

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 34/21/91  
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Further information on UA 128/91 (AMR 34/13/91, 18 April 1991) - Attempted Abduction/Possible Extrajudicial Execution

GUATEMALA: Amílcar MÉNDEZ URÍZAR

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Following the attempted abduction of Amílcar Méndez Urizar, the leader of the Consejo de Comunidades Étnicas "Runujel Junam" (CERJ), Council of Ethnic Communities "We are all Equal" on 15 April 1991, Amnesty International has received information about further threats against him.

At 8:00 p.m. on Thursday May 16 1991, Amílcar Méndez reportedly received an anonymous phone threat to his home. The caller stated that Mr. Méndez was not going to escape nor would his wife or children. The message was repeated twice.

Amnesty International continues to be concerned for the safety of Amílcar Méndez and his family.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

CERJ was formed in July 1988 to protect indigenous people's rights. It has been particularly active in protesting at peasants being forced to join the ostensibly voluntary Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PAC), Civil Defence Patrols. Article 34 of the Guatemalan Constitution, which recognizes the right to freedom of association, states that no-one may be forced to serve in self defence groups. The authorities maintain the patrols are voluntary, but Amnesty International knows of scores of cases where peasants who have not wished to do patrol service or have tried to withdraw from them, have been labelled "subversives" by the army and subjected to harassment, death threats "disappearances" and extrajudicial execution. The abuses have been carried out by uniformed soldiers as well as by men in plain clothes believed to be members of the security forces or acting under their orders.

CERJ has, since its foundation, been the target of a wide range of human rights violations. Since March 1990, at least 8 members are known to have been killed in circumstances suggesting official involvement. This figure includes the recent killing of Camilo Ajquí Jimón, on 14 April 1991 in Potrero Viejo, Zacualpa, department of El El Quiché. (See UA 128/91, AI Index: AMR 34/13/91, of 18 April 1991).

President Jorge Serrano Elías took office in Guatemala in January 1991. During his presidential campaign he pledged to ensure the protection of human rights for all Guatemalan citizens. However, Amnesty International is seriously concerned at continuing human rights violations in the country since the new government took office. CERJ members have been particularly targeted under the new government and, since January 1991, three CERJ members and three relatives of CERJ members have been killed, and many more members intimidated and threatened by members of the security forces or those working under their command.

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

- expressing concern at the reported death threats received by CERJ leader Amílcar Méndez Urizar;
- asking for guarantees for his safety, the safety of his family and for that of other CERJ members;
- asking for an immediate investigation into these threats;
- urging that the results of the investigation be made public and that those found responsible be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

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**

Gral. Luis Francisco Mendoza García

Ministro de Defensa

Ministerio de Defensa

Palacio Nacional

Guatemala, Guatemala

**Telegrams: Ministro Defensa Mendoza,**

**Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU**

**Faxes: + 502 2 537472**

Coronel Carlos Eduardo Santizo Franco

Comandante

Base Militar No. 20

Santa Cruz del Quiché

El Quiché, Guatemala

**Telegrams: Comandante Base Militar Santa Cruz,**

**Quiche, Guatemala**

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**

**COPIES TO:**

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio  
 Procurador de Derechos Humanos  
 Avenida Simeón Cañas 10-61  
 Zona 2  
 Guatemala, Guatemala

Congreso Nacional de la República  
 9 Av. 9-48, Zona 1  
 Guatemala, Guatemala

Padre Andrés Girón León,  
 Presidente  
 Comisión de Derechos Humanos

CERJ  
5a Avenida 3-13, Zona 5  
Santa Cruz del Quiché  
Guatemala

Diario Siglo XXI  
7a Avenida 11-79  
Edificio Galerías España, 6o piso  
Zona 9  
Guatemala, Guatemala  
and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 4 July 1991.