

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 37/005/2005

UA 254/05 Fear for safety / Intimidation

26 September 2005

HONDURAS **Dr Juan Almendares Bonilla (m), Executive Director of Centre for the Prevention, Rehabilitation and Treatment of Victims of Torture (*Centro de Prevención, Tratamiento y Rehabilitación de las Víctimas de Tortura y sus Familiares, CPTRT*)**

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Dr Juan Almendares Bonilla who is being threatened and harassed as a result of his work as a human rights defender.

On 12 September, Dr Juan Almendares Bonilla was intercepted by two men on a motorcycle when he got out of his car near the entrance of a clinic where he provides free medical care. The men are described as well built, and aged between 30 and 35 years. They also had a military style hair cut. One of the men put a 9mm gun to Dr Almendares left temple and demanded his mobile phone before they both rode off.

Although this could be seen as an ordinary criminal offence the circumstances in which it took place would indicate that it was a premeditated and targeted event. The fact that the men did not steal other objects of value, such as Dr Almendares Bonilla's wallet, would indicate that they stole the phone with the purpose of obtaining information about his contacts and the people he works with.

During the night of 18 September, unknown individuals (men and women) made phone calls to Dr Almendares Bonilla's home and his relatives' homes. They asked about his whereabouts in threatening tones and similar calls have been made several times a week for the last three months.

On 19 September, the office administrator at the CPTRT office in the capital Tegucigalpa arrived at work to find that the front door frame had been forced and nearly broken during an attempted burglary. This followed an earlier break-in in October 2004 (see fu ua 141/03, AMR 37/012/2004, 1 November 2004).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Honduran human rights defenders are frequently attacked threatened and intimidated because of their legitimate activities. During 2005 a number of them working on different issues including defence of the environment, peasants' organizations and indigenous issues have faced threats. The authorities rarely investigate these cases effectively, thus encouraging those responsible to continue in the knowledge that their impunity is all but guaranteed. CPTRT has frequently criticized the government on issues such as the involvement of the police in extrajudicial executions of children and prison conditions.

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

- expressing concern at the attack, threats and harassment of Dr Juan Almendares Bonilla;
- expressing concern at the attempted break-in at the offices of the CPTRT in Tegucigalpa;
- calling for an immediate, full and impartial investigation into the attack, threats and harassment of Dr Juan Almendares Bonilla and for the results of the investigation to be made public;
- calling on the authorities to take immediate steps to guarantee the safety of the CPTRT's staff members.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Honduras Republic

Lic. Ricardo Maduro
Presidente de la República de Honduras
Casa Presidencial
Boulevard Juan Pablo Segundo
Palacio José Cecilio del Valle
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Fax: +504 221 4570
Salutation: Dear President/ Señor Presidente

Minister of Security
Dr. Oscar Alvarez
Ministro de Seguridad
Ministerio de Seguridad Pública
Edificio Poujol, 4o piso
Col. Palmira (Blvd. Morazán)
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Fax: +504 220 4479
Salutation: Dear Minister/ Estimado Señor Ministro

COPIES TO:

Centre for the Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (CPTRT)
Barrio San Rafael segunda calle N. 1513
contiguo Edificio Apartamentos San Rafael
A.P. 5377
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Fax: +504 238 4027 (if someone answers ask for the fax “me da tono de fax por favor”)

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 6 November 2005