

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 34/035/2002

15 May 2002

Further information on UA 225/01 (AMR 34/036/2001, 7 September 2001) and follow-up (AMR 34/037/2001, 21 September 2001) - Fear for safety/Extrajudicial execution

GUATEMALA Enrique Aceituno (m), radio journalist
Waldemar Barrera (m), assistant human rights procurator

killed: Jorge Mynor Alegría (m)

The former mayor of Puerto Barrios has been accused of the killing of radio presenter Jorge Mynor Alegría, and a warrant has been issued for his arrest. Jorge Mynor Alegría had regularly denounced alleged corruption by municipal and port authorities in Puerto Barrios, Izabal Department, on the phone-in show that he presented.

Jorge Mynor Alegría worked for the Puerto Barrios radio station Radio Amatique. He was shot dead outside his house on 5 September 2001. The Guatemalan Human Rights Procurator concluded that the mayor was involved in Alegría's murder and the killing was political. The mayor of Puerto Barrios, Jorge Mario Chigua, was ordered to retire in March, and was stripped of his immunity from prosecution as a public official. According to key witnesses, Mario Chigua paid a man accused of several other killings some 40,000 Quetzales (approx US\$5,000) to kill Jorge Alegría.

The man he allegedly paid to carry out the killing, Jairo Humberto Gómez Sandoval, had been identified by key witnesses as the man who shot Jorge Mynor Alegría. A warrant for his arrest was issued in January, but he is still at large. He has reportedly been moving freely within the department of Izabal and police have allegedly made no effort to arrest him.

Jairo Humberto Gómez Sandoval has an extensive criminal record, and reportedly belongs to a gang of bank robbers, drug traffickers and hired assassins. He is accused of killing a legal advisor and his assistant working for a governmental environment organisation (CONAP), in February 2000 (see appeals cases, AMR 34/003/2002), the assassination of businessman Manuel Arturo Recinos in June 2000, and a massacre, carried out for unknown reasons, in July 2001 in the Petén in which nine people died and seven were injured. Two survivors were both killed in circumstances that have not been properly explained, the first one week after the massacre and the other in December of the same year.

Jorge Alegría's sister-in-law, and another woman who lived with him, allegedly helped Jairo Humberto Gómez Sandoval to carry out the killing, by telling him about Alegría's daily routine. Both women are now in prison.

Jorge Alegría's colleague Enrique Aceituno, and assistant human rights procurator Waldemar Barrera, are not known to have received any further threats since the original UA and follow-up were issued.

Many thanks to all those who sent appeals. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the case closely, as both key suspects are still at large, and taking further action if necessary. If possible, please send a final round of appeals, in Spanish, English or your own language:

- noting that a warrant has been issued for the arrest of Jorge Mario Chigua, for the September 2001 murder of journalist Jorge Mynor Alegría, and urging

the authorities to ensure that he is arrested as quickly as possible and brought to trial;

- expressing concern that Jairo Humberto Gómez Sandoval is still at large, despite the fact that a warrant for his arrest was issued in January;

- urging the government to bring anyone found responsible for carrying out or facilitating the killing of Jorge Mynor Alegría to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Regional offices of Public Prosecutor's Office

Fiscal Albert Clinton White Bernard

8 Calle, 9 Avenida Esquina,

Puerto Barrios

Izabal

Guatemala

Fax:+ 502 948 0112 (if a voice answers, please say, "fax por favor")

Salutation:Estimado Señor/Dear Sir

Local Police

Comisario Edwin Daniel Aldana Monroy

Jefe de Comisaria

Policía Nacional Civil

6 Avenida, 15-6 Calle

Puerto Barrios

Izabal

Guatemala

Fax:+ 502 9487 614 (if a voice answers, please say, "fax por favor")

Salutation:Estimado Jefe de Comisaria/Dear Chief of Police

COPIES TO:

Sixth Court of Appeals (which found that Jorge Mario Chigua had a case to answer)

Calzada Miguel García Granados

Edificio de Tribunales

Sala Sexta de la Corte de Apelaciones

3 Nivel

Zacapa

Guatemala

Fax:+ 502 941 3507 (if a voice answers, please say, "fax por favor")

Newspaper

Diario Prensa Libre

13 Calle 9-31, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: + 502 251 8768

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.