

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 231/93 Ill-treatment/Fear of ill-treatment

15 July 1993

GUATEMALA: Tomás PEREZ PEREZ, 34

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Tomás Pérez Pérez, a member of the Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC), Committee of Peasant Unity, who was arrested on 9 July 1993 and is being held at Santa Cruz prison.

According to reports, on 9 July members of the National Police accompanied by armed men in civilian clothes arrived at the village of Chontalá, municipality of Santo Tomás Chichicastenango, department of El Quiché, in order to investigate the killing on 3 July 1993 of Jorge Carpio Nicolle and three others.

After searching the home of Tomás Pérez, the police reportedly arrested him and took him to the Santa Cruz prison in El Quiché. The police also apparently confiscated some belongings from the house, including leaflets of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional de Guatemala (URNG), the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity and a bag containing 12 bullets. Members of the family of Tomás Pérez claim that these were planted by the police.

Tomás Pérez was reportedly beaten during his interrogation in detention. He was asked about some leaflets about Rigoberta Menchu, the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize winner, which were found in his home, and about the purpose of exhuming bodies from clandestine graves in the village of Chontalá (in 1991 the bodies of 27 indigenous people were exhumed from clandestine graves in Chontalá).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jorge Carpio Nicolle was the cousin and long-term political ally of Ramiro de León Carpio, Guatemala's former Human Rights Procurator. De León was recently elected by the Guatemalan Congress to fill the unexpired presidential term of President Jorge Serrano. Serrano had been forced to flee the country after carrying out an unsuccessful "auto-golpe" (self-coup) on 25 May 1993.

For many years, those suspected of opposition to the government of the day have been targets of abuses in Guatemala, including threats, harassment, torture, "disappearances," and extrajudicial executions. President de León's past experience as the country's Human Rights Procurator and the undertakings he made in his inaugural address to protect human rights, raised hopes in some quarters in Guatemala that his administration might see some improvement in the human rights situation in the country. However, the recent killing of Jorge Carpio Nicolle and three others (see UA 219/93, AMR 34/46/93, 6 July 1993) and the recent abduction and torture of a woman active in the multi-sectoral commission which helped force President Serrano out of office (See UA 218/93, AMR 34/45/93, 5 July 1993) could pose a threat to political stability in Guatemala and to the hopes that President de León Carpio will be able to act on his promises to return the country to the rule of law.

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

- expressing concern about the alleged ill-treatment of Tomás Pérez Pérez while held in detention at the Santa Cruz prison in El Quiché;

Page 2 of UA 231/93

- urging the authorities to clarify his legal situation;
- asking that while held in detention he be humanely treated and given access to an independent lawyer and a doctor;
- urging that he either be released or brought promptly before a competent court.

APPEALS TO

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Ramiro de León Carpio
Presidente de la República de Guatemala
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Presidente de León Carpio, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 2 537472, + 502 2 519702
Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU

Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President

2) Minister of Interior:

Lic. Arnoldo Ortiz Moscoso
Ministro de Gobernación
Ministerio de Gobernación
Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 2 518105
Telexes: 5085 MINGOB

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. Mario Enríquez Morales
Ministro de Defensa
Ministerio de Defensa
Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA
Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala
Faxes: + 502 2 537472
Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Head of the Presidential Commission Coordinating the Policies of the Executive

relating to Human Rights:

COPREDEH

15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13

Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Jorge García Laguardia

Procurador de los Derechos Humanos

12 Avenida 12-72

Zona 1, Guatemala

GUATEMALA

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 August 1993.