

PUBLIC

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11 August 2005

UA 209/05 Fear for safety/Death threat

PARAGUAY Juana Antonia Barua (f), nun
Clara Nimia Insaurralde (f), nun
José Bordón (m), community leader

Two nuns and a community leader from Naranjito, General Resquín District, San Pedro Department, in the north of Paraguay, received anonymous death threats on 4 and 5 August. The threats appear to be linked to their work on behalf of peasant communities and Amnesty International is concerned for their safety as José Bordón has been threatened in the past due to his work for land reform.

Juana Antonia Barua and Clara Nimia Insaurralde, nuns from the Congregation of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception (*Congregación de Nuestra Señora de la Inmaculada Concepción*) and José Bordón, Secretary General of the Organization for the Coordination of Agrarian Reform in San Pedro Department (*Secretario General de la Coordinadora de la Lucha por la Reforma Agraria del Departamento de San Pedro*) and Coordinator for the General Resquín District Front (*Coordinador para el Frente Distrital de General Resquín*) received envelopes containing written death threats and shotgun cartridges at their residences.

The letters were written in Jopará, a mixture of Guaraní and Spanish language. The one sent to the sisters said, "*cuando termina agosto no se fueron koa pende destino. Dejen de apoyar al Frente*"; "if at the end of August you haven't gone this is going to be your destiny. Stop supporting the Front." The letter sent to José Bordón said, "*re yeheya leka: re poi sin tierra trabajo ha Frente gui o si no koande destino*"; "leave it old man, leave work for the landless people and those of the Front or this will be your destiny."

The death threats appear to be linked to their work raising awareness of peasants' rights, the promotion of alternative crops and their concerns about the excessive use of agricultural pesticides by landowners. They were sent at the same time as a workshop on the judicial system for community leaders, organised by non-governmental human rights organizations and the General Resquín District Front, was taking place.

The death threats were reported to Police Station 26 in Naranjito, to the Senate's Human Rights Commission and to the Public Ministry. A request for police protection was also made, though, Amnesty International is not aware of any action that has been taken by the authorities to ensure that Juana Antonia Barua, Clara Nimia Insaurralde and José Bordón are able to continue their legitimate activities without fear for their lives or further threats.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has received reports of attacks, death threats, harassment and killings of members of peasant farmers' organizations and indigenous groups by armed civilians working for landowners or private companies in the context of disputes over land and social issues.

The General Resquín District Front emerged in 2003 as a result of health issues arising from the excessive use of pesticides by landowners which affected the local population.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of sisters Juana Antonia Barua and Clara Nimia Insaurralde, as well as of José Bordón from Naranjito, General Resquín District, San Pedro Department;

- expressing concern that they have all received death threats, apparently in connection with their work on behalf of peasant communities;
- urging the authorities to guarantee their safety in accordance with their wishes;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the death threats, for the results to be made public and for those found responsible to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

President

Sr. Nicanor Duarte Frutos
Presidencia de la República
Palacio de Gobierno
El Paraguay Independiente entre
Ayolas y O Leary
CP 1220, Asunción, Paraguay

Fax: +595 21 414 0204 (If someone answers, please ask: "Tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Dear President/Excmo Sr Presidente

Interior Minister

Sr. Rogelio Raimundo Benitez Vargas
Ministerio del Interior
Chile esq. Manduvira
Asunción, Paraguay

Fax: +595 21 450 027 (If someone answers, please ask: "Tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sra. Leila Rachid de Cowles
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
Palma y 14 de mayo
Asunción, Paraguay

Fax: +595 21 490 676 (If someone answers, please ask: "Tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Dear Minister/Señora Ministra

Minister of Justice

Ruben Candia Amarilla
Ministerio de Justicia y Trabajo
Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia
y Estados Unidos
Asunción, Paraguay

Fax: +595 21 208 469 (If someone answers, please ask: "Tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Dear Minister/Señor Ministro

COPIES TO:

Instituto de Estudios Comparados en Ciencias Penales y Sociales (INECIP)
25 de Mayo 972 c/Estados Unidos
Asunción - Paraguay
Email: inecip@inecip.org.py

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 22 September 2005.