

UA 201/97

Fear for safety

8 July 1997

PERU César Hildebrandt )

Verónica Sáenz ) journalists working for *En Persona*

Mario Tarazona )

Daniel Ruiz ) chauffeur working for *En Persona*

Angeles Laynes )

Agustín Figueroa )

Luis Angois Banchemero ) journalists working for *Ojo*

Jorge Sandoval )

Luis Revoredo )

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Journalists critical of the authorities

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César Hildebrandt, a director of the Peruvian television programme *En Persona* and prominent critic of President Alberto Fujimori's government, fears for his safety. On 25 June 1997 César Hildebrandt wrote to the Minister of the Interior, General César Saucedo Sánchez, requesting guarantees for his safety and that of his family. The request was made following revelations about a plan by the authorities to kill him and an anonymous telephone call threatening the safety of his eldest son.

The plan to kill César Hildebrandt last December was made public by *En Persona* on 18 June, when it broadcast revelations by dissident army intelligence agent Leonor La Rosa Bustamante about the plan. Leonor La Rosa revealed details about the plan while recovering from the effects of the torture inflicted on her by members of the *Servicio de Inteligencia del Ejército*, SIE, Army Intelligence Service (see UA 98/97, AMR 46/11/97, 11 April 1997 and further information published on 14 April, 15 May and 13 June 1997).

On 25 June, only days after the plan was made public, an *En Persona* team was physically assaulted. According to reports, journalist Verónica Sáenz, cameraman Mario Tarazona, their chauffeur Daniel Ruiz, and Edwin Montoya, a member of the *Defensoría del Pueblo*, Ombudsman's Office, were ordered to lie on the floor by three armed men of military appearance who broke into a house where Verónica Sáenz was about to conduct an interview. Mario Tarazona was hit on the back with a pistol and Daniel Ruiz was hit over the head with a pistol and later threatened with being killed. The assault, which took place in the district of Nueva Alianza, in Naña, department of Lima, was reported by Verónica Sáenz to the police in the nearby town of Chacayo.

Amnesty International has also learned that on 1 July journalist Luis Angeles Laynes, political editor of the newspaper *Ojo*, was "ferociously attacked", "atacado ferozmente", by three armed individuals in a street in San Miguel, a district in the capital Lima. The attack followed threatening telephone calls made against Agustín Figueroa, Luis Angois Banchemero, Jorge Sandoval, and Luis Revoredo, all of them on the staff of *Ojo*. A long-standing popular newspaper, *Ojo* recently widened the scope of its reporting to include articles critical of the government.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Over the past months, journalists critical of the government and of the Peruvian Armed Forces have come under repeated attacks, threats, and other forms of intimidation. This pattern has manifested itself at different times and in

varying contexts, but is linked to the overall criticism that Peru is ruled by "un gobierno civico-militar autoritario", "an authoritarian civic-military government", led by President Fujimori, army general Nicolás de Bari Hermoza, and Vladimiro Montesinos, an advisor to the *Servicio de Inteligencia Nacional*, National Intelligence Service.

This pattern of attacks, threats and intimidation has been closely monitored by Peruvian and international organizations working in favour of independent journalism and the defence of human rights. Incidents include a bomb attack by SIE members on a television and radio station in the city of Puno in October 1996, the short-term abduction of Blanca Rosales last March, and the threats received by Edmundo Cruz in April and Gustavo Mohme Llona in May. These three journalists are, respectively, political editor, investigative journalist and director of opposition newspaper *La República*. They have been targeted following revelations by *La República* last December of SIE plans to intimidate journalists, lawyers and other critics of the authorities. Other incidents include death threats against journalists Miguel Real, José Antonio Alvarez Pachas and Rosa Neyra Samalvides, in March and April of this year; the abduction and beating up of journalist Ginés Barrios Alderete, also in April; and the move by the armed forces last May against Baruch Ivcher, owner of TV Channel 2, for trying to blacken the reputation of the armed forces with a series of negative reports about corruption amongst the authorities, the torture of Leonor La Rosa (see above), and the murder of another army intelligent agent. Baruch Ivcher is reported to have gone abroad to escape a military warrant for his arrest.

Against this background, President Fujimori criticized the media during his opening address of the XXVII Assembly of the Organization of American States, held in Lima between 1 and 6 June 1997. In his speech President Fujimori accused some journalists of covering up the truth and succumbing to bribes. President Fujimori's comments were widely interpreted as being directed at journalists critical of his administration.

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

- expressing concern about acts of intimidation against three journalists and chauffeur Daniel Ruiz, all working for the TV program *En Persona*, and similar incidents against five journalists working for the daily *Ojo*;
- expressing concern at mounting reports of attacks, threats and other forms of intimidation against Peruvian journalists who write or publish reports critical of the Peruvian authorities;
- requesting an independent, prompt and effective investigation into these and other acts of intimidation against journalists in Peru, that the findings be made public, and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- noting that the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Peru is a state party, states, *inter alia*, that "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression" (Article 19(2));
- calling for the issuing of a presidential directive making clear that journalists in Peru have a right to exercise their legitimate professional activities unhindered by attacks, threats or other forms of intimidation.

**APPEALS TO:**

Presidente Alberto Fujimori  
 Presidente de la República del Perú  
 Palacio de Gobierno  
 Plaza de Armas

Lima 1

PERU

**Telex: 20167 pe palacio or 20331 pe sec pre**

**Fax: + 51 1 426 6930 or 426 6770**

**Salutation: Dear President/ Señor Presidente de la República**

**COPIES TO:**

Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Periodista

Oficina 403

Jr. Huancavelica 320

Lima 1

PERU

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 19 August 1997.