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@COVERTOP = GUATEMALA:

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@HEAD = Introduction

The July 2 murder of labor activist **José Rolando Pantaleón** following months of harassment and violence against members of his union's political theatre group by men believed to belong to the Guatemalan security forces, has underscored a sudden regression in Guatemala's human rights environment. The worsening trend appears related to a May 9, 1989 attempted coup by a faction of the army and allied civilians. Much like the May 11, 1988 failed putsch, this May's uprising did not disrupt the constitutional order, but appeared to signal a strengthening of those sectors in the army least disposed to allow a modicum of respect for human rights.

What follows is a recounting of some of the grave incidents which have occurred since May 9 and which appear to represent a serious setback for human rights in Guatemala. The incidents include several mass slayings, individual killings and disappearances, as well as assaults and harassment of human rights monitors.

@HEAD = Murder of Pantaleón

José Rolando Pantaleón and his brother-in-law left his home in Colonia Limón in Guatemala City's zone 18 at about 10:00 a.m. on July 2 to play soccer. Just yards from his house, a grey and black jeep with tinted glass windows drove up. Three armed men got out and forced Pantaleón inside the vehicle, where several other men were riding. His brother-in-law tried to intervene, but was told to get away if he did not want to be killed. He then tried to examine the jeep's license plates, but was again threatened and forced to flee. Pantaleón's wife quickly reported his abduction to the National Police. At 4:00 p.m., the police informed her that three bodies had been found on the side of the

road to the Atlantic, at kilometer 17, near Palencia. The bodies were transferred to a morgue, where his wife was able to identify one of them as her husband. He had been shot twice in the head, twice in the neck, and once in the chest. The skin on the top of his back had been stripped off and his jaw appeared to have been broken.

Pantaleón had been a member of the Coca Cola workers' union (STEGAC, <MI>Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Embotelladora Guatemalteca Anexos y Conexos),<D> which has long been at the forefront of union organizing in Guatemala. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, several STEGAC union leaders were murdered, following threats from the plant's managers and security forces. An international boycott of Coca Cola products brought about a change in management at the plant and an end to the violence. Troubles resumed, however, in 1984, when the plant's new owners declared bankruptcy and shut down the plant. In the most daring labor activity undertaken in Guatemala in many years, the Coke workers protested the shutdown by occupying the plant premises for 376 days until the parent company arranged its reopening and the rehiring of the workers. Pantaleón participated in the 1984-85 occupation, an action which breathed new life into Guatemala's repressed labor movement.

During the long occupation, the unionists organized theatre and musical groups to use as tools for promoting union organizing around the country. The theatre group's satirical performances included sharp political commentary urging that workers and peasants organize alliances to combat repression from the military, landowners, and factory managers. 2Q3 is the only theatre group of its nature performing in Guatemala.

In 1989, the group became the focus of psychological and physical attack. Fladio Pantaleón, José Rolando's brother, was assaulted on February 25 by four plainclothesmen, three of whom were armed with nine millimeter pistols, which only members of the security forces or army are permitted to carry. The attack occurred as Pantaleón was leaving a performance of the 2Q3 musical group at the Social Security Institute in the capital. One of the men declared, "We've already warned you," and then shot Pantaleón in the leg. While he was still in the hospital, plainclothes policemen visited Pantaleón, asking for the names and address of other members of the theatre and musical groups. The agents had a court order opening an investigation into the assault, but when Pantaleón could not identify his assailants, they stated that the case was closed.

Nonetheless, armed plainclothesmen who Pantaleón believed were police agents again visited him in the hospital and, on several occasions subsequent to his release, sought him out in the neighborhood where he lived. Fearful of further retaliation, Pantaleón moved to another zone.

Armed plainclothesmen also sought out José Rolando Pantaleón several times at his house in the days after his brother's shooting, asking his wife where José Rolando worked and where he could be found. On several occasions, he was followed by strange men in different vehicles. Following a serious incident on March

3, José Rolando quit his job at the Coke plant because he no longer felt safe there. In that incident, a yellow pickup truck with license plates 181524 tried to run him over near the bottling plant. José Rolando sought refuge in a store, which prompted the pickup to drive around the block and then stop in front of the store and wait. After 20 minutes, the truck left.

Another theatre group member, Carlos Humberto Rodas, suffered several assaults by armed men in civilian clothing believed to be members of the security forces beginning in January 1989. Like José Rolando, Rodas quit his job with the Coca Cola bottler because of the intimidation and has had to move several times.

José Rolando and his brother, Fladio Pantaleón, met with an Americas Watch delegation in April 1989 to tell of the persecution members of the group were suffering. Americas Watch fears José Rolando's abduction and murder may have been the latest step in an effort by the security forces to drive the group underground.

Americas Watch is gravely concerned about the safety of remaining members of the Coke union's theatre group, particularly Fladio Pantaleón and Carlos Humberto Rodas, both of whom have been assaulted and threatened by men believed to be plainclothes police.

@HEAD = Massacre at Sanquín, Chimaltenango

At about 2 a.m. on May 18, 1989, a group of armed men reportedly dressed in uniforms typical of the Treasury Police killed five civilians in the tiny village of Sanquín, near Patzicía, Chimaltenango. Three of the victims were members of the Perobal family; they appeared to have been the intended targets of the attack. Two other victims were from a neighboring town and appear to have been killed because they sought to assist the Perobals.

According to witnesses interviewed by Americas Watch, the attackers came to the homes of Pilar Perobal, about 35, his nephew Josué Perobal, about 25, and Pilar's brother-in-law, Mauro Gómez, at about 1 a.m. on the pretext of searching for arms. Pilar, Josué, and Mauro tried to flee. Mauro was captured, pulled off to the edge of a cornfield, and shot dead. Josué managed to escape, although a bullet severed his finger. Pilar and another member of the family escaped unhurt. Pilar and Josué decided to go to the nearby village of La Esperanza to seek the help of the military commissioner.

About an hour later, the two returned in a pickup truck with the commissioner, 50-year-old Juan Muj, and his 20-year-old son, José Jaime Muj. No sooner had they pulled up near the cluster of houses, than all four were machine-gunned to death by the uniformed assailants. Two relatives of the military commissioner who were riding in the bed of the pickup truck managed to escape the massacre.

An alternate version of events reported in the Guatemalan weekly <MIU>Crónica<D> holds that the riders in the pickup truck were captured upon arrival at the house and killed after the military commissioner, Muj, recognized his captors. <MI> <MIU>Crónica<D> also reported that Mauro Gómez, the first victim to be killed, had

recently fled his home in nearby La Canoa, along with his wife and children, after receiving death threats.<\$F"La Matanza de Sanquín," Crónica, June 2, 1989.>

Government officials, including President Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo and army press spokesman Colonel José Arturo Isaacs Rodríguez, have blamed guerrillas for the killings. Nonetheless, several witnesses interviewed by Americas Watch held government forces to blame for the killings. The case is under investigation by the first instance judge of Chimaltenango. This same judge was assigned the investigation into the November 1988 massacre of 22 peasants in the nearby hamlet of El Aguacate, but has produced no results.

Chimaltenango has seen increasing conflict between the army and the guerrilla group ORPA <MI>(Organización Revolucionaria del Pueblo Armado)<D> in the past year, although the area of this massacre, a short distance from the Pan American Highway, has been less conflictive than areas further to the north and south.

@HEAD = Further Violations at El Aguacate, Chimaltenango

The apparent kidnapping on June 20, 1989, of **Alberto Callejas y Callejas** has raised anew questions about responsibility for the November 1988 massacre of 22 peasants in the area. Callejas's two sons, Oscar Orlando and Baldomero, had provided information to investigators about the November incident. Oscar Orlando was flown to the United States by the Guatemalan government to give the government's version of events, and Baldomero was reportedly among several area residents detained and threatened by the Chimaltenango military commander for speaking against this version to independent investigators.<\$FBrook Larmer, "New Doubts Surface in Guatemala," The Christian Science Monitor, February 14, 1989; and Americas Watch interviews.> Their father, Alberto Callejas, was one of the few villagers who had not abandoned El Aguacate after the massacre.

Callejas left his home on the morning of June 20 to look for some cattle in the mountains above the village. After he failed to return, two of his sons hiked into the mountains to look for him.

They were unable to locate him, and reported his disappearance to the military base in Chimaltenango. On June 22, two other sons again went searching for Callejas in the mountains and found instead 23-year-old Eleodoro Sal Siquinajay, armed with a .38 revolver which had been taken during a guerrilla raid on a town near Antigua Guatemala shortly beforehand. The Callejas sons captured the youth and turned him over to the military.

On June 24, the army held a press conference in the public square in nearby San Andrés Itzapa to present Sal, who in front of reporters, residents, and Aguacate widows brought down by the army, confessed to having strangled Callejas to death. Sal further declared that he belonged to the ORPA unit which he claimed committed the November massacre of Aguacate residents. Sources present at the conference stated that Sal appeared drugged, and at times was prompted by a member of the military when he seemed uncertain as to what to say. Sal claimed to know the exact location of Callejas's body. After his public appearance, he was taken to the Chimaltenango jail where he was

interviewed by a justice of the peace.

A week later, some 140 soldiers, accompanied by members of the Callejas family, went to the place where Sal said he left Callejas's body, but were unable to find it. Callejas's whereabouts remain a mystery.

Guatemalan officials have pointed to Sal's public declarations as proof that ORPA was responsible for the November massacre, as well as the subsequent murder of Callejas.<\$FAn investigation by Americas Watch into these killings found little evidence to support the official story; nonetheless, the event remains shrouded in mystery and responsibility cannot be clearly determined at this point. See Americas Watch, Guatemala: Massacre at El Aguacate, February 1989.> However, sources who have interviewed Sal in jail report that he stated that his public declarations were lies invented by the army, and that he repeated them only after soldiers beat him and threatened to kill him. Sal's mistreatment at the hands of the army appears to be a part of the authorities' public relations campaign to establish guerrilla responsibility for the Aguacate massacre.

Americas Watch is gravely concerned about the apparent kidnapping of Alberto Callejas, and we also fear that others close to the tragic events of last November remain at risk. Further, we strenuously object to the use of army-sponsored public gatherings to supplant the judicial process, such as clearly occurred in Sal's case. Guatemala's 1985 Constitution expressly forbids the authorities from presenting criminal suspects to the news media before they have been presented to a judge, a provision which was flagrantly violated in this case (see Article 13). This provision was included in the Constitution with the express intent of preventing the authorities from "solving" cases by forcing detainees to "confess" to crimes in public, without the benefit of judicial guarantees. We call on the Guatemalan government to investigate and punish those responsible for the kidnapping of Callejas and the abuses committed against Sal Siquinajay.

@HEAD = Massacre at Jocotillo, Villa Canales, Guatemala

Four men were murdered in the village of El Jocotillo, Villa Canales, Guatemala department, on June 5, 1989, in circumstances suggesting security force involvement, according to Amnesty International. This slaying followed the disappearance and subsequent murder of two other village residents about two weeks earlier.<\$FAmnesty International Urgent Action, AI Index: AMR 34/26/89, June 14, 1989.>

On May 23, 1989, **Elfito** and **Víctor Hugo Trujillo Rueda** were detained in El Jocotillo. Their bodies were found, bound hand and foot and stuffed in plastic bags, on May 29 on the Los Pinos farm in Santa Elena Barillas, Guatemala.

@BODYTXTSHRINK = On June 5, armed men driving several vehicles sought out **Julián Chiche Pérez** in the village of La Limonada, Guatemala. Failing to find him, they abducted his brother, **Félix Chiche Pérez**, and forced him to locate Julián in San Rafael, El Jocotillo. The men shot Julián dead when they found him trying to hide at his sister's house, also injuring the sister, **Mercedes Chiche**. They then abducted Félix, Mercedes's husband, **Juan**

Miranda, and his father, **Augusto Miranda**. Their bodies were found hours later at kilometer 29.5 of the road to El Salvador, bringing to six the number of extrajudicial executions in El Jocotillo in two weeks.

@HEAD = **Assault on U.S. Citizen Involved with Human Rights Group**

On May 27, 1989, at about 9 p.m., an American paramedic who had been assisting members of the Quiché-based Council of Ethnic Communities Runujel Junam (CERJ), was followed near her house in Zone 1 of the capital by a maroon Chevrolet sedan which ran her up against a wall. Two men got out of the car, one of whom kicked the prostrate woman in the ribs, saying "this is what will happen to all the whores who go around with Amílcar Méndez." Méndez is the director of the CERJ, Guatemala's only rural human rights monitoring agency. (The development of the CERJ and the campaign of violence and threats directed at its members by government forces are detailed in a May 1989 Americas Watch report titled Persecuting Human Rights Monitors: The CERJ in Guatemala.) The victim, who has requested anonymity, was briefly hospitalized for head injuries incurred when the car drove her against the wall.

As noted in our May 1989 report, CERJ director Méndez has received repeated, explicit death threats in recent years as a result of his human rights work. Because of these threats, Méndez is accompanied at all times by at least one unarmed, foreign escort.

The incident of May 27 appears intended to threaten and intimidate these volunteers.

@HEAD = **Harassment of CERJ Members**

Threats against members of the CERJ and peasants who have ended their participation in the nation's civil patrols, detailed in our May 1989 report, have continued in recent months. On May 24, CERJ delegate **José Velásquez Morales** was captured at his home in Chuminá, Chichicastenango, El Quiché, by soldiers who took him to the military post in the village without an arrest warrant. He was released later that night after a group of villagers went to the military post demanding that he be freed. **Sebastián Velásquez Mejía**, another CERJ delegate in the village, has reportedly received repeated death threats and been told he may not leave the village.

On May 24, a plainclothes police officer reportedly ordered civil patrol chief **Sebastián Zan Tzoc** of El Membrillal II, Chiché, El Quiché, to kill five members of the CERJ from the village who had stopped participating in the civil patrols about a year earlier. The five intended victims are **Manuel Mejía Tol**, **Miguel Panjoj Chang**, **Sebastián Panjoj Chang**, **Juan Tomín Quino**, and **Antonio Quex**.

The civil patrol chief informed CERJ director Amílcar Méndez of the instructions he received, vowed not to carry them out, and placed a denunciation at the offices of the Human Rights Attorney in Santa Cruz del Quiché. An attempt was made to denounce the incident to the National Police, as well, but the authorities would not grant the group from the CERJ an interview. Zan Tzoc, who has ceased performing patrol duty since being instructed to carry out the five assassinations, reported that police agent Juan Chinol Xon threatened him on June 20 because of his denunciation.

The five CERJ members have also reportedly received death

threats.

On July 1, 1989, a group of 20 or 30 uniformed soldiers made their third visit this year to the remote village of **La Primavera**, where 24 men have resisted military pressure to serve in civil patrols.

The soldiers singled out the 24 ex-patrollers and stated that the army would "open up a hole" for them -- a reference to a primitive form of punishment in which the victim is held in a hole dug in the ground, sometimes filled with water -- if they did not resume patrolling. The soldiers also reprimanded the villagers for having allowed an Americas Watch delegation to visit their community in April. Americas Watch remains gravely concerned about the safety of the 24 ex-patrollers who have been threatened on several occasions in the past since they gave up patrol duty.<FArticle 34 of Guatemala's 1985 Constitution abolishes forced participation in the civil patrols; nonetheless, in many communities the army continues to coerce peasants into providing the unpaid service, using threats, beatings, and in some cases, killings, to enforce compliance. For a list of the ex-patrollers threatened at La Primavera, see Amnesty International Urgent Action 243/89, July 14, 1989.>

@HEAD = **Threats against GAM Members**

Several members of the Mutual Support Group (GAM), a group of relatives of the disappeared, received death threats in May, according to the GAM. The commander of the military base in Chichicastenango, El Quiché, and three civil patrol commanders told GAM member **Raquel Juan Juan** that she and GAM President **Nineth de García** were guerrillas and would be killed. The incident occurred in the village of Chontalá, Chichicastenango, on May 19. On May 14 or 15, the same men threatened GAM members **Tomás Chumil Méndez** and **Salvador Chumil Coc** of Sacpulup, Chichicastenango with death for their participation in the GAM. Additional threats against de García are described in the last section of this newsletter.

@HEAD = **Additional Killings and Disappearances**

On June 16, **Eulalio Ambrosio**, General Secretary of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) for the municipality of Sipacapa, San Marcos, was kidnapped by plainclothesmen and taken to the military base in San Marcos. Writs of <MI>habeas corpus<D> have been submitted on his behalf but the authorities have neither released him nor acknowledged his detention. Ambrosio, who operates a private transport company, was driving a pickup full of passengers between Sipacapa and the village Tres Cruces when he was captured by six men driving a blue pickup with foreign license plates. His capture was witnessed by the passengers on his pickup. His son, Mario Perfecto Ambrosio, followed the vehicle in which his father was captured on his motorcycle and saw it drive into the military zone.<F"PSD: 'Ejército Secuestró a Dirigente Municipal'", El Gráfico, June 22, 1989.>

On May 17, members of the armed forces killed eight-year-old **Manuel Cobo** and abducted **Pedro Santiago** 5, **Margarita Sánchez**, 50, **Manuela Pérez**, 45, and **Ambrosio Santiago**, 45, in the village of Santa María Caba, Chajul, El Quiché, according to Amnesty International. The four disappeared victims were believed to have

been taken to the military barracks at El Pinar, Uspantán, El Quiché.<\$Famnesty International USA Urgent Action 164/89, June 7, 1989.>

Plainclothesmen believed to be members of the security forces abducted **Juan Jiménez Pérez**, 27, in the village of La Emboscada, San Miguel Siquilá, Quezaltenango, on May 5. His relatives have inquired with the security forces about his whereabouts to no avail. A week earlier, **Pedro Chávez**, 25, was abducted in the same place under similar circumstances, according to Amnesty International.<\$Famnesty International Urgent Action 148/89, AI Index: AMR 34/17/89, May 26, 1989.>

Armed men believed to be soldiers abducted **Joaquín López Chávez** on the Finca San Juan, San Pablo municipality, San Marcos on June 5, 1989, Amnesty International reported. Witnesses reportedly stated that the armed men forced López, who was traveling with his father in a car, into a green pickup truck without license plates. The armed men were said to have been seen in army uniform before and after the detention was carried out. The authorities denied having detained the victim. López's body was found near the Camarón River, close to the village of Jerusalem, San Pablo, San Marcos department on or around June 21.<\$Famnesty International Urgent Action 180/89, AI Index: AMR 34/27/89, June 14, 1989; and Amnesty International USA, Further Information on UA 198/89, June 30, 1989.>

Men dressed in uniforms similar to those of the Treasury Police detained 66-year-old **José Daniel Ramírez Quiñones** and his 67-year-old wife, Rafaela Cabrera Vásquez, at gunpoint on May 29, 1989, in San Miguel Dueñas, near Antigua Guatemala, Sacatepéquez, according to Amnesty International.<\$Famnesty International Urgent Action 189/89, AI Index: AMR 34/28/89, June 16, 1989.> Cabrera was subsequently released, but the whereabouts of her husband remain unknown.

@HEAD = **Threats against Participants in the National Dialogue**

In an effort to comply with provisions of the Central American Peace Plan signed in August 1987, the Guatemalan government established a National Reconciliation Commission which, in turn, initiated a National Dialogue to discuss fundamental issues such as human rights, peace and security, and land reform in a public forum. Although the usefulness of the dialogue has been limited by the fact that the government has not allowed guerrilla representatives to participate, while the army and the nation's most powerful business organization have refused to join, a broad range of church, labor, political, and popular organizations have taken advantage of the opportunity to thrash out national issues in a public forum. This unusual political opening has been undermined, however, by a campaign of threats against dialogue participants which began shortly following the May 9 coup attempt.

Beginning at 10:30 a.m. on the day of the coup attempt, five members of the United Representation of the Guatemalan Opposition <MI>(Representación Unitaria de la Oposición Guatemalteca,<D>RUOG), who had returned from exile to participate in the dialogue, began receiving death threats.<\$F"Guatemala: El Limitado Espacio

Político Se Estrecha Aún Más," Report by the Representación Unitaria de la Oposición Guatemalteca, New York, May 30, 1989.> Members of the RUOG delegation, their relatives, their hotel, and others associated with them, received anonymous calls saying the group must leave the country within 48 hours or its members, and those who assisted them, would be assassinated, the group reported. An unidentified caller also threatened to kill **Fáctor Méndez**, director of the Center for the Investigation, Study, and Promotion of Human Rights if he did not also abandon the country.

The next day, May 10, RUOG member **Rigoberta Menchú** received a floral arrangement with a card stating that she and the other RUOG members would be killed if they did not leave the country by noon on May 11. The note was signed by the PGT-6th of January, a faction of the Communist Party which is not a member of the united guerrilla coalition known as the URNG. Later that day, the mothers of **Frank LaRue** and **Raúl Molina**, two other RUOG members, received flower arrangements with similar notes, according to the RUOG. The telephone threats continued throughout the day as well.

On May 11, Menchú traveled to Italy, as she had planned to do before the threats.

At 10:30 that night, the remaining RUOG members received another call in their hotel room, stating that they had 12 more hours to leave the country. Soon afterwards, the hotel receptionist called to say that a package had been left in the hotel lobby for them. Two friends of the delegation went to see what had been delivered and found instead a car parked in front of the garage with a package on the windshield and several pamphlets saying that only Menchú had obeyed the orders to leave the country, and that the others had 12 hours to follow her lead. A caller identified as a member of the guerrilla URNG told the fire department the insurgents had placed a bomb at the hotel where the RUOG was meeting. When the police and firemen arrived at the scene, they verified that the car parked in front of the garage had three explosive devices connected to its battery, according to the RUOG.

The group viewed the incident as an act of intimidation, rather than a genuine effort to harm them, as the devices would not have detonated unless the car was started.

On May 12, after three days of threats, the government assigned police protection to the remaining RUOG members. Nonetheless, the hostile campaign prompted the RUOG delegation to leave the country, feeling that their safety was not sufficiently guaranteed. Although civilian and military authorities reportedly held the PGT-6th of January responsible for the threats, the delegation believed they in fact came from the intelligence section of the army. This assertion was based on the systematic and coordinated nature of the campaign; the delegation's conviction that their phones were tapped; and the fact that one senior army official, reportedly asked by a relative a day before the threats were claimed by the leftist group why the RUOG was being threatened, claimed that the PGT-6th of January was behind the intimidation. Delegation members questioned how the army official knew before anyone else that the threats were to be

attributed to the splinter leftist group.
Beginning on May 19, **Nineth de García**, director of the Mutual Support Group (GAM), a group of relatives of the disappeared, began receiving anonymous telephone calls instructing her to end her participation in the dialogue. On May 23, at about noon, five heavily armed men in a white car with tinted glass windows stopped outside the GAM office for several minutes.

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