

PUBLIC

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Death threats/ fear for safety

28 April 2000

ARGENTINA

Hilda Presman - Human rights activist, member of the Provincial Commission of Human Rights, Corrientes (Comisión Provincial de Derechos Humanos de Corrientes)

Human rights activist Hilda Presman has received death threats because of her work in the northeastern province of Corrientes. There are serious fears for her safety.

Hilda Presman is a member of the non-governmental organization *Comisión Provincial de Derechos Humanos de Corrientes*, the Corrientes Provincial Human Rights Commission, which works on behalf of victims of police and institutional violence and supports the efforts of their relatives to achieve justice.

On 14 April she received a typed death threat in the post, which read: "The Corrientes Branch of the "Capitán Astiz" Association knows about your participation...in the heroic events staged by the people of Corrientes, which are a matter of public knowledge, as the attached press cutting shows. We are informing you that we do not accept your participation...you are a heathen and a traitor, and we are Roman Catholics who fight for a national cause and not a Jewish Zionist cause. Therefore this association has decided: 1) to sentence to death the Marxist Leninist Jewish Zionist Hilda Presman; 2)the action will be carried out by a group of our members in eight days' time; 3) no ammunition will be wasted...you will be stabbed to death in complete silence". (*"La agrupacion "Capitán Astiz", Sucursal Corrientes, al haber tomado conocimiento de su participación ... en los heroicos hechos protagonizados por el pueblo de Corrientes que son de público conocimiento, conforme lo atestigua el recorte que adjuntamos, nos dirigimos a Ud para comunicarle que de ninguna manera aceptamos su participación ... Ud es Atea y traidora y nosotros somos Católicos Apostólicos y Romanos que luchamos por una causa netamente nacional y no JUDIA SIONISTA. En consecuencia esta agrupación ha resuelto: 1) Condenar a muerte a la marxista leninista atea y judia sionista Hilda Presman; 2) La acción será ejecutada por un comando de nuestras filas, en un plazo de 8 días ... 3) No se desperdiciará munición ... por lo que será ejecutada con arma blanca y en el más absoluto silencio."*)

The threat refers to a December 1999 demonstration demanding pay increases, education and other social reforms from the provincial government. Two youths died and at least 50 others were injured in clashes between the provincial police (*Gendarmería*) and protestors at the Belgrano Bridge in Corrientes. A cutting from the local newspaper *Epoca* attached to the death threat described how Hilda Presman had given an open invitation to a memorial service for the two youths, and a photograph of her in the cutting was defaced with the words "stinking Jewish bitch" (*Judia puta hedionda*).

There is no information about the "Capitán Astiz" Association. A complaint about the death threat has been filed before the Juzgado de Instrucción Criminal Court No. 2, and it has been publicly denounced.

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

- expressing concern at the death threat sent to Hilda Presman;

- asking for an immediate, thorough and independent investigation into the death threat, and asking to be kept informed of the progress of any investigation already underway;
- asking the authorities to guarantee her safety, and bring those found responsible for the death threats to justice;
- expressing concern that human rights activists are being harassed for carrying out their legitimate and peaceful work, and asking the authorities to make public statements supporting their work in defence of human rights.

APPEALS TO:

Interior and Justice Minister, Corrientes Province

Ministro de Gobierno y Justicia
de la Provincia de Corrientes
Sr. Raúl Ripa

Salta 511 - 3400 Corrientes - Argentina

Telegrams: Ministro Gobierno y Justicia, Corrientes, Argentina

Fax: + 54 3783 423249

Salutation: Dear Minister

Head of Provincial Police

Jefe de la Policía de la Provincia de Corrientes

Julio Angel Fernandez

Jefatura de Policia de la Provincia de Corrientes

Quintana 853, CP 3400 Corrientes, Argentina

Telegrams: Jefe Policia Provincial, Corrientes, Argentina

Fax: + 54 3783 424841

Salutation: Dear Chief of Police

Minister of Interior

Ministro del Interior

Dr. Federico Storani

Ministerio del Interior

Balcarce 50

1064 Buenos, Argentina

Fax: + 5411 4342 6081

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores

Sr. Adalberto Rodriguez Giavarini

Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores

Esmeralda 1212

1007 Buenos Aires, Argentina

Fax: + 5411 4819 7317

Human Rights Organization

Comisión Provincial de Derechos Humanos de Corrientes,

Fax: + 5437 83-422815

and to diplomatic representatives of Argentina accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 9 June 2000.