

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 34/44/91

Distr: UA/SC

UA 355/91 Ill-Treatment of Street Child

28 October 1991

GUATEMALA Walter Federico FLORES, aged 17

Amnesty International is very concerned at reports that on Wednesday 23 October 1991 Walter Federico Flores, aged 17, was severely beaten apparently by two Police cadets.

According to information received by Amnesty International, at about 10 pm on 23 October, two young men wearing police uniforms similar to those worn by the cadets at the Escuela de Capacitación de la Policía (Police Cadets Training School), reportedly stopped Walter Federico Flores in the area known as Botellón, at 4th Avenue and 19th Street in Zone 1 of Guatemala City. They asked for Walter Flores' identification, but the latter did not want to show them his birth certificate because, as has been reported to Amnesty International, the police normally tear them up. The two men then started to hit Walter Flores over the head with their truncheons, and when he fell, they kicked him in various parts of his body, especially in the stomach and ribs. Walter Flores was also severely beaten on both arms and his left leg. He was left unconscious under a bridge in the Botellón area and regained consciousness at approximately 11.30 pm. Walter Flores, bleeding profusely from his head and right cheek, made his way to the Hogar Rafael Ayau, the government center for abandoned children, where he was reportedly denied treatment. The boy went next to Covenant House (Casa Alianza), an organization which works with street children, where he was treated by a doctor.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the past year, Amnesty International has received an escalating number of reports of human rights violations against street children in Guatemala City, including beatings, torture, "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions, reportedly carried out by official security force agents, particularly the police, acting sometimes in plain clothes and sometimes in uniform. In other cases, abuses have been carried out by agents of private security firms (see Guatemala: Extrajudicial Executions and Human Rights Violations against Street Children, AMR 34/37/90 of August 1990, which documented many of these cases).

Approximately 39 legal suits against more than 50 National Police are currently pending with the Guatemalan courts and only in isolated cases have investigations resulted in the prosecution of those responsible. Children who have witnessed or given information concerning abuses directed against other street children have been subjected to reprisals, and those working with street children have also been subjected to harassment and intimidation. In July unidentified gunmen opened fire on Casa Alianza's crisis centre, after shouting death threats against Bruce Harris, its executive director, Casa Alianza staff and the street children (see UA 246/91 - Deaths Threats - Bruce Harris, Staff and Street Children of Covenant House (Casa Alianza),

AMR 34/37/91 of 18 July 1991). In August 1991, two street children were shot at by unidentified men and a third was illegally detained and tortured with the apparent complicity of two uniformed police agents in Guatemala City (see UA 275/91 - Attack on Street Children, AMR 34/36/91 of 12 August 1991 and UA 279/91 - Torture - Edwin Esteban Rodríguez García, AMR 34/37/91 of 16 August 1991).

Page 2 of UA 355/91

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

- expressing concern at the incident in which Walter Federico Flores was reportedly severely beaten by two alleged Police cadets;
- asking that the incident be thoroughly and impartially investigated and that those found responsible be brought to justice;
- urging the Government to take steps to ensure the security of street children and that they are no longer subjected to human rights violations.

APPEALS TO:

1) President

S.E. Jorge Serrano Elías **Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente**
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

2) Minister of the Interior

Lic. Fernando Hurtado Prem **Señor Ministro**
Ministro de Gobernación
Despacho Ministerial
Oficina No. 8, Primer Nivel
Palacio Nacional
Guatemala, Guatemala

Telegrams: Ministro Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala

Telexes: 5085 MINGOB GU

Faxes: + 502 2 518105

3) Director of Police

Cnel. Julio Enrique Paiz Bolaños **Señor Director**
Director General de la Policía Nacional
6 Avenida 13-71
Zona 1, Guatemala, Guatemala

Telegrams: Director Policia, Guatemala, Guatemala

4) Attorney General

Señor Acisclo Valladares **Señor Procurador General**
Procurador General de la Nación
Procuraduría General de la Nación
18 Calle 10-36
Zona 1, Guatemala, Guatemala

Telegrams: Procurador General, Guatemala, Guatemala

COPIES TO;

Lic. Ramiro de León Carpio
Procurador de Derechos Humanos
Avenida Simeón Cañas 10-61
Zona 2, Guatemala, Guatemala

**Telegrams: Procurador Derechos
Humanos,**
Guatemala, Guatemala

Faxes: +502 2 512026

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala in your country.

Casa Alianza
Apartado 400,
Gautemala, Guatemala

Diario Siglo XXI
7a Avenida 11-79
Edificio Galerias España, 6o piso
Zona 9, Guatemala, Guatemala

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 9 December 1991.