

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 46/18/00

UA 161/00

Threats/F

PERU Mónica Vecco (f) - Journalist

A threatening message has been sent to investigative journalist Mónica Vecco after she published an article critical of the government in the newspaper *La Republica*. Amnesty International fears for her safety.

Mónica Vecco received the message, by e-mail, on 8 June 2000, the same day she had filed a news report about President Alberto Fujimori's political party, *Perú 2000*. In her article, Vecco stated that *Perú 2000* had used the workshop of a *Servicio de Inteligencia Nacional* official, SIN, National Intelligence Service, to produce electoral propaganda and manuals during the recent presidential elections.

The message, sent by an organization calling itself the *Grupo 5 de abril*, 5 April Group, was entitled "*hija de puta!!!*" ("son of a bitch!!!"). It read: "*perra de m...!!!! , escribes m..., m... comerás!!!!!!*" (Dog of sh...!!!!, you write sh..., you will eat sh...!!!!!!).

Grupo 5 de abril refers to the 5 April 1992 coup by President Fujimori.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the past few months, in the run-up to the presidential elections, journalists who have openly criticized President Fujimori and the electoral process have been harassed, intimidated and threatened. Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights, of which Peru is party, guarantee the right of freedom of thought and expression, the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds. However, it appears that the Peruvian authorities have made no commitment to comply with these rights.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (ICHR) issued a report on 2 June after the second round of presidential elections in which President Fujimori was the only candidate. The runner-up Alejandro Toledo, the opposition's candidate, pulled out of the second round because it appeared it would be no fairer than the first. The ICHR states in its report that, "the necessary conditions for the full exercise of the freedom to express political ideas by the opposition or criticism of the government through the media without reprisals, do not exist in Peru. The systematic use of intelligence services and security forces as instruments of harassment and persecution of journalists and members of the opposition with the alleged tolerance of the high authorities of the State as well as the passive and active collaboration of the judiciary, constitute a serious obstacle for the normal functioning of democracy in Peru."

The Organization of American States's (OAS) General Assembly resolved on 5 June to send to Peru, immediately, "a Mission comprising the Chair of the General Assembly and the Secretary General of the OAS with the purpose of exploring, with the Government of Peru and other sectors of the political community, options and recommendations aimed at further strengthening democracy in that country, in particular measures to reform the electoral process, including reform of judicial and constitutional tribunals, as well as strengthening freedom of press".

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

- expressing concern that investigate journalist Mónica Vecco received a threatening e-mail message on 8 June 2000;
- asking that all necessary steps be taken to guarantee her safety;
- requesting a prompt and effective investigation into the threats received by Mónica Vecco.
- urging the authorities to ensure that all journalists are allowed to work without being intimidated, harassed and/or threatened and that article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 13 of the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, both of which guarantee the right of freedom of thought and expression, are respected at all times.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister

Señor Alberto Bustamante Belaúnde
Primer Ministro
Palacio de Gobierno
Plaza Mayor
Lima 1, PERU

Fax:+ 511 447 1628

Salutation:Dear Prime Minister/Sr. Primer Ministro

Minister of the Interior and Police

General César Enrique Saucedo
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Plaza 30 de Agosto s/n
Urb. Córpac
San Isidro
Lima 27, PERU

Fax: + 511 224 2405 /+511 475 3419

Salutation:Dear Minister/ Sr. Ministro

Minister of Defense

General EP Carlos Alberto Bergaminos Cruz
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Av. Arequipa 291
Lima 1, PERÚ

Fax: + 511 433 6906

Salutation:Dear Minister/Sr. Ministro

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organization

Instituto Prensa y Sociedad (IPYS)
Calle Sucre # 317
Barranco
Lima, PERÚ

Fax: + 511 2 473194

and to diplomatic representatives of Peru accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 July 2000.