

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Possible Extrajudicial Execution

27 February 1992

PARAGUAY:

Bernardo RAMIREZ, peasant farmer

Amnesty International is concerned about the killing of peasant farmer Bernardo Ramírez on 15 February 1992 in the locality of Yhovv, district of Corpus Christi, Canindiyu department, in circumstances suggesting he was the victim of extrajudicial execution.

According to information received by Amnesty International, on the evening of 15 February army personnel from the military detachment No 1 in Yhovv, Destacamento Militar Nro 1 de Yhovv, arrested peasant farmer Rodolfo Ramírez at a social gathering. He was taken to the house of Carlos Achucarro, president of the peasants' neighbourhood commission in Yhovv who together with Bernardo Ramírez, the detained man's brother, accompanied the military personnel and Rodolfo Ramírez to his home. There, in circumstances which remain unclear, an army sergeant shot and wounded Carlos Achucarro and a soldier shot and killed Bernardo Ramírez. Rodolfo Ramírez, who reportedly witnessed the killing, was released without charge on 22 February.

Amnesty International has no information about an official investigation being opened into the incident, nor whether the army personnel implicated in the killing have been placed under arrest pending the outcome of any inquiry.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since General Andrés Rodríguez took power following a military coup in February 1989, respect for fundamental human rights in Paraguay has improved significantly. Restrictions on trade unions, political parties and the news media have been lifted; political prisoners have been released and many political exiles were allowed to return to the country. Repressive laws frequently used by the previous government of General Alfredo Stroessner to detain prisoners of conscience were repealed and steps were taken to bring to justice some of those responsible for past human rights violations. However, reports of human rights violations - particularly in the context of land disputes - continue to be received. Peasant farmers attempting to establish land claims have been violently expelled by army and police personnel and peasant community leaders have been subject to arbitrary arrest and ill-treatment. Amnesty International has received a number of reports in the last three years of the killing of peasant community leaders in circumstances suggesting extrajudicial execution.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the death of Bernardo Ramírez in circumstances suggesting he may have been victim of extrajudicial execution;

- requesting an immediate independent inquiry into the killing, in order to establish responsibility and bring those responsible to justice, the results of which should be made public.

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APPEALS TO

1) President:

General Andrés Rodríguez
Sr Presidente de la República del Paraguay
Palacio de Gobierno
Asunción, PARAGUAY

Telegrams: General Rodriguez, Asuncion, Paraguay

Salutation: Sr Presidente / Dear President

2) Minister of the Interior:

General Orlando Machuca Vargas
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Estrella y Montevideo
Asunción, PARAGUAY

Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Asuncion, Paraguay

Salutation: Sr Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Minister of Defence:

Sr Ministro de Defensa Nacional
General Angel Souto Hernández
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Avda Mcal. López y Vice Pdte. Sánchez
Asunción, PARAGUAY

Telegrams: Ministro Defensa Nacional, Asuncion, Paraguay

Salutation: Sr Ministro / Dear Minister

4) Attorney General:

Dr Luis Escobar Faella
Fiscal General del Estado
Palacio de Justicia
Asunción, PARAGUAY

Telegrams: Fiscal General del Estado, Asuncion, Paraguay

**Salutation: Sr Fiscal General del Estado /
Dear Attorney General**

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO: diplomatic representatives of Paraguay in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 9 April 1992.