

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Threats/Intimidation

14 July 1992

GUATEMALA: Luis Humberto FUENTES MORALES, trade unionist, and members of his family

Amnesty International is concerned at the continued intimidation reported against trade unionist Luis Humberto Fuentes Morales and members of his family. Luis Humberto Fuentes Morales is the secretary of the union in the private company Duralex, where he works, and a member of the Unidad de Acción Sindical y Popular (UASP), Unity of Union and Popular Accion, a broad coalition of labour and popular organizations.

According to information received by Amnesty International, on 6 July 1992 at about 6:00pm six unidentified men went to the house of Luis Humberto Fuentes Morales and asked his wife if he was there. They left when they did not find him.

The day after, at about 8:00am, two unidentified men reportedly went again to the trade unionist's house inquiring about his whereabouts. He was not at home and the men left but reportedly came back looking for him several times that morning. At about 1:00pm Luis Humberto Fuentes Morales's daughter was allegedly followed from school to her house by two unidentified men. Her mother, who was apparently frightened by this incident, tried to make a telephone call from a public telephone near the house but was stopped by the same men. Mrs. Fuentes managed to escape and sought refuge in a store. Later in the day the same men allegedly went again to the house of Luis Humberto Fuentes Morales. One of his brothers claimed to be him but the men did not believe him and demanded to speak to Mr. Fuentes Morales.

Sources in Guatemala believe that these incidents are linked to the trade union activities of Luis Humberto Fuentes Morales and to his role in the negotiations for a new work contract between the trade union he heads and Duralex, agreed three weeks ago.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Trade unionists and members of popular movements have been targeted since the government of Jorge Serrano Elías took office in January 1991 in a renewed wave of human rights violations. Amnesty International has learned of a large number of threats, intimidation, abduction and torture as well as possible extrajudicial execution against trade union leaders and members of popular movements in recent months (see Guatemala: Trade Unionists and Political Activists Targeted under the New Government of June 1991, AI Index: AMR 34/28/91).

The choice of the victim and the manner in which these abuses have been carried out suggest the involvement of the security forces in the guise of so-called "death squads". Many trade unionists have been forced to leave the country as a result of direct threats or other human rights violations against themselves and their colleagues, and the failure of the government to take preventive action.

On 27 May 1992 two sons of a trade unionist were kidnapped and freed unhurt hours later (see UA 187/92 AI Index: AMR 34/29/92 of 4 June 1992). Since then Amnesty International

has received several other reports of intimidation and threats against trade union members.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the continued intimidation of Luis Humberto Fuentes Morales and members of his family;
- asking for a thorough investigation into these incidents, that the results be made public and that those found to be responsible be brought to justice;
- urging that adequate steps be taken to ensure the safety of Luis Humberto Fuentes Morales and other members of his family.

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APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías
Presidente de la República de Guatemala Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President
Telegrams: Presidente Serrano, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telephone: + 502 2 21212, + 502 2 22266
Faxes: + 502 2 537472,
+ 502 2 519702
Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU

2) Minister of Interior:

Lic. Fernando Hurtado Prem
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister
Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
Telephone: + 502 2 21212 ext. 500,
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3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. José García Samayoa
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister
Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala
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4) Minister of Labour:

Sr. Mario Solórzano Martínez
Ministro de Trabajo y Previsión Social
Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
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COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Human Rights Commission of Congress:

Lic. Oliverio García Rodas
Presidente
Comisión de Derechos Humanos
Congreso Nacional de la República
9 Av. 9-48, Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

2) Human Rights Procurator:

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio
Procurador de Derechos Humanos
Avenida Simeón Cañas 10-60 Zona 2, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

3) Newspaper:

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

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Please check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25th August 1992.