

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 13/013/2001

UA 131/01

Fear for Safety

30 May 2001

ARGENTINA

**María Alejandra Bonafini, age 35, (f)  
Hebe de Bonafini (f), president of Asociación Madres de Plaza  
de Mayo (Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo)**

---

María Alejandra Bonafini, the daughter of the President of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo organization, Hebe de Bonafini, has been attacked and tortured in the house she shares with her mother. Amnesty International is extremely concerned for the safety of both women.

In the afternoon of 25 May, Amnesty International has been told that two men, who had identified themselves as telephone repair men, forced their way past María Alejandra Bonafini into her house in La Plata, Buenos Aires Province. They put a plastic bag over her head and beat her with an object that a doctor, who later examined her, indicated may have been a chain covered by a hose-pipe. When Alejandra fainted her attackers poured cold water over her to revive her. They burnt her arms and back with cigarettes.

María Alejandra Bonafini has previously received death threats in connection with her mother's work as a high profile human rights defender. Some months before this attack Hebe de Bonafini is also reported to have received a telephone death threat in which she was told they were going to hit her "where it hurts the most".

Although there is no direct evidence of the involvement of the security forces in the incident, Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of María Alejandra Bonafini and her mother and is calling on the authorities to investigate the threats and to take measures to ensure their safety. A complaint has reportedly been filed before the Argentine authorities.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International is concerned that the threats to María Alejandra Bonafini may be related to her mother's outspoken condemnation of the human rights situation in Argentina. The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, of which Hebe de Bonafini is the president, is a women's human rights organization set up to campaign for justice on behalf of their children and other relatives who "disappeared" during the years of military government (1976-1983).

Amnesty International has consistently emphasised to the Argentine authorities the need to clarify the fate and whereabouts of the "disappeared" as the relatives of the victims have the undeniable right to a full search for the truth and public identification of those responsible.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters either in Spanish, English or in your own language:**

- expressing concern at the attack and torture of Maria Alejandra Bonafini on 25 May, calling for a prompt, full and impartial investigation into the attack, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- asking Argentine authorities to take immediate and effective measures to guarantee the safety of Maria Alejandra Bonafini and Hebe de Bonafini and all those who are searching for the whereabouts of "disappeared" relatives;
- expressing concern that the threats may be an attempt to intimidate members of the Madres of the Plaza de Mayo who are seeking justice in cases of human rights violations committed under the military government;
- reminding the government of their obligation to clarify the fate and whereabouts of the "disappeared".

#### **APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Justice and Human Rights  
Sr. Ministro de Justicia y Derechos Humanos

Dr. Jorge de la Rúa  
Ministerio de Justicia y derechos Humanos  
Sarmineto, 329- 5 piso  
1041 Buenos Aires  
Argentina

**Telegram: Ministro Justicia Buenos aires Argentina**

**Fax: + 54 11 4328 5395**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

Minister of the Interior

Sr. Ministro del Interior

Dr. Federico Storani

Ministerio del Interior

Balcerce 50

1064 buenos aires, argentina

**Fax: + 54 11 4342 6081**

**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

**Provincial Authorities**

Governor of Buenos Aires Province

Sr. Gobernador de la provincia de Buenos Aires

Sr. Carlos Ruckauf

Casa del Gobierno

Calle 6. Entre 51 y 53, 1900 La Plata

Buenos Aires C.F., Argentina

**Fax: + 542 21 429 4189**

**Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor**

**COPIES TO:**

Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo

Hipólito Yrigoyen 1584

(1089) Buenos Aires, Argentina

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 11 July 2001.