

PUBLIC

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UA 278/98

Fear for safety

29 October 1998

PERUGiulia Tamayo León (f) women's rights activist

There is concern for the safety of Giulia Tamayo León, a prominent women's rights activist, after her home was broken into on 20 October 1998 and many of her working papers and files relating to her campaign for women's rights stolen or tampered with. Since then she has also received several intimidatory phone calls.

Giulia Tamayo, a prominent women's rights activist, is currently campaigning against cases of forced sterilization of women in Peru. The fact that many valuable items were not taken in the burglary suggests it was politically motivated.

Amnesty International believes the theft is an attempt by the authorities to intimidate Giulia Tamayo and force her to stop her legitimate work on violence against women in the health and public sectors, and other issues of women's human rights.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since a law authorising sterilization of women as a means of family planning was introduced in 1995, women's groups have been actively campaigning against its use. They allege that the law has been abused to put pressure, particularly on poor and indigenous women, to be sterilized. They argue that the real motive is not to enhance women's reproductive rights but to reduce birth rates.

In February 1998 the Health Ministry announced that such allegations would be investigated and a compensation scheme considered. No report is yet known, however, to have been published.

Critics of Peru's government continue to be subjected to harassment, abductions and attacks. Urgent Actions have recently been issued by Amnesty International on behalf of a number of high profile female human rights activists. This includes Delia Revoredo Marsano de Mur, a prominent former judge and human rights advocate who recently fled Peru following repeated death threats (see UA 135/98, AMR 46/07/98, 29 April 1998), Elba Greta Minaya Calle, judge and defender of human rights, as a result of continued intimidation against her (see UA 279/97, AMR 46/34/97, 20 August 1997), and Sofia Macher, Executive Secretary of the independent Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos (CNDDHH), National Coordinating Committee of Human Rights, after she reportedly received death threats (see UA 239/98, AMR 46/15/98, 10 September 1998).

Although President Fujimori has pledged that women should not be "the ones left behind in the 21st century", abolishing discrimination on the grounds of gender has yet to be translated into effective policies and practical measures.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Giulia Tamayo León after her home was broken into on 20 October 1998 and many of her working papers and files relating to her campaign for women's rights stolen or tampered with;
- requesting that all necessary steps be taken to guarantee her safety;

- requesting a prompt and effective investigation into acts of intimidation against Giulia Tamayo, that the findings be published, and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- reminding the Government of Peru of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 19 : "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression."

APPEALS TO:

President

Presidente Alberto Fujimori
Presidente de la República del Perú
Palacio de Gobierno
Plaza Mayor, Lima 1
PERU

Telegrams: President Fujimori, Lima, Peru

Faxes: + 511 426 6770 (if voice answers, ask: "por favor, me puede dar tono de fax")

Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Dear President

Health Minister

Sr. Merino Costa Bauer
Ministro de Salud Pública
Ministerio de Salud Pública
Av. Salaverry s/n, Cuadra 8
Jesús María
Lima 11, PERU

Telegrams: Health Minister, Lima, Peru

Faxes: + 511 433 0660 (if voice answers, ask: "por favor, me puede dar tono de fax")

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

Attorney General

Dr. Miguel Aljovín Swayne
Fiscal de la Nación
Fiscalía de la Nación
Av. Abancay, cuadra 5 s/n
Lima 1
PERU

Telegrams: Attorney General, Lima, Peru

Faxes: + 511 426 2474

Salutation: Sr. Fiscal de la Nación / Dear Attorney General

COPIES TO:

Women's Rights organization
Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristán
Parque Hernán Velarde No. 42
Lima 1, PERU

and to diplomatic representatives of Peru accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 December 1998.

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression";
Article 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>