

PUBLIC

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16 February 2005

UA 37/05 Fear for safety/death threats

MEXICO **Lydia Cacho Ribeiro (f), President of the *Centro Integral de Atención a las Mujeres (CIAM)*, Women's Assistance Centre, and human rights defender
Other staff members of CIAM**

Lydia Cacho Ribeiro, president of the organization *Centro Integral de Atención a las Mujeres (CIAM)*, Women's Assistance Centre, and staff at three CIAM shelters around Mexico, have received a number of death threats as a result of their work to protect the rights of women and girls. CIAM provides shelter, legal and medical assistance to women and girls, particularly to those who have been victims of domestic violence. Amnesty International believes that Lydia Cacho Ribeiro and others working for CIAM may be in danger.

CIAM has filed complaints regarding these threats at the federal Attorney General's Office (*Procuraduría General de la República*, PGR) in Mexico City and to the representative of the PGR in Cancún, Quintana Roo State, where CIAM is based. However, Amnesty International is unaware of any investigations at a federal or state level into the threats or any steps taken to provide Lydia Cacho Ribeiro and her staff with protection.

On 9 February, Lydia Cacho Ribeiro reportedly received two telephone calls from a former agent of the government's *Agencia Federal de Investigación (AFI)*, Federal Investigation Agency, whose wife and children are currently being sheltered by CIAM. The former agent told Lydia Cacho Ribeiro that he knew where she lived and that he could arrange for her to be killed, but first he would give her a chance to hand over his wife and children. The man had previously visited three shelters run by CIAM, where he threatened the staff with a gun because he believed his family were sheltering there. When Lydia Cacho Ribeiro filed a complaint about the incidents to the previous representative of the PGR in Cancún she was advised: "Do not mess with him, [because he's] well protected by his bosses", ("*no se meta con él [ya que está] muy protegido por sus jefes*").

In the first week of January, Lydia Cacho Ribeiro reported two threatening calls to her home from a man known to be connected with organized crime, whose wife and child are also being sheltered by CIAM after he threatened to kill his wife. The man told Lydia Cacho Ribeiro: "Stop protecting the bloody women or you will die" ("*deja de proteger a las pinches viejas o vas a morir*"). She reported the threats to the PGR in Mexico City. On 3 February, an unidentified individual whom Lydia Cacho Ribeiro believes is linked to this man called her mobile phone and told her: "stop giving information if you want to remain alive" ("*deje de dar información si quiere seguir viva*"). The man had previously threatened to kill Lydia Cacho Ribeiro and the staff of CIAM in November 2004, when he had threatened them with a gun, demanding that his wife and child be returned to him.

The local police in Cancún have reportedly obtained a list of individuals targeted by organized crime which includes Lydia Cacho Ribeiro's name, and the CIAM office has received several anonymous telephone death threats, after the organization reported the case of a man accused of sexually abusing children to the authorities. However, despite the complaints and appeals to the authorities for police protection, Lydia Cacho Ribeiro, the staff at CIAM offices and the victims who seek refuge there remain vulnerable.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Lydia Cacho Ribeiro, the staff of CIAM and the women and children under their protection, after the repeated death threats against them;

- calling for immediate measures to guarantee the safety of Lydia Cacho Ribeiro, workers at CIAM and the women and children who seek their protection, in accordance with their wishes;
- calling for an impartial, prompt and full investigation into the threats, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women calls on States to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of Quintana Roo State

Lic. Joaquín Hendricks Díaz

Gobernador del Estado de Quintana Roo

Palacio de Gobierno, Av. 22 de Enero y Héroes, Chetumal 77009, Estado de Quintana Roo, MÉXICO

Fax: + 52 983 832 06 20 (if someone answers, say “tono de fax por favor”)

Salutation: Dear Governor/ Señor Gobernador

Representative of the Attorney General of the Republic in Quintana Roo State

Sra. Imelda Calvillo

Delegada de la Procuraduría General de la República en el Estado de Quintana Roo

Avenida José López Portillo s/n, Región 93, Manzana 21, Lote 1, entre Avenida Kaba y Calle 16

Estado de Quintana Roo, MÉXICO

Fax: + 52 998 881 96 42

Salutation: Dear Representative/ Señora Delegada

Attorney General of the Republic

General Marcial Rafael Macedo de la Concha

Procurador General de la Republica

Procuraduría General de la República

Paseo de la Reforma nº 211-213, Piso 16

Col. Cuauhtémoc, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., C.P. 06500, MEXICO

Fax: + 52 55 53 46 09 83 / 08 (if someone answers, say “tono de fax por favor”)

Salutation: Señor Procurador General / Dear Attorney General

COPIES TO:

Chair of the Commission for Equality And Gender of the Mexican Senate

Senadora Aracely Escalante Jasso

Presidenta de la Comisión de Equidad y Género del Senado de la República

Torre del Caballito, Piso 16, Oficina 8, Reforma 10, Col. Tabacalera, México DF, 06030, MEXICO

CIAM - Human rights organization

Centro Integral de Atención a las Mujeres - CIAM Cancún A.C.

Calle 12 poniente · 66, SMZA 63 Cancún Quintana Roo 77500, MEXICO

and to diplomatic representatives of Mexico accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 March 2005.