

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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"Disappearance"

10 June 1991

GUATEMALA:

Santos TOJ REYNOSO

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Santos Toj Reynoso, a street fruit vendor, who was reportedly abducted by unidentified men on 26 May 1991.

According to the information received by Amnesty International, Santos Toj was abducted at his stall in Zone 4 of Guatemala City by unidentified men in plain clothes, who drove up to the stall and took him away. Amnesty International is concerned that the manner in which he was abducted, together with the fact that he was associated with the Consejo de Comunidades Étnicas "Runujel Junam" (CERJ), Council of Ethnic Communities "*We are all Equal*", suggests the possible involvement of members of the security forces in the guise of the so-called "*death squads*".

Santos Toj Reynoso, a CERJ collaborator, is originally from the hamlet (caserío) Cruzché IV, municipality of Santa Cruz del Quiché, El Quiché department. On 6 May 1991, members of the Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PAC), Civil Defence Patrols in Cruzché IV called a meeting with those patrollers who were associated with CERJ. Santos Toj Reynoso was among those called to the meeting, as he had been involved in CERJ activities with his uncle, a CERJ member and a village elder. At the meeting, he and others were told that they could not serve as Civil Defence Patrol members because they were involved in human rights work. They were told that they were no longer regarded as members of the community and warned that they should leave the hamlet. All those threatened then left the community and settled in Guatemala City, from where Santos Toj Reynoso was abducted a few weeks later. In a meeting with CERJ representatives on 4 June 1991, the President of Guatemala, Jorge Serrano Elías, reportedly promised to investigate the "*disappearance*" of Santos Toj Reynoso and look into safeguards for the security of those who wished to return to Cruzché IV.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

CERJ was formed in July 1988 to protect indigenous people's rights. It has been particularly active in protesting at peasants being forced to join the Civil Defence Patrols. The authorities maintain the patrols are voluntary, but Amnesty International knows of scores of cases where peasants who have not wished to do patrol service have been labelled "*subversives*" by the army and subjected to harassment, death threats, "*disappearances*" and extrajudicial execution. The abuses have been carried out by uniformed soldiers as well as by men in plain clothes believed to be members of the security forces or acting under their orders.

CERJ has, since its foundation, been the target of a wide range of human rights violations. Since January 1991, three CERJ members and three relatives of CERJ members have been killed in circumstances suggesting official involvement, and many more intimidated and threatened by members of the security forces or those working under their command. This figure includes the recent killing of Camilo Ajquí Jiménez, on 14 April 1991 in Potrero Viejo, Zacualpa, department of El Quiché. (See UA 128/91, AI Index: AMR 34/13/91, of 18 April 1991).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the reported abduction and "*disappearance*" of Santos Toj Reynoso in circumstances suggesting the involvement of the security forces;
- urging the authorities to immediately clarify the whereabouts of Santos Toj Reynoso,

and that, if detained, he be either brought before a judge or released;

- asking for guarantees for his physical safety and for the safety of other CERJ members and collaborators who were forced to flee Cruzché IV.

APPEALS TO:

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías
 Presidente de la República de Guatemala
 Palacio Nacional
 Guatemala, Guatemala

Telegrams: Presidente Serrano, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU
Faxes: + 502 2 537472; + 502 2 519702
Tel No: + 502 2 21212, + 502 2 22266

Gral. Luis Francisco Mendoza García
 Ministro de Defensa
 Ministerio de Defensa
 Palacio Nacional
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Telegrams: Ministro Defensa Mendoza, Guatemala, Guatemala
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Lic. Fernando Hurtado Prem
 Ministro de Gobernación
 Despacho Ministerial
 Oficina No. 8, Primer Nivel
 Palacio Nacional
 Guatemala, Guatemala

Telegrams: Ministro Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
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Señor Acisclo Valladares
 Procurador General de la Nación
 Procuraduría General de la Nación
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COPIES TO:

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 Procurador de Derechos Humanos
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Señores
 Consejo de Comunidades Etnicas "Runujel
 Junam" (CERJ)
 5a Avenida 3-13, Zona 5
 Santa Cruz del Quiché
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Padre Andrés Girón León
 Presidente
 Comisión de Derechos Humanos
 Congreso Nacional de la República
 9 Av. 9-48, Zona 1
 Guatemala, Guatemala

Diario Prensa Libre
 13 Calle 9-31, 50 Nivel
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 Zona 1
 Guatemala, Guatemala

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 July 1991.