

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Threats / Intimidation

20 April 1994

GUATEMALA

Pedro BOP CABA
Pedro DE LEON CORIO
Pedro BOP DEL BARRIO, aged 17
Camilo BERNAL MORALES

Amnesty International is concerned by a series of threats and acts of intimidation carried out by members of the armed forces and the Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PAC), (civil defence patrols), against villagers from Chel in Chajul, department of El Quiché. Those threatened include members of the local branch of the *Comisión de Derechos Humanos* (Human Rights Commission). The village of Chel is in an Ixil-speaking area.

The threats began shortly after the arrival of an armed forces detachment in the nearby community of Bijomisán in February 1993. Incidents reported to Amnesty International since then include:-

- July 1993: the commander of the PAC, appointed by the army, threatens Pedro Bop Caba, apparently after he finds him reading the Constitution of Guatemala;
- August: the commander physically attacks Pedro de León Corio;
- January 1994: Pedro de León Corio is again attacked, apparently because of his involvement in the local Human Rights Commission;
- 8 January: the commander of the local army patrol camped in the village of Chel threatens to kill all those involved in the village Human Rights Commission;
- 1 April: the commander of the Military Detachment at Bijomisán, threatens to shoot Pedro Bop del Barrio, a minor;
- 1 April: the same commander accompanied by soldiers from the detachment and the commander of the PAC attacks Camilo Bernal Morales. Members of the local Human Rights Commission intervene and take Camilo Bernal home. The Commission members are themselves later threatened and assaulted.
- 8 April: the army fire shots in the air close to the village - they later accuse the members of the Human Rights Commission of being "subversives" or guerrillas.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tens of thousands of peasants, the majority of them indigenous, were killed or "disappeared" in the late 1970s and the early 1980s as a result of army counter-insurgency operations. Many thousands of others were internally displaced or went into exile. In April 1981 over 100 villagers from Chel were extrajudicially executed by the armed forces. Since that time indigenous Guatemalans, including those in El Quiché have continued to be subjected to large-scale human rights violations, displaced or forced into exile as successive military governments sought to eliminate any potential source of political sympathy or logistical support for the armed opposition. Many of the refugees fled to Mexico.

Guatemalan refugees began to return from Mexico in January 1993, and many have settled in the area of El Quiché known as the Ixil-triangle, which includes Chajul. Since their return, refugees and those living in the area have been the target of attacks by the armed forces, who have accused them of belonging to the armed opposition. Those working with the refugees have also been targeted. Most recently, Pedro Antonio Asturias Ruiz, an advisor to the

Comisiones Permanentes de Representantes para el Retorno de los Refugiados Guatemaltecos en México, (Permanent Commissions of Representatives for the Return of Guatemalan Refugees in Mexico), has been subjected to repeated death threats. (See UA 152/94, AMR 34/22/94, 15 April 1994)

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

- expressing concern at the recent series of threats and acts of intimidation against villagers from Chel, including members of the local Human Rights Commission;
- urging that steps be taken to ensure their physical safety;
- calling for an immediate investigation into these incidents 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

Indigenous Rights Groups

Defensoría Maya
32 av. 1-56,
Zona 7, 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 1 June 1994.