

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 53/08/99

UA 184/99

Death threats/Fear for Safety/ possible
extrajudicial execution

27 July 1999

VENEZUELA

John Alejandro Linares Peña, killed
Andrés Eloy Linares Peña,) death threats
Adriana Linares Peña (f), aged 13)
Omar León Hernández)
Six unidentified neighbours)

On 14 June 1999 John Alejandro Linares Peña was allegedly extrajudicially executed by members of the *Policía Metropolitana* (Metropolitan Police) in Caracas. Amnesty International fears for the safety of his family and friends, who have received death threats from the Metropolitan Police.

Members of the Metropolitan Police arrived at the home of the Linares Peña family on 14 June 1999. John Alejandro Linares Peña apparently started running when he saw the police. He was chased and gave himself up. Police arrested him but a member of the Metropolitan Police reportedly shot John Linares in the stomach. He was taken away in a car by the police, reportedly wounded but still alive. However, his body was later found in the *Hospital Periférico de Catia* with six bullet wounds.

Andrés Eloy Linares Peña, John's brother, received a death threat after he pleaded with the police not to use their firearms and pointed out that John was unarmed. Their sister, 13-year-old Adriana Linares Peña, was also present.

On 16 July 1999, as Andrés Eloy Linares, Omar León Hernández and six other neighbours were painting the entrance of their apartment block, they were searched by several members of the police force, who told them: "*si se mueven los matamos*" ("if you move, you are dead").

A complaint about the killing has been filed with the *Policía Técnica Judicial* (Criminal Investigation Police). However, no investigation has been initiated into the killing, or the death threats, because a public attorney (*fiscal*) has not been assigned to the case. Amnesty International is calling for a full and independent investigation into the circumstances and cause of John Linares's death.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During 1998 Amnesty International was told about dozens of people killed by the security forces in circumstances suggesting excessive use of force or, in some cases, extrajudicial execution (see UA 221/98, AMR 53/07/98, 14 August 1998). These incidents are rarely fully investigated and in very few cases have those responsible been brought to justice.

In addition, Amnesty International has received reports of human rights defenders and community activists being threatened and harassed.

Since President Hugo Chávez Frías took office in February, Amnesty International has received several reports of torture and ill-treatment.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Andrés Eloy, Adriana Linares Peña and León Omar Hernández, and calling on the authorities to guarantee their safety;
- calling for a full, impartial and prompt investigation into the circumstances, manner and cause of the death of John Alejandro Linares Peña, and for the findings to be made public;
- calling for those responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

General Attorney

Dr Iván Darío Badell
Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General de la República
Parque Carabobo, Av Universidad
Caracas,
VENEZUELA

Telegrams: Fiscal General, Caracas, Venezuela

Faxes: + 58 2 577 2144

Salutation: Sr. Fiscal General / Dear Attorney General

Minister of the Interior

Doctor Ignacio Arcaya
Ministro de Relaciones Interiores
Ministerio de Relaciones Interiores
Carmelitas a Santa Capilla
Caracas, Venezuela

Faxes: + 58 2 861 19 67 / 861 0363

Salutation: Señor Ministro/ Dear Minister

Metropolitan Police

General Jesús Camacho Kairuz
Comandante General de la Policía Metropolitana
Calle Real de Cotiza,
San José, Caracas,
VENEZUELA

Faxes: +58 2 864 3238

Salutation: Comandante General / Dear General

COPIES TO:

Human Rights organization

Red de Apoyo por la Justicia y la Paz
Apartado Postal 17.476, Parque Central,
Caracas,
VENEZUELA

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 7 September 1999.