

Translation of Death Threat Sent to Guatemalan Human Rights Defenders, July 2002

CATHOLIC PRIESTS ARE SLANDERING THE ARMED FORCES

Complaint and warning addressed to the Catholic Church and other interested parties, demanding an end to the insults committed by prominent members of said religious institution.

1. The Catholic priests [...six names withheld...] and others in the same order have for many years been agents of international anarchy and satanic elements who have denigrated the Armed Forces.
2. Using their priestly function in an ambiguous way, these men have gone about spreading distorted stories about the army, trying to dishonor the armed forces among the Catholic flock.
3. In the trial of Bishop Juan José Gerardi, they have accused the army of being the force behind this heinous crime which we too mourn. In many forums they have given out the names of honorable military men, accusing them of being instigators or perpetrators in this murder, which has been shamelessly used to defame democratic institutions like the army and the sacrosanct Institution of Justice.
4. We demand that these calumnies no longer be spread. If they do not take heed, we warn that they will be the next victims. They will not free themselves from the hand of justice, and we are ready to use every weapon to put an end to their project of destroying our democracy, which has already drawn the blood of so many heroic soldiers and officers.
5. We cannot agree to international pressures that destabilize our Fatherland and endanger our liberty. We will not allow the church to become yet again an instrument of anarchy and subversion. We cannot tolerate that these and other members of liberation theology use Religion and the Bible to destroy our institutions and to put our constitutionality at risk.
6. We bring this to the attention of the Catholic Church so they will put some restrictions on these wicked priests. We remind them that as foreigners they have no right to politically destabilize our country. If they want to keep exercising their religious activities in Guatemala, we demand that they abstain from using religion as a weapon to fool our people. We condemn this behavior as a profanation of religion and of Holy Scripture.
7. If the Church and those men don't take heed, we declare that sooner than later they will meet the same fate of other professional churchmen who never listened to our suggestions and now can no longer keep practicing their subversive activity.
8. For the sake of our dear Fatherland we are prepared to remedy the excesses of these clerics whose attitude is a constant political provocation to our institutions and the stability of our democracy.
9. We emphasize that we are not anonymous, although for now we prefer to hide our names and that of our organization for our safety and that of our plans. We are professing Christians and we are not going to submit to what these wicked ministers are making of religion.
10. We fulfill our duty to defend democracy by denouncing these deeds. This call to attention is serious and we hope that it will be sensibly taken to heart, so as not to bring about other measures which would later be regretted.

The deeds we denounce are reprehensible and we cannot tolerate them.

The Fatherland comes before everything.