

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

7 March 2003

GUATEMALA Marielos Monzón, (f) ] journalists  
Isabel Enríquez, (f) ]

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Guatemalan journalists, Marielos Monzón and Isabel Enríquez and their families, following recent acts of intimidation and attacks intended to stop them reporting on human rights violations.

On 23 February Isabel Enríquez, a reporter from the news agency, *Centro de Reportes Informativos sobre Guatemala* (CERIGUA), Centre of Information on Guatemala, was attacked by two men as she approached the CERIGUA offices in Guatemala City. The attackers demanded her keys which they stole as well as her bag. They also hit her in the stomach. The week prior to the attack against Isabel Enríquez, two other CERIGUA journalists were also assaulted. A reporter in the CERIGUA outpost in Baja Verapaz had his bag stolen which contained his ID and unidentified men in Guatemala City demanded the keys from the CERIGUA administrator.

On the morning of 2 March several intruders broke into the family house of columnist Marielos Monzón who writes for the Guatemalan newspaper *Prensa Libre*. The intruders searched her belongings but only stole radio parts from the family's two cars, in an apparent attempt to make it appear a common robbery. However, prior to the break in she had received several telephone calls in which the caller hung up. She received 17 further anonymous phone calls while the police were at her home investigating the scene.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International is concerned that journalists are being threatened and attacked by or with the complicity of the official security forces, in order to intimidate or silence those reporting on human rights, corruption or other issues considered to constitute criticism of the authorities in Guatemala (see US 55/02, AMR 34/010/2002, 19 February 2002).

CERIGUA was founded on 8 August 1983 and since then has reported extensively on the human rights situation in Guatemala, and has been subject to constant intimidation. In February 2002 a CERIGUA journalist while reporting in Santa Cruz del Quiché was threatened by unidentified men who stole his cassettes and money and told him to leave the area or they would kill him. In July 2002 the regional outpost in Jutiapa was raided and the hard disk containing important information, stolen.

The recent break-in at Marielos Monzón's home is the latest in a series of threats and intimidation against her. Several incidents of intimidation have come immediately after the publication of her columns. In December 2002, hours after her article on the disappearance of indigenous leader Antonio Pop Caal was published, she received an anonymous telephone call. The caller threatened that unless she stopped writing about the case, she would meet the same fate. Antonio Pop Caal's decapitated body was found on 17 December 2002 in a well. Following the publication of two articles on 28 January and 4 February 2003 she also received anonymous telephone threats to both her mobile and home phones. The articles concerned the fate of three members of the Azmitia family who "disappeared" in 1981 as well as the case of Myrna Mack, an anthropologist who was stabbed to death in 1990. Both cases are presently at the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (CIDH). In June 2002 Marielos Monzón's name was also included on a death threat believed to have been faxed by a clandestine organisation with apparent links to the army high command to several of Guatemala's most prominent human rights organisations (see UA 173/02, AMR 34/037/2002, 11 June 2002). Most recently, on 25 February Marielos Monzón wrote a column entitled, "*Las víctimas incontables*" (the innumerable victims) which paid homage to the courage of those who challenged the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of massacres during the long-term civil conflict. Again within hours

of the publication she received renewed death threats. Marielos Monzón has taken her case to the CIDH to request precautionary measures for both her and her two children. Whilst police do pass by her house on their rounds, she has expressed concern for the lack of interest in investigating the perpetrators of the break-in and recent threats.

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

- expressing concern for the safety Marielos Monzón and Isabel Enríquez and their families, and all those involved in efforts to promote human rights and freedom of expression;
- urging the authorities to take immediate measures, in accordance with the victims' wishes, to guarantee their safety;
- calling for an immediate and thorough investigation into the death threats and other attacks on journalists mentioned above, that the results be made public and those responsible brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

Attorney General

Lic. Carlos David de Leon Argueta  
Fiscal General de la República  
Fiscalía General del Ministerio Publico  
8a. Avenida 10-57, Tercer nivel  
Zona 1, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

**Fax: + 502 221 2718**

**Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Señor Fiscal General**

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Adolfo Reyes Calderón  
Ministro de Gobernación  
6ª Avenida 4-64, Zona 4  
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

**Fax: +502 362 0239 / 362 0237**

**Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro**

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Canciller Edgar Gutiérrez  
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores  
2a Avenida 4-47, Zona 10  
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

**Fax: +502 348 0110 (please keep trying)**

**E-mail: despacho@minex.gob.gt**

**Salutation: Señor Ministro**

Director General of the National Civil Police

Comisario General Raul Arquimedes Manchame Leiva  
Director General de la Policia Nacional Civil  
6a Avenida 13-71, Zona 1  
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

**Fax: + 502 251 9382**

**Salutation: Dear Director/Señor Director**

**COPIES TO:**

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Sergio Morales  
Procurador de Derechos Humanos  
Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos  
12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1  
Ciudad de Guatemala 01001, Guatemala

**Fax: +502 238 1734**

**Salutation: Dear Procurator/Señor Procurador**

Newspaper

Diario Prensa Libre  
13 Calle 9-31, Zona I  
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala  
**Fax: +502 251 8768/ 230 2193/ 230 2257**

News agency

CERIGUA  
2a Calle 1-42, Zona 1  
Ciudad de Guatemala Guatemala  
**Telefax: +502 238 1456**  
**221 2521/251 1289**

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 18 April 2003.