

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 172/93 Grave Threat to Human Rights

6 February 2015

GUATEMALA: Ramiro de León Carpio, Human Rights Procurator
José Lobo Dubon, President of Congress
Juan José Rodil Peralta, President of the Supreme Court
Edgar Tuna Valladares, Acting Attorney General

Amnesty International calls on its membership worldwide to denounce as a dangerous and unacceptable risk to human rights protection, the actions of President Jorge Serrano Elias in suspending the constitution, dissolving the Congress and Supreme Court, arresting state officials and replacing the rule of law with rule by personal decree.

The unlawful attempts to arrest leading officials such as the Human Rights Procurator, Ramiro de Leon Carpio, the President of Congress, José Lobo Dubon, the President of the Supreme Court, Juan José Rodil Peralta, and the acting Attorney General, Edgar Tuna Valladares, all indicate an apparent intention to flout procedures for the protection of basic human rights and pose a grave threat to the observance of such rights in Guatemala.

This is aggravated by the suspension of offices concerned with human rights such as the Human Rights Procurator's Office and the Attorney General's Office. Following indications that human rights monitors from other central American countries currently visiting Guatemala may be subjected to some form of detention, there is also cause for grave concern for the safety of all independent human rights organisations in the country.

Amnesty International demands the maintenance of the principles of human rights protection enshrined in international law to which Guatemala is bound by treaty and in law to observe.

These include the American Convention on Human Rights of the Organisation of American states and the United Nations (UN) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). These instruments stipulate that even in time of war, public danger or other emergency governments are obliged to protect certain fundamental rights including the right to life, to physical security and to judicial guarantees such as habeas corpus.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These moves have come in the wake of large-scale protests in the capital, Guatemala city. Amnesty International is concerned that targeted groups, including trade unionists, student leaders, journalists and those working with non-governmental organizations, particularly those attempting to investigate and protect human rights, may now be even more vulnerable to human rights violations. These groups of people have been long-term targets of abuses in Guatemala, including harassment, threats, torture, "disappearances", and extrajudicial executions. Amnesty International is also concerned that government officials carrying out human rights initiatives will also be at risk.

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

- demanding immediate guarantees that all human rights protected in Guatemala's constitution will be observed;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of anyone arrested for their conscientiously held beliefs and who are known not to have used or advocated violence, including Human Rights Procurator Ramiro de León Carpio, Congressional President José Lobo Dubon, Supreme Court President Juan José Rodil Peralta, and the Acting Attorney General, Edgar Tuna Valladares;

- urging the government to take all necessary steps to ensure that basic human rights are not abrogated and to ensure the physical integrity of any persons already detained, including protecting them from extrajudicial executions, "disappearance," and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- calling for information to be made public concerning all those detained, and that any individuals in custody be permitted access to their families and to legal representation;

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- urging the government to immediately issue a public directive to the security forces stating that human rights of all citizens, including human rights defenders, are to be fully protected and that any infractions of human rights standards will be severely punished;
- calling on the government to immediately reestablish the functions of the judiciary, public ministry and legislature designed to protect human rights.

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, 22266
Faxes: (502) (2) 537472, 519702
Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente/Dear President

2) Minister of Defence:

Gral. José García Samayoa
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: (502) (2) 537472
Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

3) Minister of the Interior:

Lic. Francisco Perdomo
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala
GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telephone: (502) (2) 21212 ext. 500; 518105-6 (direct)
Telexes: 5085 MINGOB

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

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

Sr. Bernardo Neumann, Presidente
Comisión Presidencial Coordinadora
de la Política del Ejecutivo en
materia de Derechos Humanos (COPREDEH)

15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Association of University Students

Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios
"Oliverio Castañeda de León" (AEU)
Ciudad Universitaria
Zona 12
Guatemala
GUATEMALA

Newspaper:

Diario "Prensa Libre"

13 Calle 9-31
Zona 1, 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 7 July 1993.