

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Threats/Intimidation

23 April 1993

GUATEMALA: Angela María CONTRERAS CHÁVEZ (female), aged 24

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of student Angela María Contreras Chávez, who has been the victim of a series of threats and acts of harassment, the latest of which happened on 11 April 1993.

Angela María Contreras Chávez is a student of anthropology at the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (Valle University of Guatemala). In 1991 she began working with a team of forensic doctors carrying out exhumations of the victims of the violence of the early 1980's counter-insurgency campaign.

In early December 1992, a red pick-up van with darkened windows was seen parked outside her home. A few days later she and a member of the Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala (CONAVIGUA), National Coordinating Committee of Widows of Guatemala, were photographed as they were leaving her home.

In February 1993 she stopped working with the forensic team in order to concentrate on her studies, and began documenting cases of "disappearances" with the Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo por el Aparecimiento con Vida de Nuestros Familiares (GAM), Mutual Support Group for the Appearance of Our Relatives Alive.

On the afternoon of 20 February 1993 her home was broken into. The perpetrators stole equipment and papers relating purely to her work with the medical forensic team.

On 7 April her home was again broken into. This time the assailants left a number of papers with cut-out words such as "death", "grave", "die" and "kidnap" pasted on them. These were apparently intended to intimidate her.

On 11 April a packet was left in her mail-box which contained press cuttings with more intimidating words. Again they were apparently intended to threaten her.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International is concerned at the recent increase in human rights violations against targeted groups, including trade unionists, student leaders, journalists and those working with non-governmental organizations, particularly those attempting to investigate and protect human rights. These groups have been long-term targets of abuses in Guatemala, including harassment, threats, torture, "disappearances", and extrajudicial executions. Such abuses have sometimes been preceded by acts of intimidation and surveillance, such as in this instance.

On 24 March 1993 a leaflet was circulated in Guatemala which accused 24 people, including journalists, development workers, trade union leaders and members of non-governmental organizations of "having links with the subversive elements and their destabilizing actions" and warned that as of 31 March, those named would be killed" (see UA 96/93, AMR 34/14/93 of 2 April 1993). Two days later on 26 March a student, Luis Arturo Álvarez Concoa, from the national Universidad de San Carlos (USAC), University of San Carlos in Guatemala City, reportedly "disappeared" after he left the USAC. His body was found on 1 April approximately 70 km north of Guatemala City. On 27 March another student, Herbert Alfonso Juárez Santizo was abducted, and held for three days during which he was severely ill-treated (see UA 99/93, AMR 34/15/93 of 6 April 1993 for these last two cases).

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the student Angela María Contreras Chávez who has repeatedly been the victim of threats and harassment in the last five months;
- asking that these incidents be immediately investigated and that those found to be responsible be brought to justice;
- asking for guarantees for the security of Angela María Contreras;
- urging that all possible measures are taken to protect the lives of those working for human rights.

**APPEALS TO**

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías  
Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Presidente Serrano, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 537472, + 502 2 519702**  
**Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU**

**Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr.  
Presidente /  
Dear President**

2) Minister of Interior:

Lic. Francisco Perdomo  
Ministro de Gobernación  
Ministerio de Gobernación  
Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8  
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Telephone: + 502 2 21212, ext 500; + 502 2 518105-6 (direct)**  
**Telexes: 5085 MINGOB**

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

3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. José García Samayoa  
Ministro de Defensa  
Ministerio de Defensa  
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 537472**  
**Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU**

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

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

1) Human Rights Procurator:  
Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio  
Procurador de los Derechos Humanos  
12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1,  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Faxes: + 502 2 81734**

2) Head of the Presidential Commission  
Coordinating the Policies of the  
Executive relating to Human Rights:  
Sr. Bernardo Neumann  
COPREDEH  
15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13  
Guatemala, GUATEMALA

3) Archbishop's Human Rights Office:  
Oficina de Derechos Humanos del  
Arzobispado de Guatemala (ODHAG)  
Apartado Postal 723  
Guatemala, 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 3 June 1993.