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@DEATH IN CUSTODY AND TORTURE

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Amnesty International is concerned about the torture that detainees are reported to undergo during their interrogation in establishments run by the *Oficina de Investigacionaes del Delito*, OID, the Crime Investigation Office. According to Information received by Amnesty International, between June and August 1992 one person died in custody after being tortured and three were subjected to torture.

Felipe MOREIRA CHAVEZ

Felipe Moreira Chávez was detained on 20 August 1992 in Quevedo, province of Los Ríos, by members of the police and accused of assaulting a bank. He was taken to the *Oficina de Investigación del Delito*, Office of Crime Investigation, where he was reported to have been subjected to torture. His relatives claim that he died under electric torture.

On 22 August Radio Quito reported that the guards of the local cemetery said that the body of Felipe Moreira had been left in the morgue by various policemen. People who saw his body said it had many bruises at his finger tips and feet. The Quevedo police has publicly denied responsibility for this death, saying that Felipe Moreira died after a fall, when he attempted to escape. As of 26 September the Ministry of Government and Police, had made no public statement regarding this death.

William Fausto ANDRADE

William Fausto Andrade was detained on 6 June 1992 at his home in the Parroquia El Eno, Sucumbios province, in the Amazon region. According to reports, he was taken by two uniformed policemen and four persons in civilian clothes to the police station at Lago Agrio, where he was accused of being responsible for someone's death. In the evening he was taken by five policemen to the Aguarico river, where he was interrogated under torture. He was released on 12 June.

The Sucumbios human rights office wrote to the police superintendent, asking that they investigate the alleged torture and order a medical examination. The results are not known yet.

Víctor Hugo CADENA

Víctor Hugo CADENA was detained on 25 July 1992 by the police in a street in the Atahualpa housing development, in the South of Quito, the capital. He was detained and hooded by two agents and taken to a building where he had his eyes covered and his wrists tied while being interrogated by four policemen about the theft of some motor-bikes. During his interrogation the police allegedly kicked him in the stomach and beat him on the legs. He was then reportedly hung with his arms tied behind his back. Electricity was also reportedly applied to his body. Almost unconscious, and unable to move, he was put in a cell with other detainees.

On 28 July, a police agent reportedly gave him some money and released him, warning him not to denounce what had happened to him. Only then did he realize that he was being held at the Pichincha offices of the OID. His wife had looked for him there but his name did not appear in the registry book.

On 6 August, Victor Hugo Cadena presented a formal complaint to the head of the OID regarding his detention, incommunication and torture. On 11 August a medical doctor from the Procuraduría General del Estado, Office of the General Prosecutor, certified that his body presented marks and bruises. In the official reply received, the OID denies the detention. Víctor Hugo Cadena subsequently reported receiving threatening phone calls and visits from OID agents who menaced him with detaining him again unless he withdrew his complaint.

Johny Julio LARA TERAN

Julio Lara was detained on 17 July 1992 in the street in a northern quarter of Quito, and taken to the Centro de Detención Provisional (CDP), the Provisional Detention Centre. The following day he was taken to the Pichincha province headquarters of the OID and questioned about a robbery. According to reports, he was beaten and hung by the arms in order to force him to confess to the crime. He suffered the fracture of an arm and was then asked to sign that the fracture was the product of a fall from a horse. A police report made at the time of his detention is reported to state that he showed no signs of blows, bruises nor visible wounds. He was returned to the CDP where he was held without receiving medical attention until 29 July, the day he was released.

BACKGROUND

The *Oficina de Investigaciones del Delito* is the office that succeeded the *Servicio de Investigaciones Criminales*, Criminal Investigation Service, after its dissolution in September 1991 by the government of former president Rodrigo Borja. The government decreed the dissolution of the SIC, following the report of the *Special Commission of Inquiries to Investigate the "disappearance" of the Restrepo Brothers*. This Commission concluded that members of the SIC were responsible for their "disappearance" and death in January 1988. The Report stated that the investigative methods of the SIC "included the use of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment".

Over the years, Amnesty International has received frequent reports of torture by the security forces from Ecuador, including the police. Many of the reported victims are people said to have been suspected of committing petty crimes such as robbery or theft. The reports suggest that the torture and ill-treatment of ordinary criminal suspects is a common practice during police interrogation and that it is tolerated by or carried out with the acquiescence of senior police authorities.

Ecuadorean legislation forbids the use of torture and the government has ratified international treaties that oppose its use, including the United Nations Conventions Against Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. This Convention states that each state party is to prevent torture and make it a punishable offence.

Amnesty International is calling for full and impartial inquiries into the alleged death under torture of Felipe Moreira Chávez and the allegations that William Fausto Andrade, Víctor Hugo Cadena and Johnny Julio Lara Terán were tortured, that the results be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice.

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