

UA 221/98 Fear for safety/Possible extrajudicial execution

14 August 1998

VENEZUELA Yolima Rangel (f), mother of Freddy Diaz

Ali Eduardo Sojo, aged 14

Katuska Sojo (f)

Flor Diaz (f)

Freddy Diaz, aged 18, killed

There are fears for the safety of Freddy Diaz' family after he was shot dead, reportedly by a policeman, in the municipality of Sucre on 8 July 1998.

After reporting the shooting to the authorities, Yolima Rangel, Freddy Diaz' mother, and the rest of her family have been threatened and followed by police.

The shooting occurred after Ali Eduardo Sojo, Freddy Diaz' 14-year-old cousin, was chased into his house by a policeman making routine spot checks in their street. The policeman reportedly then fired a gun at Ali Eduardo Sojo, but the bullet instead hit Freddy Diaz and killed him in front of a number of witnesses, including children, while they were having dinner.

Freddy Diaz' family was then taken into custody and held for 24 hours. They were told by police that if they pressed charges the police would '*hacerles la vida imposible*' - make their lives impossible.

Yolima Rangel nevertheless reported the shooting, and her family and neighbours have since been constantly harassed by the police. They have reported seeing a number of police cars driving past their houses at night and policemen looking into their house.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the years, Amnesty International has received many reports of individuals killed by Venezuelan security forces and military personnel in circumstances where firearms were used unnecessarily or with the deliberate intention of killing or causing serious injury.

Amnesty International has also documented an increased number of attacks and extrajudicial killings of minors (see '*The silent cry: Gross human rights violations against children*' AMR 53/13/97, October 1997). These incidents are rarely fully investigated and in very few cases have those responsible been brought to justice.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Yolima Rangel and her family, and calling on the authorities to guarantee her safety;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the events surrounding the death of Freddy Diaz, and calling for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- reminding the Venezuelan authorities of the country's commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, notably Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person".

APPEALS TO:Attorney General

Dr. Iván Darío Badell González
Fiscal General de la República
Manduca a Ferrenquín
La Candelaria
Caracas, Venezuela

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Caracas, Venezuela

Faxes: + 58 2 564 74 61

Salutation: Sr. Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

Minister of the Interior

Doctor Asdrúbal Aguiar
Ministro de Relaciones Interiores
Ministerio de Relaciones Interiores
Carmelitas a Santa Capilla
Caracas, Venezuela

Fax: + 58 2 861 19 67

Salutation: Señor Ministro/ Dear Minister

Mayor of the Municipality of Sucre

Sr Raoul Bermúdez,
Casco Histórico de Petera
Municipio de Sucre
Alcaldía
Officina del Alcalde
Estado Miranda
Venezuela

Telegrams: Alcalde, Estado Miranda, Venezuela

Salutation: Sr Alcalde / Dear Mayor

President of the National Human Rights Commission

Dr. José Guillermo Andueza
Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos
Palacio de Miraflores
Edificio Bicentenario, Nivel Plaza, Of. 206
Caracas, Venezuela

Faxes: + 582 806 39 42

Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Dear President

COPIES TO: Sres. Red de Apoyo por la Justicia y la Paz
Apartado Postal 17.476, Parque Central, Caracas, Venezuela

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 2 October 1998.

***"Everyone has the right to life, liberty
and security of person".***

Article 9, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>