

6 December 2000

Further information on UA 362/00 (AMR 18/13/00, 27 November 2000) - Fear for Safety / Ill-treatment / Medical Concern

Margarita Terán, women's union activist

New names: Leonardo Romero, health adviser  
Antonio Gangas ]  
Víctor Zapata ]  
Luciano Cruz ] coca leaf growers  
Bonifacio Condori ]  
Javier Lorocachi ]

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Margarita Terán Gonzales was released on 1 December on the orders of a judge. Leonardo Romero and five others are still detained at *El Abra* Prison, and they are believed to be in danger of torture.

Margarita Terán, leader of a women's coca-leaf growers union, has been accused of masterminding a peasant farmers' blockade, during which a police officer and his wife were allegedly murdered. The judge, Roger Triveño, accepted that she had been at a meeting at Shinahota city at the time.

Margarita Terán has to report to the court in Vinchuta twice a week, and she is not allowed to leave her town without the permission of the judge until the case is formally closed.

Health adviser Leonardo Romero, who works in Vinchuta, and the five coca-leaf growers named above, are still in custody, accused of criminal conspiracy, terrorism and murder. Police transporting them by helicopter reportedly stuck guns in their mouths and threatened to throw them out of the aircraft if they did not confess.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The security forces in the El Chapare region are enforcing a government program to eradicate coca-leaf crops. In the process they have committed serious human rights abuses against coca-leaf growers and peasant farmers.

In September 2000 peasant farmers and other activists blockaded the main roads in the region, calling on the government to come up with alternative development policies, implement agreements made with peasant organizations, demilitarise the area and respect the human rights of coca-leaf farmers. The security forces put down the protest violently, killing nine peasants. Two security force officers were also killed, and the bodies of four soldiers and the wife of one of them, who went missing at the time, were found later.

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

- welcoming the release of Margarita Terán Gonzales;
- urging the authorities to guarantee the safety of Leonardo Romero, Antonio Gangas, Víctor Zapata, Luciano Cruz, Bonifacio Condori and Javier Lorocachi;

- asking the authorities what charges have been brought against them;
- urging that they be released if they are not charged with a recognizably criminal offense;
- calling for an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into both civilian and military killings during the recent protests, and for the results to be made public and those responsible to be brought to justice.

**APPEALS TO:**

Ministry of Government

Sr. Ministro de Gobierno  
Guillermo Fortún  
Ministerio de Gobierno  
Av. Arce esq. Belisario Salinas  
La Paz, Bolivia

**Fax: + 59 12 442 589**

**Salutation: Dear Minister / Sr.Ministro**

Ministry of Justice

Sr. Ministro de Justicia  
Luis Vásquez  
Ministerio de Justicia  
Palacio de Comunicaciones Piso 6,  
Avenida Mariscal Santa Cruz  
La Paz, Bolivia

**Fax: + 59 12 392 982 (If the call is answered, say "Fax, por favor"  
and wait for the signal)**

**Salutation: Dear Minister / Sr. Ministro**

**COPIES TO:**

Non-governmental organization

*Red Andina de Información*  
25 de Mayo, entre Jordan y Colama  
Edif. Cine Avaroa 3er piso. Casilla 4817  
Cochabamba, Bolivia

**Fax: + 59 14 252 835**

Ombudsperson

Defensora del Pueblo  
Ana María Romero de Campero  
Calle Heriberto Gutierrez 2374  
Casilla 792  
La Paz, Bolivia

and to diplomatic representatives of Bolivia accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 16 January 2001.