

EXTERNAL

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Fear for Safety

1 July 1997

ARGENTINARUÍZ GUIÑAZÚ, Magdalena, journalist
GARBARZ, Ariel, computer engineer & journalist
FERNÁNDEZ LLORENTE, (f) María José, sister of Antonio

Fernández Llorente
FERNÁNDEZ LLORENTE, Antonio, journalist

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Magdalena Ruíz Guiñazú, Ariel Garbarz, María José and Antonio Fernández Llorente following death threats and intimidation because of their journalistic activities.

Anonymous telephone death threats were made on 24 June 1997 against Magdalena Ruíz Guiñazú, a well known radio and TV journalist. She was threatened with becoming the "next one", a reference to José Luis Cabezas a *Noticias* press photographer killed in Pinamar, Buenos Aires Province, on 25 January.

On 23 June written threats were made against Ariel Garbarz, who works for the newspaper *Página 12*. In two separate telephone calls made by men who identified themselves as members of the Buenos Aires Province police, Ariel Garbarz was urged to stop his newspaper articles about the killing of José Luis Cabezas. The callers warned that, if he did not stop, he "was going to have problems with them".

On 23 June María José Fernández Llorente was attacked in Palermo, a Buenos Aires neighbourhood, by three men who cut her hand twice with a flick-knife. She is the sister of Antonio Fernández Llorente, a journalist from Channel 13, who has been covering the investigation into the killing of José Luis Cabezas. María José Fernández Llorente was warned by her attackers that if her brother did not stop his investigative journalism on the case, his family would face the consequences. Reportedly, her attackers had managed to evade the protective custody recently granted by the authorities to the Fernández Llorente family following threats and intimidation against Antonio Fernández Llorente and members of his family.

Legal complaints on all these incidents have been filed before the courts. While Amnesty International is unable to confirm the source of these threats and the attack on the above-mentioned individuals, the organization believes that there is a well-founded concern for their safety, particularly in view of the increasing number of attacks, threats and intimidation against journalists and the lack of thorough and conclusive investigations into these incidences.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The charred and handcuffed body of José Luis Cabezas, a photographer with the magazine *Noticias*, was found inside a burnt-out car in Pinamar on 25 January. He had reportedly received death threats. The investigation into his killing is being closely covered by the Argentine media.

Magdalena Ruiz Guiñazú is a former member of the National Commission on Disappeared People (*Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas*) created in 1983, following the return of civilian government in Argentina,

to clarify the tragic events in which thousands of people "disappeared" during the military government (1976-1983).

In recent years Amnesty International has registered numerous cases of attacks and death threats against journalists, allegedly on account of their investigative journalism or criticism of the government. In several of these cases there were reports of participation or acquiescence by members of the police. Between 1992 and 1993 alone, over 120 cases were recorded (See *Journalism, a dangerous profession: Physical attacks, death threats and harassment of journalists in Argentina*, AI Index: AMR 13/01/94, January 1994). Most of those cases have remained unsolved, including the death of Mario Bonino in November 1993. According to press reports, by the end of March 1997, the Buenos Aires Press Workers Union (Unión de Trabajadores de Prensa de Buenos Aires) had recorded over 60 cases of threats against journalists since the killing of José Luis Cabezas.

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

- expressing concern at the death threats against Magdalena Ruíz Guiñazú, Ariel Garbarz and Antonio Fernández Llorente and his family; and the attack on María José Fernández Llorente;
- urging that immediate and effective steps be taken to guarantee their safety;
- stressing the importance of any investigation already initiated into these incidents and the need for them to be carried out promptly, thoroughly and conclusively, and urging that the findings be made public and those found responsible be brought to justice;
- expressing concern about the killing of José Luis Cabezas, stressing the same points about the investigation as above.

APPEALS TO:

President

Exmo. Sr. Presidente
de la República Argentina
Dr. Carlos Saúl Menem
Casa Rosada, Balcarce 50, Buenos Aires C.F., ARGENTINA
Fax: + 541 344 3 800
Telegrams: President Menem, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Salutation: Excelencia / Excellency

Minister of Interior

Sr. Ministro del Interior
Sr Carlos Corach
Ministerio del Interior
25 de Mayo 101, (1002) Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA
Fax: + 541 331 1156 (if voice, ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")
Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Sr. Guido José María di Tella
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Arenales 761, Buenos Aires, C.F. Argentina
Faxes: +541 310 8227/ 8210
Telegrams: Ministro Relaciones Exteriores, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Ministre

COPIES TO:

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and to diplomatic representatives of ARGENTINA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 August 1997.