

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Extrajudicial Execution

13 December 1990

GUATEMALA

Diego Ic Suy, aged 30

Amnesty International is concerned about the circumstances surrounding the killing of 30-year-old Diego Ic Suy, a member of the Consejo de Comunidades Etnicas "Runujel Junam" (CERJ), Council of Ethnic Communities "We are all Equal", and resident of Chunimá, El Quiché department, on 10 December 1990.

According to sources in Guatemala, Diego Ic Suy, who had recently moved to Guatemala City, was returning home with three friends on the night of 10 December 1990, when he was shot and killed in Zone 4 of Guatemala City by four heavily armed masked men. Events leading up to his killing suggest Diego Ic Suy may have been killed by the security forces. In October 1990 Diego Ic Suy, together with four other villagers, fled their home town of Chunimá and sought refuge at the CERJ office in Santa Cruz del Quiché, after a CERJ delegate from their community, Sebastián Velásquez Mejía, "disappeared". He was later found dead. His seizure came after he had received a series of death threats accusing him of being a subversive because of his opposition to the ostensibly voluntary civil patrols. (See UA 404/90, AMR 34/57/90 of 9 October and follow-up AMR 34/68/90 of 7 November 1990.) All five villagers had also been accused by members of the Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PAC) Civil Defence Patrols, of being "guerrillas", because they refused to participate in the civil patrols.

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 in the ostensibly voluntary Civil Defence Patrols. Article 34 of the Guatemalan Constitution, which recognizes the right to freedom of association, states that no-one may be forced to serve in self-defence groups. 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 or have tried to withdraw from them, have been labelled "subversives" by the army and subjected to harassment, death threats and extrajudicial execution, sometimes by men in civilian clothes believed to be members or acting on behalf of the security forces. CERJ has, since its foundation, been the target of a wide range of human rights violations. Since March 1990, at least seven CERJ members are known to have been killed in circumstances suggesting official involvement (for information on previous attacks against CERJ members see UA 171/90, AMR 34/31/90 3 May; UA 289/90, AMR 34/42/90, 9 July and follow-ups AMR 34/49/90, 13 August and AMR 34/53/90, 2 August).

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

- expressing concern at the killing of Diego Ic Suy in circumstances suggesting security force involvement;

- urging the authorities to open a full, independent inquiry into his killing and that the results be made public.

APPEALS TO

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COPIES TO:

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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 24 January 1990.