

PUBLIC

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29 January 2003

UA 32/03 Fear for Safety

VENEZUELA Cesar Emilio Machado (m)

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Cesar Emilio Machado, who has reportedly been the victim of a thirteen-month long campaign of intimidation and death threats by the Municipal Police in Girardot municipality, city of Maracay, Aragua State.

On 9 December 2002 at 2am, members of the Girardot Municipal Police reportedly opened fire on Cesar Emilio Machado's home. He was not injured in the attack although his property was damaged. Since this incident, Cesar Emilio Machado has reported being followed and watched by unknown individuals in cars without number plates.

Members of the Municipal Police have allegedly been behind numerous incidents of threats and intimidation against Cesar Emilio Machado since he was attacked and shot by Municipal Police functionaries in Maracay on 21 December 2001. Machado was shot in the leg and severely beaten by the police, allegedly without motive. While the attack was reported to the state authorities and to the Human Rights Ombudsman (*Defensor del Pueblo*) in December 2001, his attackers, whom he identified, have not been apprehended or charged. As a result of the campaign of threats and intimidation, Cesar Emilio Machado has been forced to move house.

Local human rights organizations who have taken up Cesar Emilio Machado's case claim that the attack on his house on 9 December was aimed at stopping him from testifying against the Municipal Police in the preliminary hearing of his case, which was to take place in Maracay on 9 December, but was subsequently postponed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Many Venezuelan states, including Aragua, Bolívar, Anzóatequi and Falcón, have a history of extra-judicial executions carried out by the police and a failure to protect witnesses and family members of the victims. Both the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights have intervened in many of these cases, requesting that local authorities and the Venezuelan state investigate these crimes and provide protection to those involved. However, the measures requested by the Inter-American System have not, in most cases, been carried out.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Cesar Emilio Machado and asking the authorities to take action to protect him;
- calling on the authorities to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the threats and intimidation experienced by him, to publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- expressing concern that Cesar Emilio Machado's attackers are still at large and urging the authorities to ensure progress in the case.

APPEALS TO:

Attorney General

Fiscal General de la República, Dr. Isaías Rodríguez
Avenida Universidad, Esquina Pele el ojo a Misericordia,
frente a Parque Carabobo, Caracas, VENEZUELA

Telegram: Fiscal General de la República, Caracas, Venezuela
Fax: + 58 212 576 44 19
Salutation: Estimado Señor Fiscal General/Dear Attorney General

Human Rights Ombudsman

Defensoría del Pueblo
Dr. Germán Mundaraín
Bellas Artes comienzo Avenida México frente al Ateneo de Caracas
Plaza Morelos
Caracas, VENEZUELA

Telegram: Defensoría del Pueblo, Caracas, Venezuela
Fax: + 58 212 575 4467 (if a voice answers, say "tono de fax por favor")
Email: gmundarain@defensoria.gov.ve
Salutation: Estimado Señor/Dear Sir

Municipal Police

Policía Municipal de Girardot
Parque de Feria, San Jacinto
Avenida Intercomunal de Turmero
Maracay, Aragua
VENEZUELA
Telegram: Policía Municipal de Girardot, Maracay, Aragua, Venezuela
Salutation: Estimado Señor/Dear Sir

Municipal Mayor

Coronel Humberto Prieto
Alcalde Municipal
Alcaldía del Municipio Girardot
Avenida las Delicias
Cruce con Avenida Casanova Godoy
Edificio Sede Alcaldía
Maracay, Aragua
VENEZUELA
Telegram: Alcalde Municipal, Alcaldía del Municipio Girardot, Maracay, Aragua, Venezuela
Salutation: Estimado Señor/Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Group

Red de Apoyo por la Justicia y Paz
Parque Central
Edif. Caroata, Nivel Ofic.2,
Ofic. 220, Parque Central
Caracas, VENEZUELA
Fax: + 58 212 574 1949/574 8005
E-mail: redapoyo@cantv.net

and to diplomatic representatives of Venezuela accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 March 2003.