

URGENT ACTION



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24 October 2008

UA 296/08

Fear for safety/Death threats

GUATEMALA

**Norma Cruz (f), Director of Fundación Sobrevivientes (Survivors' Foundation)
Her relatives and other members of staff**

On 19 October at around 12pm a relative of Norma Cruz (whose name is withheld for safety reasons) was stopped by an unknown man driving a pick-up truck while walking home in Guatemala city. Norma Cruz's relative offered the man a cellular phone thinking it was a robbery but was told by the man that it was not and to "get in son of a bitch, get in or you're going to die" (*subite hijo/a de la gran puta, subite sino te vas a morir*). The relative did as told and got in the back where there were two masked men, one of them holding a gun at the relative. They drove the relative around repeating "you're going to die." The relative was released after 20 minutes one block away from Norma Cruz's home. Norma Cruz is an active women's human rights defender.



During the morning of 23 October the same relative received three phone calls. In the first one, a male voice said "are you comfortable, you piece of shit, you're going to die" (*vás cómodo, verdad cerote? Te vas a morir*) after which the call was cut off. The following two calls were cut off when the relative answered. Later that day a green pick-up truck with tinted windows was parked in front of the offices of Norma Cruz's organization, the Sobrevivientes Foundation. Members of staff deemed this suspicious and approached the vehicle in order to talk to the driver, who immediately drove off.

The safety of Norma Cruz, and that of her colleagues and relatives, is at risk.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sobrevivientes Foundation provides psychological support to women victims of sexual violence and other forms of domestic violence. It also provides legal assistance in cases of killings of women and has investigated high-profile cases of trafficking of people in which government officials could be involved. Sobrevivientes Foundations believes these acts of intimidation are related to a particular case they are currently supporting.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:

- expressing concern for the safety of Norma Cruz, her family and her colleagues in Sobrevivientes Foundation;
- urging the President and the Minister of the Interior to ensure that immediate measures are taken and maintained to guarantee the safety of Norma Cruz, her family and colleagues in strict accordance with their wishes;
- calling on the authorities to order an immediate, thorough and swift investigation into this incident, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;

Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.

- reminding the authorities of the right of human rights defenders to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Lic. Álvaro Colom
Presidente de la República
Casa Presidencial, 6ª Avenida, 4-41, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala
GUATEMALA

Fax: 011 502 2221 4423

**Salutation: Dear President/
Estimado Sr. Presidente**

Minister of the Interior

Sr. Francisco José Jiménez Irungaray
Ministro de Gobernación
6ª Avenida 13-71, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala
GUATEMALA

Fax: 011 502 2413 8658

**Salutation: Dear Minister/
Estimado Sr. Ministro**

COPIES TO:

Fundación Sobrevivientes
12 calle 11-63, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala
GUATEMALA

Ambassador Jose Guillermo Castillo
Embassy of Guatemala
2220 R St. NW
Washington DC 20008

Fax: 1 202 745 1908

Email: info@guatemala-embassy.org

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.

Check with the AIUSA Urgent Action office if sending appeals after 05 December 2008.