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Argentina: the voice of human rights defenders cannot be silenced

Intimidation of those who defend human rights is an abominable and cowardly act, stated Amnesty International today, declaring its condemnation of the threats suffered in recent days by members of the *Comisión por la Memoria Provincial* (Provincial Remembrance Commission) in La Plata, Buenos Aires province.

The telephone threats received on 25th September 2002 in the Commission's offices followed an attack several days earlier on the home of Estela de Carlotto, President of the Commission and of the human rights organisation *Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo* (Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo).

"The role played by the *Comisión por la Memoria* is fundamental in terms of supporting the search for truth and justice of the many victims and families of victims of past human rights violations, and in terms of denouncing the abuses that continue to be noted, particularly at the hands of the police," Amnesty International emphasised.

"Not only the provincial but also the national authorities must send out a clear and unequivocal message emphasising that attacks, threats and harassment of those raising their voices to denounce human rights violations will not be tolerated."

"It will not be by silencing human rights defenders but by listening to their requests for truth and justice that Argentina will overcome its unpleasant heritage of serious violations committed in the recent past, and ensure there is no such repetition," declared Amnesty International.

For more information, see the following Urgent Actions:

Argentina: Fear for safety -- Estela Carlotto (AMR 13/009/2002);
Argentina: Fear for safety -- Estela Carlotto and members of the *Comisión Provincial por la Memoria* (AMR 13/010/2002).

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