

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 18/01/92
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Date: 1 May 1992

@MEDICAL CONCERN

Wilfredo VELA MALDONADO
£BOLIVIA

Amnesty International is concerned that Wilfredo Vela Maldonado, a 19-year-old diabetic prisoner, has been refused transfer to hospital although his diabetes is now uncontrolled and he is in need of proper management and care. He was arrested and imprisoned in September 1991 and it appears that his diabetes has not been properly monitored or controlled since his arrest; he has insulin-dependant diabetes mellitus. Wilfredo Vela is at present awaiting trial in San Sebastian prison, Cochabamba. He is a member of the *Ejército Guerrillero Tupaj Katari* (EGTK) - an armed opposition group - and has been charged with planting explosives in the Cochabamba Parliamentary offices (*Brigada Parlamentaria de Cochabamba*). In December 1991 he entered a diabetic coma, suffering cardio-respiratory and renal failure. The governor of San Sebastian prison initially refused to permit his transfer to hospital despite representations from doctors, and it was only after other prisoners threatened to riot that he was hospitalized. He remained in coma for eight days following which he is reported to have been bound to his hospital bed by the arms and legs until his return to prison.

In March 1992 he is again reported to have been close to coma. Tests carried out in early April showed him to have a blood glucose level of 500 mg% and in late April, 365 mg%. Doctors have recommended that he be hospitalized urgently and permission has been sought to grant his temporary release to allow hospitalization. However, although a judge was initially sympathetic to this petition, the Interior Ministry is subsequently reported to have ruled that no EGTK suspect be granted bail on any grounds.

The conditions and medical facilities at San Sebastian prison have clearly been inadequate to allow the control of his diabetes and Amnesty International is concerned that he is now at serious risk unless provision is made for his transfer to hospital. The organization is appealing to the Bolivian authorities to arrange his admission to hospital and to provide assurances that he will be guaranteed proper medical supervision while he remains in prison.

The EGTK is an armed opposition group which claims to act on behalf of groups from among the indigenous Aymara and Quecha population; it is described by the government as a Marxist-Leninist organization falsely exploiting the name of the indigenous population in furtherance of its own aims. The group has used robbery to finance its activities and has destroyed electricity, gas and water supplies as well as Parliamentary offices in the districts of La Paz, Cochabamba, Sucre, Potosi and Oruro. Amnesty International recognizes the gravity of the charges against Wilfredo Vela, but believes that specialist medical care must be made available to him without further undue delay.

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To: Medical professionals
 From: Medical Office / Research Department - Americas
 Date: 1 May 1992

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Wilfredo VELA MALDONADO
 BOLIVIA**

Keywords

Theme: ill-health/ medical care

Summary

Wilfredo Vela Maldonado is a 19-year-old prisoner with uncontrolled diabetes mellitus. He requires transfer to hospital to allow the control of his diabetes, but is charged with membership of an armed opposition group which appears to be impeding attempts to hospitalize him. There is concern at the risk to his life unless arrangements can be made to provide proper management without further delay.

Recommended Actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses given below:

- raising the case of Wilfredo Vela Maldonado, noting that he is a diabetic and that his diabetes is seriously out of control
- expressing concern that, despite his clear need for specialist attention, no provision for this appears to be under consideration
- urging that arrangements be made to ensure that he is transferred to hospital without further delay and seeking assurances that, if he remains in prison after trial, adequate provision will be made to ensure the proper monitoring and control of his diabetes

Addresses

Sr Ministro del Interior,
 Migración y Justicia
 Sr Carlos Saavedra Bruno
 Ministerio del Interior
 La Paz, Bolivia
 (Minister of the Interior,
 Migration and Justice)

Coronel Abelino Alcaráz
 Gobernador
 Cárcel "San Sebastian"
 Plaza San Sebastian
 Calle Ladislao Cabrera esq. Hamiraya
 Cochabamba, Bolivia
 (Governor of San Sebastian prison)

Copies to:

Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos
Casilla 2383
Cochabamba
Bolivia
(Non-governmental human rights body)

Copies could also be sent to:

Sr Doctor
Cárcel "San Sebastian"
Plaza San Sebastian
Calle Ladislao Cabrera esq. Hamiraya
Cochabamba
Bolivia
(Prison doctor)

Colegio Médico de Cochabamba
Colombia 511
entre Ayacucho y Baptista
Cochabamba
Bolivia
(Cochabamba Medical Association)

