

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 37/01/97

UA 97/97

Death threats / Fear for safety

10 April 1997

HONDURASBerta Oliva de Nativí (f), human rights defender
Liduvina Hernández (f), human rights defender

Berta Oliva de Nativí and Liduvina Hernández, leading members of the *Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras*, (COFADEH), Committee of Relatives of the Disappeared in Honduras have received further death threats because of their work on behalf of victims of human rights violations.

On 2 April 1997, Berta Oliva de Nativí, coordinator of COFADEH, received an anonymous call on her private phone threatening her with death. She reported that the caller had imitated the sounds of a person being executed and had said " This is how you'll end up, bitch" (*Así vas a quedar hija de P..*).

Previously, on 20 March 1997, Berta Oliva de Nativí had received another anonymous call, in which the caller is reported to have given a physical description of Liduvina Hernández, President of COFADEH, her latest movements, as well as her private address. The caller informed Berta Oliva de Nativí of the existence of a plan to kill Liduvina Hernández and claimed to have been paid a large sum of money by one of three members of the Honduran military accused of involvement in past human rights violations, including "disappearances" in the 1980s (see below). He said he was one of four men to have been approached for this purpose.

The threats seem to be an attempt to stop COFADEH from continuing its work on behalf of relatives of the "disappeared". Berta Oliva de Nativí and Liduvina Hernández are respectively the wife and mother of two "disappeared" people in Honduras.

COFADEH has been active in the defence of human rights in Honduras for many years, often coming into conflict with the authorities because of its complaints against violations allegedly committed by the state security forces. COFADEH and some other non-governmental organizations have been particularly active on behalf of some 184 people "disappeared" by the Honduran military in the early 1980s.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In July 1995 the Special Prosecutor for Human rights charged 10 military officers with human rights violations committed in the 1980s. In October 1995 arrest warrants were issued against three of the 10 officers, but they went into hiding (where they remain), allegedly helped by fellow military personnel. As a result of their work to bring to justice those allegedly responsible for past human rights violations, members of local NGOs, including COFADEH, as well as the Commissioner for Human Rights and the judge hearing the case have received death threats. Shots were fired at the court where the proceedings were taking place. For more information see: *Continued struggle against impunity* (AMR 37/01/96, March 1996) and *The beginning of the end of impunity?* (AMR 37/01/95, June 1995).

Members of COFADEH have long been the target of an intimidatory campaign because of their activities in the defence of human rights. Berta Oliva de Nativí was special guest of Amnesty International on the launch of its report *Human rights defenders on the front line* (AMR 02/01/96) in Mexico in December 1996. The report features previous threats against COFADEH (particularly against Berta

Oliva and Liduvina Hernández and their relatives), as well as cases of other human rights activists threatened in Central America and Mexico because of their work on human rights.

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

- expressing serious concern for the safety of Berta Oliva de Nativí and Liduvina Hernández following threats against them;
- calling for a prompt and thorough investigation into the threats and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging the government to take immediate measures to guarantee the safety of Berta Oliva de Nativí and Liduvina Hernández and asking to be kept informed of developments;
- expressing support for the work of COFADEH on behalf of victims of human rights violations.

Also if possible:

- urge the authorities to pursue the investigation into past human rights violations with vigour and to make every effort to bring those responsible promptly before the courts;
- reiterating the need for appropriate protection to be given to all those involved in bringing to light the abuses committed by military in the past.

APPEALS TO:

1) President

S..E. Carlos Roberto Reina Idiaquez
Presidente de la República de Honduras
Casa Presidencial
6ª Avenida, 1ª Calle
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Telegrams: Presidente, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Salutation: Sr. President/Dear President

2) Commander of the Army

Gral. Mario Hung Pacheco
Comandante del Ejército
Cuartel General,
Estado Mayor,
Comayagüela, Honduras

Telegrams: Comandante del Ejercito, Comayagüela, Honduras

Salutation Sr. General/General of the Army

3) Attorney General

Lic. Edmundo Orellana Mercado
Fiscal General
Fiscalía General de la República
Ministerio Público
Edificio Castillo Poujol
4º Avd, colonia Palmira
Boulevard Morazán
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Fax: (504) 39 47 50

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Salutation: Sr. Fiscal General/Attorney General

COPIES TO:

1) Human rights organization
Comité de Familiares de Detenidos-Desaparecidos
en Honduras (COFADEH)
Apartado Postal 1243 Honduras (COFADEH)
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Tel/Fax: (504) 37-78 54

2) Daily Newspaer
Diario La Tribuna
Sr. Director
Apartado 1501
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

and to diplomatic representatives of Honduras accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 May 1997.