

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death in Custody/Killings in Disputed Circumstances

VENEZUELA: Darwin Duncan Capote Rondón, 17, secondary school student

José Gregorio Delgado, 17, secondary school student

José Humberto López Arias, 21, conscript

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned about the killing of three people on 20 November 1991 in circumstances that suggest they were the victims of extrajudicial execution. They occurred in the context of widespread demonstrations by students that have been taking place in Caracas and other major Venezuelan cities in the last few days.

According to reports, Darwin Capote Rondón, a student at the Francisco Fajardo School was wounded after members of the Metropolitan Police (PM, *Policía Metropolitana*) opened fire with shot guns during a student demonstration on 20 November 1991 in the Macarao suburb of Caracas. He was reportedly kicked by the police while lying on the ground, handcuffed and pushed into a jeep belonging to the PM. His handcuffed body was later found on the street near the Caricuao social security office, with a wound in his back.

José Gregorio Delgado was reportedly shot in the neck by a police officer as he was running down the street. According to eye witnesses the shot was fired without any prior warning. Minutes later, José López Arias, who reportedly approached the same police officers, was shot at close range and wounded. He died later in a side street.

Five policemen have reportedly been arrested in connection with these killings.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

A series of demonstrations started in mid-October 1991 after the government announced rises in fuel prices and a sharp increase in transport fares. At least three other students have been shot dead in disputed circumstances by police since the beginning of the year. They include Raúl Contreras, 18, a student at the Cecilio Acosta University College, in Los Teques, State of Miranda, who died on 29 October 1991 after being shot by a state police sniper.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned at frequent reports of disputed killings by police in Venezuela. In February and March 1989 several hundred people died after the government suspended a wide range of constitutional guarantees in response to widespread protests. Although many died in the context of widespread violence and disorder, a number of people were the victims of deliberate and unlawful killings by the police and military personnel.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters, preferably in Spanish:**

- expressing serious concern at the recent killings in disputed circumstances of Darwin Duncan Capote Rondón, José Gregorio Delgado and José Humberto López Arias;

- welcoming reports that five policeman have been arrested in connection with these killings but urge that judicial investigations proceed without delay and that those responsible for unlawful killings be brought to justice;
- requesting that urgent measures be taken to ensure that all police personnel comply with the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials [spanish: *Código de las Naciones Unidas para el Personal Encargado de Hacer Cumplir la Ley*].

**APPEALS TO:**President:

Sr. Carlos Andrés Pérez

**Sr. Presidente**

Presidente de la República

Palacio Miraflores, Caracas, Venezuela

**Telegrams: Presidente Pérez, Caracas, Venezuela****Telex: 26429 EXTER VC**Minister of the Interior:**Sr. Ministro**

Sr. Alejandro Izaguirre Angeli

Ministro del Interior

Palacio Miraflores, Caracas, Venezuela

**Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Caracas, Venezuela****Telex: 26429 EXTER VC**Attorney General:

Sr. Ramón Escobar Salom

**Sr. Fiscal General**

Fiscal General de la República

La Candelaria, Caracas, Venezuela

**Telegrams: Fiscal General, Caracas, Venezuela****Telex: 24787 FISGE VC**Minister of Defence:

General Fernando Ochoa Antich

**Sr. Ministro**

Ministro de Defensa Nacional

Fuerte Tiuna

Conejo Blanco

El Valle, Caracas, Venezuela

**Telegrams: Ministro Defensa, Caracas, Venezuela****COPIES TO:**

Sres.

Provea

Apartado Postal 5156

Caracas, Venezuela

(Human Rights organization)

Sres.

Federación de Centros

Universitarios

Ciudad Universitaria

Los Chaguaramos

Caracas, Venezuela

(Students Federation)

El Diario de Caracas

Final Av. Principal

Boleíta Norte

Caracas, Venezuela

(daily newspaper)

and to diplomatic representatives of Venezuela in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 January 1992.**