

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 41/14/94

Distr: UA/SC

UA 300/94

Death threats

12 August 1994

MEXICO

Members of the *Compañía de Jesús*, the Jesuit order

On August 7 1994, posters bearing a death threat to all Jesuits in Mexico were pasted outside at least five Jesuit residences and centres in Mexico City. One of these posters also appeared in Puebla. The text reads: "*Jesuits! Enough! No more betrayal of the Fatherland! In El Salvador, thousands of Indians died before the Jesuits: those responsible for the massacre. In Mexico, the Jesuits will die first.*" ("*¡Jesuitas! ¡Ya basta! No más traición a la Patria! En El Salvador murieron millares de indigenas antes que los Jesuitas: responsables de la masacre. En México morirán los Jesuitas primero.*"). At the bottom of the poster appears the name: *Squads for the defence of the Catholic faith and peace in Mexico (Escuadrones para la Defensa de la fé católica y la paz de México)*.

The Jesuit order has also recently been the target of unfounded press attacks accusing its members of alleged involvement in guerrilla activities. The provincial curia in Mexico City has received telephoned bomb threats and two of their centres in Chiapas and Guerrero have been raided by the police.

The reference to El Salvador in the latest threat against the Jesuits gives particular cause for concern as Jesuit priests in that country continue to be the targets of death threats and harassment (see UA 220/94, AMR 29/08/94, 8 June 1994). During the late 1970s and 1980s, tens of thousands of civilians were killed or "disappeared" by the armed forces in the civil war in El Salvador.

At the height of the fighting, in November 1989, members of the Salvadorean army murdered six defenceless Jesuit priests along with their housekeeper and her daughter at the Jesuit-run Central American University in San Salvador.

The Jesuits had long been accused of being supporters or sympathizers of the armed opposition in El Salvador.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The threat against the Jesuits is the latest in a series of threats and attacks against Church and human rights activists monitoring the human rights situation in Chiapas following the 1 January indigenous uprising. Members of the Catholic Church and other grassroots organizations have been active in promoting and protecting the rights of the indigenous populations of Chiapas and other states with large indigenous minorities, for many decades. They have frequently encountered opposition from the local authorities and large landowners.

Father Samuel Ruiz, Bishop of San Cristóbal de las Casas and a mediator in the conflict, received a death threat on 8 March 1994, which said that if he did not leave San Cristóbal, they "*would get their hands into the business and silence him for good*". On 9 March 1994, Mariano Pérez Díaz, leader of the State Council of Indigenous and Peasant Organizations in Chiapas, (*Consejo Estatal de Organizaciones Indígenas y Campesinas de Chiapas (CEIOC)*) was killed in an ambush by eight unidentified armed men in Simojovel, Chiapas. No one has been charged with his killing.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes and airmail letters - expressing concern at the death threats against members of the Jesuit order of Mexico, which have appeared in posters in Mexico City and Puebla from 7 August 1994;

- asking that immediate steps be taken to identify those responsible and bring them to justice;
- urging immediate measures to guarantee the physical integrity of all Jesuits and other human rights monitors in Mexico.

APPEALS TO:1) President of the Republic

Lic. Carlos Salinas de Gortari
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio Nacional
 06067 México D.F., Mexico

Telegrams: Presidente Salinas, México D.F., Mexico

Telexes: 170937 sppnme; 1774468 sppnme

Faxes: +52 5 271 1764

Salutation: Sr. Presidente/Dear President

2) Interior Minister

Dr Jorge Carpizo McGregor
 Secretario de Gobernación
 Secretaría de Gobernación
 Bucarelli 99, 1er piso
 Colonia Juárez
 06669 México DF, MEXICO

Telegrams: Secretario Gobernación, México D.F., Mexico

Telexes: 1774376, 1774375

Faxes: +52 5 592 0014

Salutation: Sr. Secretario de Gobernación/Dear Minister

3) Attorney General's Office

Lic Humberto Benítez Treviño
 Procurador General de la República
 Procuraduría General de la República
 Paseo de la Reforma y Violeta
 Colonia Guerrero
 06300 Mexico DF, MEXICO

Telegrams: Procurador General, Mexico D.F., Mexico

Telexes: 1777572

Faxes: +52 5 526 8506

Salutation: Sr Procurador General/Dear Attorney General

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:1) National Human Rights Commission

Sres.
 Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos
 Periférico Sur 3469
 Col San Jerónimo Lídice
 10200 México DF, Mexico

2) Mexican Archdiocese - Human Rights Department

Sres.
 Departamento de Derechos Humanos
 Arquidiócesis de México
 Durango No. 90, 7o. piso
 Colonia Roma

06700 México DF, Mexico

3) Daily newspaper

Sr. Editor

La Jornada

Balderas 68

06050 México DF, Mexico

and to diplomatic representatives of MEXICO accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 23 September 1994.