

**ARGENTINA Esteban Cuya, human rights defender
other human rights activists**

An apparently carefully planned attack on a human rights defender, Esteban Cuya, in Buenos Aires on 17 November 1998, has raised serious concerns for the safety of others seeking truth and justice in cases of human rights violations committed during Argentina's military regime (1976-1983).

Esteban Cuya is a Peruvian delegate from the German human rights organization *Coalición contra la Impunidad*, Coalition Against Impunity. He was reportedly attacked shortly after taking a taxi to his hotel. Two black cars blocked the road and three men forced their way into the taxi. They beat Esteban Cuya before stealing important files, his passport and personal papers. They also gagged him with a wet towel and threatened him with death. After being driven around for some time he was then pushed out of the car in a remote part of Buenos Aires.

The attack seems to be a direct response to the *Coalición Contra La Impunidad's* campaign for German Courts to bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations against German nationals during the military regime in Argentina. Esteban Cuya is part of a delegation of the *Coalición Contra La Impunidad* currently visiting Argentina to meet local non-governmental organizations and authorities in an attempt to further these investigations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Earlier this year Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action after Ragnar Haglin, a Swedish national whose daughter "disappeared" in Argentina in 1977, was threatened, apparently in response to his attending hearings relating to his daughter's case (see UA 87/98, AMR 13/07/98, 18 March 1998). The organization has also received other frequent reports regarding threats and harassment against human rights defenders in the country.

During the military regime in Argentina thousands of people were abducted by the security forces and "disappeared". Legal redress for victims of human rights abuses committed during this period was exhausted in Argentina with the amnesty laws *Ley de Punto Final*, Full Stop Law, of 1986 and *Ley de Obediencia Debida*, Law of Due Obedience, of 1987, and subsequent presidential pardons.

Other countries have undertaken a number of legal initiatives to establish the fate of "disappeared" foreign nationals in Argentina under the military regime. Prosecutors in Spain have been particularly vigorous in pursuing cases. In Germany, the Federal Supreme Court has instructed the Nuremberg General Prosecutor to investigate four cases involving German nationals. The Argentine authorities have so far refused to cooperate with any of these legal initiatives.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Esteban Cuya of the *Coalición Contra La Impunidad*, who was attacked in Buenos Aires on 17 November 1998;
- expressing concern that the attack was an attempt to intimidate members of the *Coalición Contra La Impunidad* and other human rights activists seeking justice in cases of human rights violations committed under the previous military regime;

- calling for immediate steps to be taken to guarantee the safety of Esteban Cuyo and other *Coalición Contra La Impunidad* delegates presently in Argentina;
- calling for a prompt, full and impartial investigation into the attack, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- reminding the government of Argentina of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

APPEALS TO:

President

Presidente de la República Argentina
Dr. Carlos Saúl Menem
Casa Rosada, Balcarce 50
Buenos Aires C.F.
ARGENTINA

Telegrams: President Menem, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Faxes: + 541 331 6376 / 331 1849

Salutation: Excelencia / Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

Sr. Ministro del Interior
Dr. Carlos Corach
Ministerio del Interior
25 de Mayo, 101
1002 Buenos Aires, C.F., Argentina

Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Faxes: + 541 331 1156 (if voice, ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

Minister of Justice

Sr. Ministro de Justicia
Dr. Raul Granillo Ocampo
Ministerio de Justicia
Sarmiento 329, 5o. Piso
1041 Buenos Aires, C.F., Argentina

Telegrams: Ministro de Justicia, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Faxes: + 541 328 6038 / 6039

Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organization

SERPAJ
Servicio Paz y Justicia
Piedras 730
1070 Buenos Aires C.F.,
ARGENTINA

and to diplomatic representatives of Argentina accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 31 December 1998.

"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."
Article 3, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>