

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 152/94      Fear for Safety

15 April 1994

GUATEMALA      Pedro Antonio ASTURIAS RUIZ, aged 35, architect, US national

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Pedro Antonio Asturias Ruiz who has reportedly been subjected to repeated death threats. He is currently advisor to the *Comisiones Permanentes de Representantes para el Retorno de los Refugiados Guatemaltecos en México*, (Permanent Commissions of the Representatives for the Return of the Guatemalan Refugees in Mexico).

According to reports, Pedro Antonio Asturias has been the subject of surveillance and other acts of intimidation since 7 April 1994. On that date five heavily armed men reportedly came to look for him at his uncle's workplace.

While showing their guns, they told a member of the staff that they needed to sort out some business with Pedro Antonio Asturias. Over the next few days several calls were received at the same workplace, announcing his imminent death. On 13 April members of the staff noticed two armed men standing outside the offices and asked them what they wanted. The men responded that they were waiting for "the architect".

In May 1992 Pedro Antonio Asturias started working as technical advisor for urban utilities (water, electricity, sewerage and design of the refugees' settlements in the North-West).

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tens of thousands of Guatemalans, many of them indigenous peasants, fled Guatemala in the late 1970s and early 1980s, escaping the Guatemalan army's "scorched earth" counter-insurgency campaign which claimed many thousands of non-combatant victims. Many of the refugees fled to Mexico.

Guatemalan refugees began to return from Mexico in January 1993. However, some of those involved in the returns have been subjected to threats, harassment and ill-treatment. On 27 August 1993 Joaquín Jiménez Bautista, a coordinator of the *Asociación de Refugiados Dispersos de Guatemala* (ARDIGUA), Association of Dispersed Refugees of Guatemala, who had returned to Guatemala from Mexico, was detained by members of a civil defence patrol. While held in detention he was reportedly beaten and kicked until unconscious. He was later released and he returned to Mexico.

In December 1993, Juan Quiñonez Schwank, Technical Director of the *Asociación para el Desarrollo para América Central* (ADEPAC), Association for the Development of Central America, and member of other organizations concerned with Guatemalan refugees, was subjected to repeated death threats and urged to leave the country or face the consequences (see UA 31/94, AMR 34/04/94, 31 January 1994).

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

- expressing concern about reported threats received by Pedro Antonio Asturias Ruiz;
- urging that his physical safety be guaranteed;
- asking for an immediate investigation into these death threats and that those found responsible be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Ramiro de León Carpio  
 Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Presidente de León Carpio, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 347364**  
**Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU**

**Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente /Dear President**

2) Minister of Interior:

Lic. Danilo Parrinello Blanco  
 Ministro de Gobernación  
 Ministerio de Gobernación  
 Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 515 368**  
**Telexes: 5085 MINGOB**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. Mario Enríquez Morales  
 Ministro de Defensa  
 Ministerio de Defensa  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 21906/515252**  
**Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Jorge García Laguardia  
 Procurador de los Derechos Humanos  
 12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1  
 Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Faxes: +502 2 81734**

Head of the Presidential Commission Coordinating the Policies of the Executive relating to Human Rights

Lic. Jorge Gonzalo Cabrera Hurtarte  
 Presidente  
 COPREDEH  
 15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13  
 Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Archbishop's Human Rights Office

Oficina de Derechos Humanos del  
 Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHAG)  
 Apartado Postal 723  
 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 27 May 1994.