

19 July 2000

Further information on UA 52/00 (AMR 45/01/00, 28 February 2000) - Fear for Safety / Ill-treatment

PARAGUAY Francisco CARBALLO FIGUEREDO (15)
 Rubén Darío ALCARAZ (17)
 and other detainees at the "Panchito López" juvenile
 detention centre

Some 200 minors are still held at the *Panchito López* juvenile detention centre, although the government has maintained for several years that all the inmates were shortly to be transferred to a new purpose-built facility. Amnesty International considers that conditions of detention at *Panchito López* amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Eight inmates died in a fire at *Panchito López* on 11 February, and at least 20 others suffered serious burns. Since then the government has told Amnesty International and other international organisations several times that it is taking steps to improve conditions at the centre, and that arrangements are almost complete for the transfer of the inmates to a new, purpose-built juvenile detention centre.

Forty inmates have been moved to the new *Centro de Educación Integral*, in Itauguá, 25km from the capital, Asunción. Conditions there are reportedly better than at *Panchito López*. However, 22 others have now spent nearly five months in an adult prison in Emboscada, where they were held "temporarily", until a suitable institution can be found.

Rubén Darío Alcaraz has been released, and Francisco Carballo Figueredo is not reported to have suffered any further ill-treatment.

Amnesty International welcomes government assurances that torture will not be tolerated in Paraguay and that those responsible will not escape justice ("*No queremos tolerar en manera alguna ni dejar impune la tortura en el país*"). However, the organisation has received no news on the progress of investigations into reports of torture.

A local NGO, *Defensa de los Niños Internacional* (DNI), International Children's Defence, have thanked Amnesty International for the Urgent Action appeals:

"The work that Amnesty International has done in supporting us has been really important to the children deprived of their freedom, as the pressure from more than a hundred letters... made the authorities take action... Once again our thanks to Amnesty International for the help that you have given us and that was apparent in the actions of the national authorities."

"*Ha sido realmente valiosa la colaboración que nos dá Amnesty para nuestros niños privados de libertad, ya que la presión a través de más de un centenar de cartas... hizo que se movilizaran las autoridades... Una vez más nuestros agradecimientos a Amnesty Internacional por la ayuda que nos han brindado y que se notara en las actuaciones de las autoridades nacionales.*"

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

- welcoming government assurances that torture will not be tolerated in Paraguay and that those responsible will not escape justice;
- asking for news of the progress of investigations into reports of ill-treatment and torture of detainees by prison guards;
- asking what progress has been made in investigations into the 11 February fire at *Panchito López*, to determine any criminal responsibility for allowing the fire to break out or failing to save the detainees who died and were injured;
- calling for the *Correccional de Menores "Panchito López"* to be closed immediately, reminding the authorities that despite repeated promises five months after the fire they have failed to transfer all the detainees to adequate premises.

APPEALS TO:

President

Exmo. Sr. Presidente de la República del Paraguay
Don Luis Angel Gonzalez Macchi
Palacio de López
El Paraguayo Independiente y Ayolas
Asunción, Paraguay

Telegrams: Presidente, Asunción, Paraguay

Faxes: + 595 21 498 809;

Salutation: Sr. Presidente / Dear President

Minister of Justice

Dr Silvio Ferreira Fernández
Ministro de Justicia
Gaspar R. de Francia y EE.UU.
Asunción, Paraguay

Telegrams: Ministro Justicia, Asunción, Paraguay

Faxes: + 595 21 208 469

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Dr Juan Esteban Aguirre
Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores
O'Leary 222 y Pte. Franco
Asunción, Paraguay

Telegrams: Ministro Relaciones Exteriores, Asunción, Paraguay

Faxes: + 595 21 490 676

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Non-governmental Organisation

Defensa de los Niños Internacional-DNI
Casilla de Correo N° 3101
Asunción, Paraguay

and to diplomatic representatives of Paraguay accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 August 2000.