

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 34/081/2002

10 December 2002

UA 355/02

Death Threats/Fear for Safety

GUATEMALA

Carlos David De León Argueta, (m) Attorney General

On the night of 5 December, an unknown number of unidentified gunmen fired six shots at Carlos David De León Argueta, the Guatemalan Fiscal General (Attorney General), when he was returning to his home in Guatemala City. The gunmen missed the car he was driving and hit trees and a wall near the entrance to his home instead. The Attorney General escaped unhurt from the incident. Amnesty International is gravely concerned for Carlos David De León Argueta following this recent attack on his life and the death threats that he has been receiving in recent months.

Since coming to office in May 2002, Carlos David De León Argueta, whose appointment was well received by national human rights groups, has been proactive in seeking to investigate past human rights abuses, as well as organised crime, corruption and drug-trafficking. As Attorney General in Guatemala, he has ultimate authority over criminal prosecutions in Guatemala. The attack appears to have arisen from his work on organised crime and corruption, as it took place on the day that the *Ministerio Público*, Prosecutor's Office, which he heads, named the prosecutors selected to investigate high-ranking military officers accused of involvement in organised crime. Attorney General De León has publicly stated that he believes the attack against him is linked to these investigations. However, many of the same high-ranking individuals involved in organised crime have also frequently been cited as responsible for human rights violations and Amnesty International believes that the attack on Carlos David De León Argueta could also have arisen from his work on important human rights cases.

Since coming to office, Carlos David De León Argueta has reported a series of anonymous threats in the form of letters and telephone calls, the most recent of which was a letter sent to his office during the week of 2 December, in which the authors claimed that they were tracking his movements.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International is concerned that in the past several years, there has been a continuing pattern of threats and intimidation against lawyers, judges and public prosecutors in Guatemala, particularly those involved in human rights, corruption and organised crime inquiries.

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

- expressing serious concern for the safety of Attorney General Carlos David De León Argueta in light of the attack against his life on 5 December;
- expressing concern that he and has received a series of anonymous death threats;
- urging the authorities to take necessary measures to ensure the safety of the Attorney General, whose position is constitutionally mandated to investigate crimes and human rights abuses;
- asking the authorities to investigate immediately, independently and exhaustively the attack and reported threats, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic of Guatemala

Lic. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera

Presidente de la República de Guatemala 6a. Avenida "A" 4-41, Zona 1, Guatemala, Guatemala

Telegram: **Presidente de la República de Guatemala, Guatemala City, Guatemala**

Fax: **+ 502 253 0801**

Salutation: **Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente**

Secretary of Strategic Affairs

Lic. Edgar A. Gutiérrez

Secretario de Asuntos Estratégicos

Secretaría de Asuntos Estratégicos

6a Avenida 'A' 3-53, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Telegram: **Secretario de Asuntos Estratégicos, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala**

Director General of the National Civil Police

Comisario General Raúl Arquímedes Manchamé Leiva

Director General de la Policía Nacional Civil

6a Avenida 13-71, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegram: **Director General de la Policía, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala**

Fax: **+ 502 251 9382**

Salutation: **Señor Director / Dear Director**

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Adolfo Reyes Calderón

Ministro de Gobernación

Ministerio de Gobernación

6ª Avenida 4-64, Zona 4

Ciudad de Guatemala , GUATEMALA

Telegram: **Ministro de Gobernación, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala**

Fax: **+ 502 362 0237**

Salutation: **Dear Minister/Señor Ministro**

COPIES TO:

Attorney General

Lic. Carlos David de León Argueta

Fiscal General de la República

Fiscalía General del Ministerio Público

8a. Avenida 10-57

Tercer nivel

Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Sergio Morales

Procurador de Derechos Humanos

Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos

12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1

Ciudad de Guatemala 01001, 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 21 January 2003.