

EXTERNAL

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Fear for safety

7 May 1996

**GUATEMALA** Carlos Orellana, 54, radio journalist  
Irma López de Orellana (f), public ministry official  
Carlos Alberto Orellana, aged 17  
Juan Jose Orellana, aged 16

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Amnesty International is deeply concerned for the safety of Carlos Orellana, Director of Radio Victoria, *Radio Victoria "La Benabita del Cuadrante"*, his wife, Irma López de Orellana, and their children, Carlos Alberto and Juan Jose Orellana.

At 1.30am on 4 May 1996, a bomb exploded in front of the family's house in Mazatenango, Sucitepéquez department. No one was injured, and it caused only minor damage to the house. Neighbours saw two men running away after the explosion.

Immediately afterwards, as Carlos Orellana was driving to the National Police station to report the attack, another car attempted to follow him. However Carlos Orellana turned off his headlights and escaped, arriving safely at the National Police station.

The bombing occurred just two days after Carlos Orellana had interviewed Julio Ixmatá Tziquin, a human rights activist and indigenous leader who had been brutally attacked on 1 April by, among others, members of the *Comités Voluntarios de Defensa Civil*, Voluntary Civil Defence Committees (civilian auxiliaries of the armed forces) in Guineales, Santa Catarina Ixtahuacán, Sololá department.

Carlos Orellana has also been publically denouncing the spate of kidnappings and car thefts in his department in which members or ex-members of the security forces are allegedly involved. The day before the explosion, Carlos Orellana had broadcast a radio program in which he indicated to the audience how to denounce the kidnappings and suggested preventive and protective measures.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In the last few months, Amnesty International has been receiving increasing and consistent reports on threats and intimidation to journalists in Guatemala, in which members of the security forces may be involved.

On 28 February 1996, Vinicio Pacheco, journalist of Radio Sonora in Guatemala City, who had reported on stories implicating members of the security forces in car thefts and kidnappings, was abducted in Guatemala City and was brutally kicked, beaten and burned on the feet and chest. He was released after three hours.

In early March 1996, six other journalists were named in anonymous death threats sent to some of the newspapers and homes of the journalists. The journalists were accused of being guerrillas.

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

- expressing grave concern for the safety of Carlos Orellana and his family;
- calling for immediate and adequate measures to guarantee their safety;
- calling for an immediate and thorough investigation into the bombing of 4 May 1996 and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

**1) President of the Republic:**

**S.E. Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen**  
**Presidente de la República de Guatemala**  
**Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA**  
**Faxes: +502 2 22117**  
**Telegrams: Presidente, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Dear President**

**2) Minister of Interior**

Lic. Rodolfo Mendoza  
Ministro de Gobernación  
Ministerio de Gobernación  
Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8, Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

**3) Minister of Defence**

Gral. Julio Arnoldo Balconi Turcios  
Ministro de Defensa  
Ministerio de Defensa  
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

**4) Governor of Suchitepéquez Department**

Sr Gobernador  
Mazatenango  
Suchitepéquez  
Guatemala  
**Telegrams: Gobernador, Mazatenango, Suchitepéquez, Guatemala**  
**Salutation: Sr Gobernador / Dear Governor**

**COPIES TO:**

Attorney General

Sr. Fiscal General de la Nación  
Ministerio Público  
6a Avenida 3-11, Zona 4, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Faxes: +502 2 317066**

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Jorge García Laguardia  
Procurador de los Derechos Humanos  
12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Faxes: +502 2 81734**

*Radio Victoria*

Av La Libertad 9-91 Z-1  
Mazatenango  
Suchitepéquez Department  
Guatemala

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 June 1996.