

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 313/92 Death Threats/Intimidation

8 October 1992

GUATEMALA: Members of the Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios (AEU)

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of members of the Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios, AEU, and for the safety of those students involved in court proceedings against members of *Hunapú*, the Guatemalan special security force unit.

On 5 October 1992 a bomb exploded outside the offices of the AEU at the Universidad de San Carlos (USAC) in Guatemala City. The bomb explosion follows a series of death threats received by members of the AEU and students involved in a legal action against *Hunapú*. *Hunapú* were responsible for the killing on 10 April 1992 of student Julio Cu Quim (see UA 123/92, AMR 34/16/92, 15 April and AMR 34/16/92, 28 April 1992).

The AEU reported that during May 1992 several students were followed by armed men in plain clothes. They also reported receiving written death threats, which demanded that the students involved in the legal action against members of the *Hunapú* unit withdraw their action. Otto Peralta, AEU president, also reported that armed men riding a motorcycle were watching his house and noting the movements of his family. The girlfriend of one of those injured during the 10 April 1992 incident reportedly received an anonymous written death threat which stated "*we are aware that you are the people who head the list of eight people who will be eliminated, if you continue your accusations against members of Hunapú*".

A relative of Axel Morales Gaytán, another of the students wounded on 10 April 1992, also received an anonymous letter, similar to the one above, which threatened that the next time they would kill members of the families of those bringing legal actions against the security forces.

In August 1992 a written death threat signed by "Members of the Security Forces", invited five AEU members, Axel Morales, Otto Pérez, Julio Sajche, Hugo Gudiel and Otto Peralta to a meeting at the "La Villa" Cemetery on 25 August at 3.00 pm. The letter said that the motive for the meeting was to reach a solution with those persons affected in relation to the events of 10 April 1992. The death threat was sent directly to an individual who for security reasons does not wish to be named, but who was also invited to the meeting and threatened that "*We don't want blood, you will be the person most affected if the conditions we ask for are not adhered to*". Among the conditions were that no publicity be given to the letter and that no member of the media attend the meeting.

A second bomb exploded on 5 October 1992 at the offices of the weekly magazine *Tinamit*. *Tinamit* has published articles critical of the government and has reportedly received death threats as a result. Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of journalists and workers at *Tinamit* magazine.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Journalists, as well as students and university teachers have in recent months been the

object of repeated human rights violations, threats and intimidation. On 14 May 1992 Andrés Ramírez Lara, a university lecturer at the Faculty of Economics, and José Arana Paz, a student at the Faculty of Psychology at the USAC, were killed in circumstances suggesting official security force involvement. Andrés Ramírez Lara had previously received anonymous death threats. (see UA 165/92, AMR 34/27/92 of 19 May 1992). In February 1992, university lecturer Pedro Us Soc and his wife Floridalma Ixtahualán received a series of threats, apparently linked to their association with Manuel Estuardo Peña, a professor of History at the USAC, who was shot "death-squad"-style. (See UA 87/92, AMR 34/12/92, 13 March 1992 and UA 56/92, AMR 34/09/92, 17 February 1992). A bomb was planted in the AEU building on 30 January 1992.

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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 at the bomb attacks and threats and intimidation directed against leaders and students of the AEU;
- asking for an immediate investigation into these incidents, including the bombing of the offices of *Tinamit* magazine and that those found to be responsible be brought to justice;
- asking for guarantees for the security of all students, citing especially those students named in the death threats as being targeted because of their involvement in a legal suit against the security forces and for the safety of workers and members of *Tinamit*.

APPEALS TO:

1. President of the Republic

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

2. Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio
Procurador de Derechos Humanos
Avenida Simeón Cañas 10-60 Zona 2,
Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telephone: +502 2 300874 - 76
Faxes: +502 2 81734
**Salutation: Sr. Procurador/Dear Mr.
Procurator**

3. Minister of Defence

Gral. José García Samayoa
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telephone: +502 2 21212
Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU
Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

4. President of the Supreme Court

Lic. Juan José Rodil Peralta
Presidente de la Corte Suprema de Justicia
Centro Cívico 21a Calle y 7a Avenida
Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telephone: +502 2 84323, 843203-08
**Salutation: Sr. Presidente/Dear Mr.
President**

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Attorney General

Lic. Acisclo Valladares Molina
Procurador General de la Nación
Procuraduría General de la Nación
18 Calle 10-36
Zona 1, Guatemala, GUATEMALA

(Head of the Presidential Coordinating Commission

of the Policies of the Executive relating to Human Rights)

Sr. Bernardo Neumann

Comisión Presidencial Coordinadora

de la Política del Ejecutivo en

materia de Derechos Humanos (COPREDEH)

15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13

Guatemala, GUATEMALA

University Students Association of the University of San Carlos

Asociación de Estudiantes Universitarios (AEU)

Ciudad Universitaria

Zona 12, 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 19 November 1992.