

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 289/91 (AMR 34/40/91, 28 August 1991) and follow-up AMR 34/14/91, 30 August 1991; AMR 34/48/91, 12 December 1991 -Threats/Intimidation

GUATEMALA: Amílcar MÉNDEZ URÍZAR

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Amnesty International is concerned at the recently renewed series of threats and acts of intimidation against Amílcar Méndez Urízar, the president of Consejo de Comunidades Étnicas "Runujel Junam" (CERJ), Council of Ethnic Communities "We are all Equal".

According to information received from CERJ, at approximately 10.00 pm on the night of 10 May 1992, a grenade exploded outside the Méndez' family home in Santa Cruz del Quiché, El Quiché department, causing damage to the outer wall. Amílcar Méndez, along with wife and children were in Guatemala City when the grenade exploded, but his brother and his family were in the house. The family believe that the grenade may have been thrown from a passing vehicle. Nobody was hurt. The commander of the local military base at Santa Cruz del Quiché visited the scene of the explosion later that evening.

Two hours after the explosion Amílcar Méndez received a telephone call at his sister's house in Guatemala City. The caller asked for him and said that this was a "warning", which Amílcar Méndez took to be a reference to the earlier grenade attack on his home.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amílcar Méndez left Guatemala for the United States in early September 1991 following a series of death threats against him (see UA 289/91, AMR 34/40/91, 28 August 1991). On 30 September 1991, at a meeting held in the United States with human rights organizations including Amnesty International, Guatemalan President Jorge Serrano Elías accused Amílcar Méndez and CERJ of having links with the insurgency. Amílcar Méndez returned to Guatemala at the end of November 1991. On 8 December 1991, Amílcar Méndez received an anonymous telephone call, in which the caller accused him of belonging to the guerrillas. (See further information AMR 34/48/91, 12 December 1991). Since then he has received further threats.

In January 1992 his name appeared along with trade union and other human rights leaders in a typewritten death threat issued by a so-called death squad, calling itself the "*Unidad Anticomunista*" (Anti-communist unit). (See UA 39/92, AMR 34/07/92, 4 February 1992).

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 on 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 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.

On 9 April 1992, an indigenous peasant, Pedro Raguez, was reportedly extrajudicially executed in the hamlet of Xoljuyú, San Pedro Jocopilas, El Quiché department. The killing was reportedly carried out by two leaders of the PAC, and is believed to be related to his refusal to participate in the civil patrols. (See UA 124/92, AMR 34/17/92, 22 April 1992).

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

- expressing concern at the latest death threats and acts of intimidation against CERJ president, Amílcar Méndez Urizar;
- asking that an impartial investigation be carried out into these incidents and that the results be made public;
- asking that those found to be responsible for these incidents be brought to justice;
- asking that urgent measures be taken to provide for the security of Amílcar Méndez, his family and members of CERJ.

**APPEALS TO:**

1. President of the Republic

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías  
 Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Presidente Serrano, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Telephone: + 502 2 21212; + 502 2 22266**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 537472; + 502 2 519702**  
**Telex: 5331 CAPRES GU**  
**[Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr Presidente/Dear President]**

2. Commander of El Quiché Military Base

Cnel. Roberto Terrazos Pinot  
 Comandante Base Militar No. 20  
 Santa Cruz del Quiché, El Quiché  
 GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Comandante El Quiche Base Militar, Santa Cruz del Quiche, Guatemala**  
**Telephone: + 502 9 551005; + 502 9 551548; + 502 9 551199**  
**[Salutation: Señor Comandante/Dear Commander]**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

President of the Human Rights Commission of Congress

Lic. Oliverio Garcia Rodas  
 Presidente  
 Comisión de Derechos Humanos  
 Congreso Nacional de la República  
 9 Av. 9-48, Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Human Rights Procurator

3. Minister of Interior

Lic. Fernando Hurtado Prem  
 Ministro de Gobernación  
 Ministerio de Gobernación  
 Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telephone: + 502 2 21212 ext. 500; 518105-6 (direct)**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 518105**  
**Telexes: 5085 MINGOB**  
**[Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister]**

4. Minister of Defence

Gral. José García Samayoa  
 Ministro de Defensa  
 Ministerio de Defensa  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Telephone: + 502 2 21212; + 502 2 2226**  
**Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU**  
**[Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister]**

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio  
 Procurador de Derechos Humanos  
 Avenida Simeón Cañas 10-60 Zona 2,  
 Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Head of the Supreme Court

Lic. Juan José Rodil Peralta  
 Presidente de la Corte Suprema de Justicia  
 Centro Cívico  
 21a Calle y 7a Avenida Zona 1, Guatemala

GUATEMALA

Council of Indigenous  
Communities "We are all Equal")  
Consejo de Comunidades Etnicas  
"Runujel Junam" (CERJ)  
5a Avenida 3-13, Zona 5  
Santa Cruz del Quiché  
El Quiché, GUATEMALA

Daily newspaper  
Diario 'Prensa Libre'  
13 Calle 9-31, 5o Nivel,  
Edificio Prensa Libre Zona 1,  
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 24 June 1992.