

PUBLIC

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UA 130/03

Fear for Safety

09 May 2003

VENEZUELA

Miguel Díaz Loreto (m)
Dinorah María Díaz Loreto (f)
Jairo Alexis Díaz Loreto (m)
Bladimir Díaz (m)
Alexandra Gualdron (f),
Enmary Cava (f)

Dinorah María Díaz Loreto, Jairo Alexis Díaz Loreto, Bladimir Díaz, Miguel Díaz Loreto, Alexandra Gualdron and Enmary Cava are all family members from the town of Cagua in the State of Aragua. They have been subjected to escalating death threats and harassment in recent months, allegedly by agents of the Aragua State Police and Amnesty International is seriously concerned for their safety.

The family members have been pressing the local authorities to carry out an exhaustive investigation into the killing of brothers Robert Díaz Loreto and Antonio Díaz Loreto and their father Octavio Ignacio Díaz, who were killed in suspicious circumstances, by agents of the Aragua State Police on 6 January.

Since the investigation into the killings began the family members have reportedly been subjected to systematic harassment and death threats. The most recent incident took place on 26 April when police agents entered the house of Miguel Ángel Díaz Loreto reportedly without a warrant. They wanted to arrest him for his alleged involvement in a recent crime. As a result of the police operation, Miguel Ángel was temporarily detained by the police.

Whilst also in temporary custody during the operation, Dinorah María Díaz was reportedly told by one of the police agents that he would kill all of her family, if they continued to pursue an investigation into the deaths of Robert, Antonio and Octavio Ignacio Díaz. Miguel Ángel was also urged to stop supporting the case.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Many Venezuelan states, including Aragua, Bolívar, Anzóatequi, Portuguesa and Falcón, have a history of extra-judicial executions carried out by the police and a failure to protect witnesses and family members of the victims. Both the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights have intervened in several of these cases, requesting that local authorities and the Venezuelan state investigate these crimes and provide protection to those involved. However, the measures requested by the Inter-American System have not, in most cases, been carried out effectively.

In December 2002, Cesar Emilio Machado was reportedly assaulted and threatened by the Municipal Police in Girardot, city of Maracay, Aragua State in order to prevent him from testifying in a trial against the Municipal Police (see UA 32/03, 29 January 2003, AMR 53/004/2003).

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Dinorah María Díaz Loreto, Jairo Alexis Díaz Loreto, Bladimir Díaz, Miguel Díaz Loreto, Alexandra Gualdron and Enmary Cava and asking the authorities to take action to guarantee their safety in accordance with their wishes;
- calling on the authorities to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the death threats and harassment experienced by these individuals, to publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on the authorities to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the killings of Robert Díaz Loreto, Antonio Díaz Loreto and Octavio Ignacio Díaz, to publish the results and bring those responsible to justice.

APPEALS TO:

Attorney General

Fiscal General de la República,
Dr. Isaías Rodríguez
Avenida Universidad,
Esquina Pele el ojo a Misericordia, frente a Parque Carabobo,
Caracas, VENEZUELA

Telegram: Fiscal General de la República, Caracas, Venezuela

Fax: + 58 212 576 44 19

Salutation: Estimado Señor Fiscal General/Dear Attorney General

Local Governor

Gobernador de del estado Aragua
Sr. Didalco Bolívar
Palacio de Gobierno
Maracay
Estado de Aragua, VENEZUELA

Telegram: Gobernador del estado, Aragua, Maracay, Estado de Aragua, Venezuela

Fax: +58 243 2377002

Salutation: Estimado Señor/Dear Sir

Local Police

Comandante de la policía de Aragua
Comisario Angel Mercado
(no address available)

Telegram: Comandante de la policía de Aragua, Maracay, Estado de Aragua, Venezuela

Fax: +58 243 235 1220

Salutation: Estimado Señor Comisario/Dear Sir

Human Rights Ombudsman

Defensoría del Pueblo
Dr. Germán Mundaraín
Bellas Artes comienzo Avenida México frente al Ateneo de Caracas
Plaza Morelos
Caracas, VENEZUELA

Telegram: Defensoría del Pueblo, Caracas, Venezuela

Fax: + 58 212 575 4467 (if a voice answers, say "tono de fax por favor")

Email: gmundarain@defensoria.gov.ve

Salutation: Estimado Señor/Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

Commission for Human Rights, Justice and Peace for the State of Aragua

Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Justicia y Paz del Estado Aragua
Calle Negro Primero, Oeste
N 98, frente al
Liceo 'Valentin Espinal', Cruce con Av. Ayacucho, Maracay
Estado Aragua, VENEZUELA

Telefax: +58 243 233 6363 (if a voice answers, say "tono de fax por favor")

and to diplomatic representatives of Venezuela accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 June 2003.