

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 37/02/97

UA 269/97

Fear for safety

12 August 1997

**HONDURAS Ramón Custodio López, human rights defender, and his family  
Members of CODEH**

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Concern for the safety of Ramón Custodio López, Director of the *Comité para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos en Honduras (CODEH)*, Committee for the Defence of Human Rights in Honduras, his family and other members of CODEH, has been raised by recent heavy security force surveillance.

At 9pm on 9 August 1997, 15 men, allegedly members of the security forces, were reportedly covering the way in and out of "Los Dolores" square in the capital, Tegucigalpa, where the home of Ramón Custodio and the offices of CODEH are located. Ramón Custodio lodged a complaint with the Director of the *Dirección de Investigación Criminal (DIC)*, the Directorate of Criminal Investigations, who sent members of his office to check. However, the 15 men had vanished.

Amnesty International's concerns have been heightened by the fact that Ramón Custodio and other members of CODEH have long been the target of a campaign of intimidation, including death threats and surveillance, in an apparent attempt to restrict CODEH's legitimate activities.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

As a result of their work to bring military personnel responsible for past human rights violations to justice, members of local NGOs, including CODEH, as well as the Commissioner for Human Rights and some judges, have been receiving death threats over a long period of time (for more information see: *Continued struggle against impunity* (AMR 37/01/96, March 1996) and *The beginning of the end of impunity?* (AMR 37/01/95, June 1995) as well as UA 97/97 (AMR 37/01/97, 10 April 1997) on the latest death threats to members of another Honduran NGO, COFADEH.)

Amnesty International believes that this increase in intimidation of human rights defenders is directly related to their efforts to expose serious past and present human rights violations in Honduras and to pressurize the authorities into bringing the perpetrators to justice.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:**

- expressing serious concern for the safety of Ramón Custodio López, his relatives and members of CODEH following heavy security force surveillance against them;
  - calling for a prompt and thorough investigation into the surveillance, and into previous threats and acts of intimidation against Ramón Custodio and CODEH members, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
  - urging the government to take immediate measures to guarantee the safety of Ramón Custodio, his relatives and members of CODEH, and asking to be kept informed of developments;
- if possible, also:**
- express support for the work of CODEH on behalf of victims of human rights violations;
  - emphasise the need for appropriate protection to be given to all those involved in bringing to light the abuses committed by military in the past.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) President

S..E. Carlos Roberto Reina Idiaquez  
Presidente de la República de Honduras  
Casa Presidencial  
6<sup>a</sup> Avenida, 1<sup>a</sup> Calle  
Tegucigalpa, Honduras  
**Telegrams: Presidente, Tegucigalpa, Honduras**  
**Fax: +504-2 34-4947**  
**Salutation: Sr. President/Dear President**

2) Commander of the Army

Gral. Mario Hung Pacheco  
Comandante del Ejército  
Cuartel General, Estado Mayor,  
Comayagüela, Honduras  
**Fax: +504 37 3795**  
**Telegrams: Comandante del Ejercito, Comayaguela, Honduras**  
**Salutation Sr. General/General of the Army**

3) Attorney General

Lic. Edmundo Orellana Mercado  
Fiscal General  
Fiscalía General de la República  
Ministerio Público  
Edificio Castillo Poujol  
4° Avd, colonia Palmira  
Boulevard Morazán  
Tegucigalpa, Honduras  
**Fax: (504) 39 47 50**  
**Telegrams: Fiscal General, Tegucigalpa, Honduras**  
**Salutation: Sr. Fiscal General/Attorney General**

**Note: You may sometimes not be able to obtain a fax tone on these fax numbers outside Honduran office hours.**

**COPIES TO:**

1) Human rights organization

CODEH  
Plaza Los Dolores, Edificio 447 (mercado Maumar)  
Tegucigalpa, Honduras  
**Fax:+504 37-9238**

2) Ombusman

Lic. Leo Valladares Lanza  
Comisionado Nacional de Protección de los Derechos Humanos  
Avda. Los Próceres 3623  
Tegucigalpa MDC., Honduras  
Fax: +504 367213

3) Daily Newspaer

*Diario La Tribuna*  
Sr. Director  
Apartado 1501

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

and to diplomatic representatives of Honduras accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 28 September 1997.