

GUATEMALA Matilde Leonor González Izas (f)

Amnesty International has grave concerns for the safety of Matilde Leonor González Izas after receiving information that she has been kept under surveillance and has received a number of threatening telephone calls.

Matilde Leonor González Izas is a historian working for *Asociación para el Avance de las Ciencias Sociales* (AVANCSO), Investigation Centre for the Advancement of Social Sciences. She has researched and published information on the new mechanisms used by the military to maintain local power in the San Bartolome Jocotenango in the department of EL Quiche. Her work has revealed the complicity of the military in the mob violence and lynchings that are taking place in communities throughout the country. Matilde Leonor González Izas has also been subjected to threats and intimidations in 1998 and in 1999 as a result of her investigations.

On 2 October, a man entered Matilde Leonor González Izas' house and stole her lap-top computer. It contained information on her research and that of another similar research project in San Idelfonso Ixtahuacan, Huhuetenango. On the same day, her neighbours noticed that her house was being watched by people in two different cars. The house was also being watched on 5 October, but this time the neighbours scared the culprits away.

On 7 and 8 October, Matilde Leonor González Izas was followed as she left her house. A day later, as she was driving, seven cars surrounded her and boxed her in, forcing her to take a different route. When she saw an acquaintance in the street, she asked him to get in the car with her. A few hundred metres later, the other cars drove off.

Matilde Leonor González Izas has since gone into hiding. Even there she began receiving strange phone calls, where nobody would speak on the other end of the phone when she answered. She also received threatening calls on her mobile phone.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

AVNSCO has been a target of human rights abuses in the past, most notably with the killing of the anthropologist Myrna Mack in 1990. Myrna Mack's investigations showed that the military was targeting civilian populations during the armed conflict.

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

- urging the authorities to denounce the threats and intimidations against Ms. González Izas;
- urging the government to carry out a full investigation into these events in order to who planned and carried out the threats and intimidation;
- urging the authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of Ms. González Izas.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

Sr. Byron Barrientos
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
6ª Avenida 4-64, Zona 4
Ciudad de Guatemala , GUATEMALA

Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax:+502 362 0239/ 362 0237

Salutation: Dear Minister / Señor Ministro

Minister of Defence

Gral. Eduardo Arevalo Lacs
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa
Antigua Escuela Politécnica
Avenida Reforma 1-45, Zona 10
Ciudad de Guatemala , GUATEMALA

Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa Nacional, Guatemala, Guatemala

Telefax: + 502 360 9909

Salutation: Dear Minister / Señor Ministro

Attorney General

Lic. Adolfo González Rodas
Fiscal General de la República
Ministerio Público
8a. Avenida 10-67 Zona 1
Tercer nivel
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax: + 502 221 2718 (directo)

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/ Señor Fiscal General

Minister of External Relations

Lic. Gabriel Orellana
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Avenida Reforma 4-47, Zona 10
Ciudad de Guatemala
Guatemala

Telegrams: Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, Guatemala, Guatemala

Fax:+502 331 7938/ 331 8410

e-mail: mint@mieno.gt

Salutation: Dear Minister / Señor Ministro

COPIES TO:

Asociación para el Avance de las Ciencias
Sociales en Guatemala (AVANCSO)
6a Ave. 2-30, Zona 1,
Guatemala GUATEMALA

Fax:(502) 232 5841

El Periódico (newspaper)
15 Ave 24-51, Zona 13
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Fax: +502 332 9761

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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 30 November 2001.