

PUBLIC

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5 March 2003

UA 60/03 Death threats/fear for safety/medical concern/torture and ill-treatment

ECUADOR Carlos Javier Paredes (m), aged 19 – army conscript
His family

Carlos Javier Paredes, an army conscript, was threatened with death by two army personnel while receiving treatment at the Military Hospital in the capital, Quito. He has also suffered ill-treatment in the Military Hospital, and medical treatment has been withheld on a number of occasions.

These incidents follow a formal complaint made earlier in February 2003 by Carlos Javier Paredes' family that the conscript was tortured and ill-treated while on military service in September 2002. Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Carlos Javier Paredes and that of his family.

An Amnesty International delegation interviewed Carlos Javier Paredes and his mother on 22 February, during a research mission to Ecuador. Carlos Javier Paredes told Amnesty International that the death threat occurred on 20 February. As two army officers walked past Carlos Javier Paredes, they allegedly said "*a ese Paredes hay que matarlo*" ("we have to kill Paredes"). Carlos Javier Paredes claims he has been verbally abused on several occasions by army personnel in the hospital. He says he has recently been denied medicines and food on several occasions, which has impaired his recovery. Amnesty International believes that these incidents represent attempts to force his family to drop the complaint of ill-treatment brought against the military.

In September 2002, Carlos Javier Paredes was stationed at an army barracks in Fuerte Altahualpa, Machachi, Pichincha province. After returning two days late from a period of leave, he was allegedly punished by being forced to wear a tyre around his neck for 12 days. He was then reportedly forced to fight against other conscripts until he lost consciousness. Carlos Javier Paredes complained to his superiors of nausea, headaches and problems with his vision after this incident. However, he was forced to fight on two other occasions despite allegedly vomiting blood as a result of the blows received in the first fight. When he told his superiors that he was feeling unwell and could not fight he was verbally and physically abused. After Carlos Javier Paredes' family complained to his superior officers about his torture and ill-treatment, the same officers tried to persuade him to claim he was beaten during a robbery outside the military barracks.

Carlos Javier Paredes was taken to hospital in December 2002. In hospital he was diagnosed with displacement of the vertebra and also had to have neurological surgery. To date, Carlos Javier Paredes continues to wear a neck collar and may have to undergo further surgery on his head.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Carlos Javier Paredes and his family;
- urging the authorities to do everything in their power to guarantee the safety of Carlos Javier Paredes and his family in line with their international obligations;
- calling for an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the alleged torture and ill-treatment of Carlos Javier Paredes, and the death threat made against him;
- expressing concern at reports that he has been denied food and medical treatment several times while in hospital, and urging that he receive all necessary care and treatment;
- reminding the authorities of their duty to ensure that human rights violations are investigated and punished.

APPEALS TO:

Attorney General

Dra. Mariana Yépez de Velasco
Ministra Fiscal General del Estado
Av. Eloy Alfaro N 32 240 y República
Quito, Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 2559 447

Email: fiscalia@uio.satnet.net

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/ Sra. Ministra

Minister of Defence

Gral. Nelson Herrera Nieto
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Ministerio de Defensa Nacional
La Exposición 208, (La Recoleta)
Quito, Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 2580 431

Salutation: Dear Minister/ Sr. Ministro

Chief of the Armed Forces

Gral. de División Oswaldo Jarrin Roman,
Jefe del Comando Conjunto
de las Fuerzas Armadas
La Exposición 208, (La Recoleta)
Quito, Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 2583 394

Salutation: Dear General/ Sr. General

Commander General of the Army

Gral. Octavio Romero Ochoa
Comandante General de la Fuerza Terrestre
La Exposición 208, (La Recoleta)
Quito, Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 2582 638 (If a voice answers, ask for the fax: "me da tono de fax por favor")

Salutation: Dear General/ Sr. General

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organization

Comisión Ecuatólica de Derechos Humanos - CEDHU
Carlos Ibarra 176 y 10 de Agosto
Edif. Yuraj Pirca, 9no. piso
Quito, Ecuador

Fax: + 593 2 2589 272 (If a voice answers, ask for the fax: "me da tono de fax por favor")

and to diplomatic representatives of Ecuador accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 16 April 2003.