

PUBLIC

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11 November 2003

**Further Information on EXTRA 48/03 (AMR 34/063/2003, 07 November 2003) Fear for Safety/ Harassment**

**GUATEMALA** Human Rights Activists, Voters, Candidates and others around 9 November elections including:

Joji Fukuyama (m)	] Members of <i>Alianza Comunitaria Organizada de Derechos</i>
Victoria Dardón (f)	] <i>Humanos</i> , (ACODH), Alliance of Community Human
Victor Rosa (m)	] Rights Organizations

**New names:** Rolando Morales (m), congressional candidate for the *Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza* (UNE), National Party of Hope  
Marcos Ramírez, Mayoral candidate for the *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG), National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity party in Cantabal, Quiché Department  
Members of the municipal governing board and others in Cantabal

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Amnesty International remains concerned for the safety of human rights activists, candidates and voters after several reports of violence and voting irregularities in the first round of Guatemala's elections on 9 November.

Rolando Morales, congressional candidate for the *Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza* (UNE), National Party of Hope and chief political advisor to presidential candidate Álvaro Colom, was shot and injured by unidentified attackers in the early hours of 9 November in Zone 1 of Guatemala City. He reportedly received two gunshot wounds but is said to be in a stable condition in hospital. It is feared that the attack may have been politically motivated.

There are also concerns for the safety of elected mayor and *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG), National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity representative Marcos Ramírez, members of the municipal governing board and others connected with the elections in the town of Cantabal, Quiché Department. On 10 November, following the announcement of local election results, supporters of rival party the *Frente Republicano Guatemalteco* (FRG), Guatemalan Republican Front reportedly instigated a demonstration outside the offices of the National Civil Police and the *Tribunal Supremo Electoral* (TSE), Supreme Electoral Tribunal in Cantabal, in an attempt to force the head of the TSE to nullify the election result. Amnesty International is concerned that Marcos Ramírez and others involved in this election process may face further intimidation and harassment.

Reports currently suggest that Oscar Berger of the *Gran Alianza Nacional* (GAN), Great National Alliance, and Álvaro Colom of the *Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza* (UNE), National Union of Hope, came highest in the national polls and will therefore go forward to a second election round on 28 December. Amnesty International remains concerned that, in advance of the second round, there may be further political violence, intimidation and threats against voters, candidates and others involved with the election. Since the start of the electoral campaign in May 2003, there have been reports of at least 21 election-related killings, as well as numerous acts of intimidation.

Although there were a number of reports of disturbances during the election, so far there have been no further reports of violence or harassment against human rights activists such as Joji Fukuyama, Victoria Dardón, Victor Rosa and others.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Violent incidents reported in the course of the elections include the burning of thirty ballot boxes in the indigenous communities of El Quetzal, San Marcos Department and Cuyutenango in Suchitepéquez Department. In Iztapa, Escuintla Department and Palencia, Guatemala Department, some would-be voters were prevented from voting and ballot boxes were attacked and destroyed. Three indigenous women, María Ijón Escobar, Catarina Escobar and a third unnamed woman, were reportedly crushed to death when violence erupted in a crowd waiting for a polling station to open in the village of Chajul, El Quiché Department. It appears that some violent incidents occurred after voters became frustrated at delays and irregularities during the election process. Some sources suggest that political interests, particularly that of the FRG, may have been behind some of these incidents.

Allegations of fraud around the elections have also emerged, including the use of false identity cards and documents. Administrative irregularities in a number of departments reportedly led to thousands of people being omitted from the electoral register and therefore denied the right to vote.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:**

- expressing concern about the attack on congressional candidate Rolando Morales and the intimidation of elected mayor Marcos Ramírez;
- urging the authorities to carry out a thorough and impartial investigation into these incidents and to bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on the authorities to ensure the safety of candidates, voters, human rights defenders, journalists and electoral observers during the electoral period between now and 28 December;
- urging the authorities to ensure that those political parties involved in the second round of elections adhere to the pact of non-violence they agreed to at the start of the campaign.

## **APPEALS TO:**

### President of the Republic of Guatemala

Lic. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera  
6a Avenida "A" 4-41 Zona 1  
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala  
**Fax: + 502 238 3579**

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

### Minister of the Interior

Lic. Adolfo Reyes Calderón  
Ministro de Gobernación  
6ª Avenida 4-64, Zona 4  
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala  
**Fax: + 502 362 0239**

**Salutation: Señor Ministro/ Dear Minister**

### Director General of the National Civil Police

6a Avenida 13-71, Zona 1  
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala  
**Fax: + 502 251 9382**

**Salutation: Señor Director/Dear Director**

### Supreme Electoral Tribunal

Oscar Edmundo Bolaños  
Presidente  
Tribunal Supremo Electoral  
6a Avenida 0-32 Zona 2  
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

**Fax: + 502 232 0381 (if someone answers say "fax por favor")**

**Salutation: Estimado Señor Bolaños/Dear Mr. Bolaños**

## **COPIES TO:**

Mirador Electoral (Guatemalan Election Observation project)

Instituto Centroamericano de Estudios Políticos (INCEP)

8 Calle, 0-32, Zona 9

Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

**Fax: + 502 360 3625 (if someone answers say "fax por favor")**

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 23 December 2003.