auxiliar de Derechos Humanos de Sololá
5a Avenida 8-20, Zona 1
Sololá, Sololá, GUATEMALA
Fax:+ 502 762 3642

Salutation:Estimado Procurador / Dear Procurator

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 18 June 2001.