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Fear for safety

24 November 1999

ARGENTINA

Lidia ABINEME, human rights organisation activist

Human rights activist Lidia Abineme was assaulted by armed men on 19 November 1999. Amnesty International believes she was attacked because she is pressing for a thorough investigation into an assault on her son by police officers, and is concerned for her safety.

Lidia Abineme is an activist for the human rights organisation *Coordinadora Contra la Represión Policial e Institucional* (CORREPI), Association against Police and Institutional Repression. She had just taken part in a gathering at the Plaza de Mayo square in Buenos Aires when two men got out of a red car, one holding a gun to her waist while the other knocked her to the ground from behind. Before they made off one attacker told Lidia Abineme to "Stop interfering in this" ("*Déjate de joder con esto*") before the other ordered him to "leave her, that's enough!" ("*¡Déjala, ya está!*"). It is alleged that a nearby police patrol car failed to intervene.

Lidia Abineme's son, 17-year-old Juan Manuel Valdés, suffered a broken arm when he was beaten by police officers at *Destacamento Sur de la Policía*, South Police Station, in Villa Gesell, Buenos Aires Province, on 26 January 1999. He and a group of friends had gone to inquire about another friend who had just been arrested. Police officers came out of the station and beat them, fracturing Juan Manuel's arm, and arrested the whole group, but released them shortly afterwards, apparently when they realised that several were minors. However, police officers followed them when they left, and threatened to arrest them again when they tried to telephone their parents.

CORREPI lawyers filed a judicial complaint about the assault, and Lidia Abineme has been pressing for a full investigation. CORREPI members have suffered death threats and intimidation in the past.

On 22 November 1999 a judicial complaint about the 19 November attack was filed on behalf of Lidia Abineme before the courts (*Juzgado Nacional de Primera Instancia en lo Correccional n°8 de Dolores*).

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

- expressing concern at the attack on Lidia Abineme in her role as a human rights activist for CORREPI and as the mother of Juan Manuel Valdés;
- asking for an immediate and thorough investigation into the attack on Lidia Abineme with the method and outcome made public, and for those found responsible to be brought to justice;
- asking for assurances that the Argentine authorities will take all necessary steps to protect Lidia Abineme and her family from further intimidation;
- inquiring about the progress of the investigation into the assault on Juan Manuel Valdés;
- urging the authorities to publicly repudiate all harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders, and to publicly recognize the important contribution that human rights defenders make to the protection of human rights and the promotion of a just, democratic and equitable society.

APPEALS TO:

Please note that on 10 December 1999 president-elect Fernando de la Rúa will take office. After this date please address government appeals not to individual ministers, but to the relevant ministry.

President

Excmo. Sr. Presidente de la República Argentina
Dr. Carlos Saúl Menem
Casa Rosada, Balcarce 50, Buenos Aires C.F., ARGENTINA
Telegrams: President Menem, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Faxes: + 54 114 331 6376 / 331 1849
Salutation: Excelencia / Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

Sr Ministro del Interior
Dr Carlos Corach, Ministerio del Interior
25 de Mayo 101, 1002 Buenos Aires C.F., ARGENTINA
Telegrams: Ministro Interior, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Faxes: + 54 114 331 1156
(if voice, ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")
Salutation: Sr Ministro / Dear Minister

Minister of Justice

Ministro de Justicia, Dr Raúl Granillo Ocampo
Ministerio de Justicia, Sarmiento 329, 5o. piso
1041 Buenos Aires, C.F., ARGENTINA
Telegrams: Ministro Justicia, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Faxes: + 54 114 328 6038 / 328 6039
Salutation: Sr Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organisation

CORREPI
Corrientes 1785 - 2º C
1042 Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA
Faxes: + 54 114 371 8066 (if voice, ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Newspaper

Página 12, Av. Belgrano 673
Buenos Aires, C.F., ARGENTINA
Faxes: + 54 114 334 2330

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 5 January 2000.