

**GUATEMALA Employees of *La Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala* (FAFG),
the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation
Employees of the *Centro de Antropología Forense y Ciencias Aplicada*, (CAFCA),
the Centre of Forensic Anthropology and Applied Sciences.
Other people involved in carrying out exhumations**

Death threats have been made against the employees of *La Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala* (FAFG), the Guatemalan Forensic Anthropology Foundation, the *Centro de Antropología Forense y Ciencias Aplicada*, (CAFCA), the Centre of Forensic Anthropology and Applied Sciences and others involved in carrying out exhumations of individuals massacred during the counter-insurgency campaign carried out by the Guatemalan military during the early 1980s.

On 21 February, 10 copies of a typed letter arrived at the home of one of the forensic scientists involved in exhumations. The letter explicitly named 11 people; five of whom have carried out exhumations in the past, four present employees of FAFG and two who work for CAFCA.

The letter also made reference to any institution working on exhumations. It demanded that the exhumations stop and warned that if forensic scientists continued carrying out their work, their families would "soon be burying their bones and those of their children".

At the same time as the letter was issued, a fire was started at a church in Nebaj, El Quiché Department which stored equipment used for exhumations. Part of the church was destroyed. During the last few months, organisations and individuals involved in the exhumation process have also reported incidents of threats and intimidation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the absence of any official government exhumation programme, FAFG works to exhume the remains of individuals massacred in the counter-insurgency campaign carried out by the Guatemalan military during the early 1980s. Since 1992, the Foundation has carried out 191 exhumations of more than two thousand victims of the armed conflict. FAFG is currently carrying out an exhumation of the secret mass graves in Xiquín Senahí, Comalapa, Chimaltenango Department where between 80 and 130 victims are believed to be buried.

The exhumation of secret mass graves have enabled forensic investigations into the massacres to take place. This evidence has been crucial in the few cases where convictions of those involved in the massacres, have been secured. Exhumations are also being carried out to provide further evidence in the two suits for genocide filed in Guatemala, by the *Centro de Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos* (CALDH), the Centre for Legal Action in Human Rights, against officials of the administrations of Former President Lucas García (1978-1982) and Former President Ríos Montt (1982-1983).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety of the employees of FAFG, CAFCA and others involved in carrying out exhumations;

- urging the authorities to immediately investigate the reported threats against organisations carrying out exhumations;
- reminding the authorities of their obligation to fulfill the recommendations made by the Historical Clarification Commission which identified exhumations as an important step towards justice and national reconciliation, and called for a government exhumation programme;
- urging the authorities to initiate a government exhumation programme.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic of Guatemala

Lic. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera
Presidente de la República de Guatemala
6a. Avenida "A" 4-41, Zona 1,
Ciudad de Guatemala , GUATEMALA

**Telegrams:Presidente de la República de Guatemala, Ciudad de Guatemala,
Guatemala**

Fax: + 502 239 0090 (please keep trying this number)

Email:mensajes@presidenteportillo.gob.gt

Salutation:Dear President/Señor Presidente

Minister of the Interior

Eduardo Arévalo Lacs
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
6ª Avenida 4-64, Zona 4
Ciudad de Guatemala , GUATEMALA

Telegrams:Ministro de Gobernación, Ciudad de Guatemala , Guatemala

Fax:+ 502 362 0239/ 362 0237

Email: monica24@intelnet.net.gt

Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Peace Secretary

Sr. Gabriel Aguilera
Secretario de la Paz
5a Calle 4-33, Zona 1
Edificio Rabi, 4 Nivel
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax:+ 502 230 1731

Salutation:Dear Secretary/Señor Secretario

COPIES TO:

Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (FAFG)

Avenida Simón Cañas 10-64, Zona 2,
01002 Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: 502 254 0882/288 7297/ 288 7302 (if a voice answers, say "por favor, tono de fax")

Newspaper

Diario Prensa Libre
13 Calle 9-31, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: + 502 251 8768

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 16 April 2002.