

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)AI Index: AMR 34/86/93**

**Distr: UA/SC**

**UA 436/93 Fear for Safety16 December 1993**

**GUATEMALA Mario POLANCO**

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Mario Polanco, a member of the *Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo por el Aparecimiento con Vida de Nuestros Familiares (GAM)*, Mutual Support Group for the Appearance of Our Relatives Alive, following his abduction by five heavily armed men wearing military boots, in Guatemala City on 10 December 1993.

According to reports, Mario Polanco was taken to an uninhabited place in zone 15 of the capital. He was held for two hours during which time he was tied up and severely beaten with fists, guns and a wooden bat, kicked in the face, back and ribs, and his head smashed repeatedly against the ground, whilst being interrogated about his activities with GAM. His abductors reportedly told him that they were not pleased with his work, but that they would not kill him, only teach him a lesson. His abductors then left him, tied up and bleeding. He later managed to get to a hospital, where he received medical treatment, including stitches to his ear which had been ripped. Witnesses to the abduction, which took place not far from the GAM offices, were apparently threatened with death if they did not keep silent.

GAM has reported the incident to the police, but there are fears that Mario Polanco's life is still in danger.

Mario Polanco had been participating on that day in a peaceful march organised by various groups, including GAM, in order to commemorate the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to protest at the recent accord between Congress and the Executive (which agreed *inter alia* to reform Guatemala's Constitution) and at the lack of government funding for housing, health and education. Marchers were also calling for the disbanding of the *Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PAC)*, Civil Defence Patrols and for an end to forced military recruitment. The march ended at the *Palacio Nacional*, National Palace, where speeches were made by some of the participants, including Mario Polanco.

**BACKGROUND:**

Members of GAM have been object of human rights violations on many occasions in the past. Most recently, on 27 October 1993 armed men reportedly invaded the GAM offices, beat a female member of GAM in the office at the time and confiscated all their records and equipment (see follow-up on UA 379/93, AMR 34/77/93, 29 October 1993; UA 379/93, AMR 34/76/93, 27 October 1993). Over the years since the group was formed in 1984, GAM members have repeatedly been subjected to threats, their offices have suffered grenade and bomb attacks and some leaders and members have been killed in circumstances suggesting they were actually extrajudicially executed. Recently, flyers distributed for several days' running in Guatemala City in the name of a hitherto unknown group calling itself the *Movimiento Indígena Revolucionario*, Indigenous Revolutionary Movement, denounced Nineth Montenegro, GAM's president, and other prominent Guatemalans as corrupt and involved with drug trafficking. Often in the past, such allegations have preceded attacks against the persons so accused.

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

- expressing concern about the reported abduction and ill-treatment of Mario Polanco;
- asking for guarantees for the security of Mario Polanco;
- urging for a full investigation into this incident, that the findings be made public and the perpetrators brought to justice;
- urging protection for other members of GAM, including its President Nineth Montenegro, who has

recently been the object of threats and unverified allegations of corruption and drug trafficking.

**APPEALS TO**

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Ramiro de León Carpio  
Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Telegrams: Presidente de León Carpio, Guatemala, Guatemala.**

**Faxes: + 502 2 537472, + 502 2 519702**

**Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU**

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

2) Minister of Interior:

Lic. Arnoldo Ortiz Moscoso  
Ministro de Gobernación  
Ministerio de Gobernación  
Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8  
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

**Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala**

**Faxes: + 502 2 518105**

**Telexes: 5085 MINGOB**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. Mario Enríquez Morales  
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**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

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

COPREDEH  
15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Jorge García Laguardia  
Procurador de los Derechos Humanos  
12 Avenida 12-72  
Zona 1, Guatemala  
GUATEMALA

Human Rights Group

Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo por el Aparecimiento  
con Vida de Nuestros Familiares (GAM)  
Apartado 15, Ofic. 5  
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 27th January 1994.