



UA Quotes*

A collection of stories and quotes from Amnesty International's Urgent Action Network

Vol. 17 – Spring/Summer 2005



Thich Tri Luc, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, heads a procession of monks as they set off for the demonstration and hunger strike preceding Thich Don Hau's funeral in April 1992. (c. IBB)

VIET NAM/CAMBODIA: Vietnamese Buddhist monk takes a breath of freedom

Prisoner of conscience Thich Tri Luc has been resettled in Sweden. In a statement made public on July 8, Thich Tri Luc said, ***“For the first time in over a decade, I have taken my first sweet breaths of freedom and democracy.”*** He has expressed thanks ***“from the bottom of my heart... to [those to] whom I owe my freedom.”***

(UA 249/02 issued August 7, 2002).

BANGLADESH: International pressure helps protect religious community.

The planned siege of the Ahmadiyya headquarters by Islamist groups on August 27, 2004, did not take place. A combination of police protection, local pressure and swift international action, including that from the Urgent Action Network, helped protect the members of the religious community. The threatened siege, in which Islamist groups said they would stop worship and confiscate prayer books, was seen as part of an attempt to have the government of Bangladesh declare the Ahmadis non-Muslims. This was an effort towards the introduction of aspects of Islamic law in Bangladesh. ***“The Ahmadiyya community has asked me to pass on to members of the Urgent Action Network their thanks for all your***

hard work, and your quick response to the threat,” says Amnesty International's researcher on Bangladesh. ***“The threats against Ahmadis are continuing, but at least on this occasion, they received sufficient protection.”***

(UA 254/04 issued August 26, 2004)

BANGLADESH: Anti-landmines campaigner released.

Rafique al Islam, the Bangladesh representative of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, was released on bail on September 19, 2004. He had been arrested without a warrant and taken to the Joint Interrogation Cell in Dhaka, which is notorious for the use of torture. A few days after Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action on his case, he was transferred to the relative safety of judicial custody in

Cox's Bazar Jail. It is believed that he was not tortured or ill-treated while in detention or the Joint Interrogation Cell. ***“We would like to thank everyone who wrote a letter or sent a fax on behalf of Rafique al Islam,”*** Amnesty International's researcher on Bangladesh commented. ***“We will continue to monitor the case. To protect people from being tortured in Bangladesh, it is necessary to act fast - and that is just what this Urgent Action helped us to do.”***

(UA 261/04, issued September 6, 2004)



Rafique al Islam, the Bangladesh representative of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, was released from detention in September 2004.

* We Need Your Creativity!

We're looking for a **new name** for this semiannual collection of quotes and good news stories from Amnesty International's human rights work. Please give us your suggestions for a new title that represents the collective nature of these quotes. Send it to uan@aiusa.org or to the Urgent Action office address in Colorado (back page). For sending us your ideas (send as many titles as you like!) we will send you an Amnesty International poster. Please send them by May 1, 2005.

Thanks!



The mother of José Nunes da Silva, holds a stack of letters sent to her family by UA Network members. José Nunes da Silva, a 22 year-old mentally retarded man, was killed on March 31, 1999 in São Paulo, Brazil. Witnesses claim they saw police order José Nunes da Silva to run, shot him in the leg, and then shot him dead as he lay on the ground. Edinaldo Gomes, 28, was also shot and killed. Neither man had a criminal record.

Valdênia Aparecida Paulino, the lawyer representing the dead men's families, received threats as the date of a May 2000 court hearing approached. The hearing was to determine whether there was enough evidence for the five police officers accused of the killings to stand trial. (c. AI)

BRAZIL: *"It was the first time the postal services entered our favela."*

In May 2000, Amnesty International issued an Urgent Action on behalf of Valdênia Aparecida Paulino, a Brazilian lawyer who was facing threats and intimidation in her attempts to uncover the truth behind the suspected extrajudicial execution of two men by military police. In the UA, we also asked for copies of appeals to be sent to the family of one of the men, José Nunes da Silva, who lived in one of the favelas (shanty-towns) which surround Sao Paulo. Earlier this year, Valdênia Aparecida Paulino spoke to AI about the impact of the UA.

"We were working on a case in which military police had killed two people, one of whom was mentally handicapped. We couldn't make ourselves

heard, not even in the state or in the country. From the moment that Amnesty got involved through an Urgent Action campaign, the authorities realized the problem actually existed, and a case which was on the verge of being closed went to trial.

"When the Urgent Action letters began to arrive, it was the first time the postal services had entered our favela. Generally speaking, they don't come in - but because these were letters from other countries, and because there were so many, the postal service went into the favela where the families lived... There are so many positive aspects - because the local people realize that someone knows they exist, there is a spirit of solidarity. The public authorities, which had always ignored them, now recognize their existence."

(UA 125/00 issued May 19, 2000)

CHINA: Tiananmen Square activist thanks UA activists.

Student leader Wang Dan, jailed for his part in the 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, spoke at Amnesty International's headquarters on June 18, 2004. Because of UA appeals, he said, he was treated much better than other prisoners. He asked AI staff members to thank the UA Network, and encourage them in their work on behalf of those in prison now. Asked about the Network's action, he said simply, ***"It works!"***

(Wang Dan was the subject of Urgent Actions and a Medical Action during the years 1989, 1990, 1991 and 1997)

COLOMBIA: Urgent Action letters save lives!

"I have boxes and boxes of appeals sent on our behalf by Urgent Action letter-writers. I have no doubt those letters saved our lives." Urgent Action



In June 2004, fifteen years after the pro-democracy demonstrations in China's Tiananmen Square, former student leader Wang Dan spoke at AI's International Secretariat in London. Of the Urgent Action Network, he said simply, *"It works!"* (c. AI)



As the leader of the most successful tree-planting and women's empowerment program in Africa, Professor Wangari Maathai had been repeatedly beaten and imprisoned over the years for fighting to save Kenya's forests. Her vocal opposition to proposed construction of a skyscraper that would destroy a city park led Kenya's President Moi to label both her and her movement as "subversive." (c. AP)

appeals helped to protect Colombian human rights defenders Astrid Manrique and Yolima Quintero after they received death threats. Yolima Quintero added, **"Urgent Actions are a powerful way to hold our government accountable. Your support is the oxygen that keeps us going."**

(UA 140/01 issued June 5, 2001)

ETHIOPIA: former UA subject receives media award.

On May 13, 2004, Kifle Mulat, president of the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association, received the prestigious "Human Rights Journalism Under Threat" media award in London from Amnesty International's UK section. He received the award from singer Sir Bob Geldorf, who has helped raise millions of dollars for famine relief and development in Ethiopia. A former prisoner of conscience, Kifle Mulat has been detained more than six times in the past decade for publishing articles which have been critical of the government. He

currently edits his own newspaper, *Lissane Hizeb* (Voice of the People). *(UA 56/98 issued February 20, 1998 and reissued several times).*

IRAN: UA activism helps stop execution.

Iran's Supreme Court has stopped the pending execution of Afsaneh Norouzi, a woman convicted of the murder of a senior police official, who she alleged had tried to rape her. According to her lawyer, quoting from the verdict, the Supreme Court "found deficiencies in her case". **International pressure helped to secure this decision. Since this Urgent Action began, the case has received wide media coverage and national attention, and was taken up by Iranian NGOs and members of the "women's caucus" in Iran's parliament, who sought the assistance of the Speaker of Parliament to halt the execution and campaigned for the judiciary to order a review of the case.**

(EX 44/03 issued September 25, 2003 and re-issued 2 times)

KENYA: Environmental leader and UA subject is awarded 2004 Nobel Peace Prize!

A leader of Kenya's Greenbelt Movement, Wangari Maathai was awarded the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. Urgent Action Network members took action on her behalf on five separate occasions. She recently stated to Amnesty International members: **"I count the number of times you have saved my life and made our work possible."**

(UA 74/92 issued March 5, 1992, UA 58/93 issued March 4, 1993 and several updates)

MEXICO: Environmental activists more determined now to continue work.

Isidro Baldenegro and Hermenegildo (Domingo) Rivas, two environmental activists and human rights defenders, were released on June 23, 2004 after all charges against them were dropped. National and international pressure was

Isidro Baldenegro (left) and Hermenegildo Rivas (right) are both members of the indigenous Rarámuris (or Taraumaras) community of Coloradas de la Virgen, in Chihuahua State, Mexico, where they had been among the leaders of their community's struggle against unregulated logging in the region. In retaliation for their work, officers of the state judicial police detained them in March 2003, and charged them with illegal possession of firearms. Isidro Baldenegro was also charged with possession of marijuana.

Isidro Baldenegro has said that he intends to carry on his environmental activism in the face of opposition from vested local interests. Amnesty International therefore remains concerned for the men's safety, and that of their families.



vital in securing this action by the authorities. **Isidro Baldenegro told the newspaper La Jornada that he was “now even more determined [to carry on his work in defence of the environment], because this experience has shown us that there are people who are prepared to help us.”** (UA 193/04 issued June 4, 2004 and re-issued once)

NEPAL: Amnesty’s involvement results in early release.

Deepak Thakuri and his uncle, Chet Bahadur Thakuri, were released from detention on May 6 and May 25, 2004 respectively. Deepak was reportedly arrested on January 27 and Chet Bahadur on January 13. Syam Thakuri, who is Deepak’s father and Chet Bahadur’s brother, was reportedly arrested by 12 armed security force personnel on April 19. He may have been targeted because of his involvement with the Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist, which is a legal and peaceful political party. Though the army denied knowledge of his whereabouts, after he was released on May 13 Syam said that he too had been held at Bareni barracks. **He also said that the involvement of Amnesty International in his family’s case had enabled him to be released from detention earlier.**

(UA 63/04 issued February 13, 2004 and re-issued twice)

NEPAL: Father thanks UA activists for helping release his son.

Ajeet Man Tamang was reportedly released from detention on May 14, 2004 having been arrested at his office in Kathmandu on January 1. **His father, Jagat Bahadur Tamang, believes Amnesty International helped to prevent Ajeet Man Tamang from being ill-treated while in custody, and sends his thanks to all those who worked on behalf of his son.**

(UA 40/04 issued February 4, 2004 and re-issued once)

NEPAL: Teacher released.

Maha Prasad Angai was released on September 19, 2004. **He thanked Amnesty International for campaigning on his behalf.** He had been arrested on November 7, 2003.

(UA 326/03 issued November 12, 2003)

NEPAL: Another release helped by UA campaigning.

Maha Prasad Angai, a 22 year old teacher, was released on September 19, 2004. **He thanked Amnesty International for campaigning on his behalf.** He had been arrested on November 7, 2003.

(UA 326/03 issued Nov. 12, 2003 and re-issued 5 times)

NEPAL: NGO offers thanks for help.

39 *metis* (male transvestites) arrested in Kathmandu on August 9 were released on bail on August 20, 2004. The Blue Diamond Society, a local organization which campaigns for the rights of sexual minorities, has sent its **“sincere and grateful thanks”** for the work done on behalf of the 39, all of whom are members of the Society.

(UA 245/04 issued August 11, 2004)

NEPAL: Shankha Buddha Lama thanks Amnesty for its help.

Shankha Buddha Lama was released on May 27, 2004. Shankha Buddha Lama’s family was not told of his whereabouts or allowed to visit him while he was in detention. **His treatment while in custody was generally good, and improved, he believes, after Amnesty International released an Urgent Action on his behalf.**

(UA 83/04 issued February 26, 2004)

NEPAL: Couple released and in good health.

Chandra Prasad Nepal, a teacher, and his wife Sabitri Nepal were released from Bharatpur District Police Office on April 18, 2004. **They are now in good health and thank Amnesty International for the work done on their behalf.**

(UA 77/04 issued February 23, 2004)

Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, director of the Sudanese Social Development Organization (SUDO) was released in August 2004 from Kober Prison in Khartoum North, Sudan. SUDO provides support to people forced to flee their homes in Darfur, western Sudan. Dr. Mudawi was arrested at his home in Khartoum in December 2003 after he visited Darfur in the course of his work for SUDO. In February 2004 he was brought before the Attorney General and charged with crimes against the state that carried the death penalty. **The “evidence” against him included the fact that he owned documents published by Amnesty International.** He was held solely for his activities in defense of human rights, and Amnesty International adopted him as a prisoner of conscience.



**RUSSIAN FEDERATION:
Ingushetia relatives
grateful to UA letter-
writers.**

All 36 Chechen men detained in Altievo, Ingushetia during a police and army raid on June 23, 2004, were released, according to the human rights organization, *Memorial*. **A representative from Memorial said that they very much appreciated the work of the UA Network, which is thought to have contributed to the men's release. Many female relatives of the detainees asked Memorial to convey their thanks to those who campaigned for the release of their loved ones.**

(UA 210/04 issued June 24, 2004)

**SUDAN: "We will win a
prosperous world."**

All charges against human rights activist Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, director of the Sudan Social Development Organization (SUDO), were dropped on August 7, 2004, and he was released. The following day he sent this email to the AI's International Secretariat: **"Thanks for the support you gave me and all the needy people. I have been inspired by the support you and all human rights defenders gave. It is your support and solidarity that kept my high spirit and determination to keep on the struggle for the freedom and rights of my people ... Your Solidarity and support explicitly strengthened my belonging to the community of good spirited people. Thanks again and I will remain honest, faithful and determined as an impartial human rights defender as long as I exist in this life. Keep up and cheer up, we will win a prosperous world."**

(UA 2/04 issued January 5, 2004 and re-issued once)

**SUDAN: POC released,
thanks Amnesty
members for support.**

A lawyer and human rights defender from Nyala, Darfur, Saleh Mahmud Osman, was released from Kober prison in the capital, Khartoum, on September 4, 2004. He was brought to his family by

his lawyers after a final interrogation by the National Security Forces found no evidence to keep him in detention. Thousands of letters were sent to the Sudanese authorities and Saleh Mahmud Osman's legal counsel during his seven-month detention. **He has expressed his thanks and gratitude for the widespread support given by Amnesty International members.**

(UA 41/04 issued February 4, 2004)

**SUDAN: "Urgent Action
appeals definitely had an
effect on my case."**

Rehab Abdel Bagi Mohamed Ali, who was released without charge from detention in Sudan, personally expressed his thanks to the Urgent Action Network.

(EX 68/02 issued September 5, 2002)

**SUDAN: Thousands of
letters sent to Sudan.**

Prisoner of conscience Saleh Mahmud Osman was released from Kober Prison in Khartoum on September 4, 2004, and brought to his family by his lawyers after a final interrogation by the National Security Forces found no evidence to keep him in detention. **Thousands of letters were sent to the Sudanese authorities and Saleh Mahmud Osman's legal counsel during his seven-month detention. He has expressed his thanks and gratitude for the widespread support given by Amnesty International members.**

(UA 41/04 issued February 4, 2004 and re-issued once)

**SYRIA: Amnesty's candle
burns bright.**

"Amnesty International's support was like a candle that lit the darkness of the cell and left the spark alive and vivid in our souls." - Riad al-Turk.

Urgent Action letter-writers sent thousands of appeals to protect Syrian prisoner of conscience Riad al-Turk from torture and ill-treatment, and to secure his release.

(UAs and Medical Actions issued in 1981, 1984, 1985, 1988, 1991 and 2001)



**TURKMENISTAN:
Khalmurad
Gylychdurdyev returned
to his family.**

Khalmurad Gylychdurdyev was returned to his family by officers of the Ministry of National Security (MNS) on June 26, 2004. He said that Amnesty International's involvement had helped secure his release. Mr Gylychdurdyev had been taken away by three men in a car on the morning of June 23 during a visit to the eye hospital in the capital, Ashgabat. During interrogation, while in detention, he was pressured to stop giving interviews on Radio Liberty - a US station that frequently broadcasts programs critical of Turkmenistan's government policies. He told Amnesty International on July 1, 2004: **"They wanted me to sign a letter to the President they had prepared in my name. I was supposed to apologize for passing on lies and secret information about the economy and other issues to Radio Liberty. How would I know any secret information? I have no access to such information. I am a pensioner, that's all."** He said he did not sign the letter, although one of his interrogators threatened that "we can take away your home and then we'll send you and your family into the desert. See how you get on there." He added, **"I think they released me because you got involved in the case and, maybe, because they just couldn't find anything criminal in what I have done."**

(UA 208/04 issued June 24, 2004)



Dilobar Khudoberganova (left) is the sister of Iskander Khudoberganov, a man who has been the subject of numerous Urgent Actions. In 2002, Iskandar Khudoberganov was sentenced to death on charges that included religious extremism and serious anti-state crimes. Iskander Khudoberganov's mother, Matlyuba Khudoberganova, told AI that when she saw her son for the first time in the Uzbek National Security Service (SNB), he told her: ***"They tortured me to force me to confess to all the charges they have come up with. If I hadn't signed the confession in the end, I wouldn't be alive anymore. Everything inside me feels smashed."***
(c. AI)

UZBEKISTAN: Sister thanks UA activists for helping brother.

Dilobar Khudoberganova, whose brother, Iskandar, has been on death row since November 2002, visited Amnesty's International Secretariat in 2004 and told the UA staff, ***"I am convinced that it is entirely due to the Urgent Action that my brother is still alive."***

The Uzbek National Security Service (SNB) also has reportedly followed Dilobar Khudoberganova, who is an active member of the human rights

organization *Mothers against the death penalty and torture* in Uzbekistan. Members of the SNB have slandered her publicly and attempts to prevent her carrying out her legitimate human rights activities have increased since the annual meeting of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in Tashkent in May 2003, at which she spoke about human rights violations in Uzbekistan. Dilobar Khudoberganova told Amnesty International that when she saw her brother for the first time in

prison, she could not recognize him at first, as his black hair had turned completely white. She believes this to be caused by the torture he was subjected to in detention.

In April 1999 President Karimov was said to have publicly stated: ***"I am prepared to rip off the heads of 200 people, to sacrifice their lives, in order to save peace and calm in the republic."***

(UA 276/02 issued September 4, 2002)

USA/OKLAHOMA: Death sentence of Mexican national commuted.

On May 14, 2004, Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry commuted the death sentence of Mexican national Osvaldo Torres to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, in line with the recommendation made by the state Pardon and Parole Board on May 7. Osvaldo Torres was sentenced to death in 1996 for the murders of Francisco Morales and Maria Yanez, committed in 1993. His co-defendant, George Ochoa, whom the state considers to have been the actual gunman, remains on death row. In a statement, the Governor said: "My heart goes out to the family of Mr. Morales and Ms. Yanez. This was difficult decision, but I believe clemency is warranted by a number of issues involved in this case. It is important to remember that the actual shooter in

these horrific murders was also sentenced to death and faces execution." He added that "Osvaldo Torres will spend the rest of his life behind bars for his role in this deplorable crime." As a Mexican national, President Vicente Fox had been among those appealing to Governor Henry to stop the execution. The Governor did note that Osvaldo Torres had been denied his consular rights under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. The Governor's statement added "that treaty is also important in protecting the rights of American citizens abroad." He said: "I took into account the fact that the US signed the 1963 Vienna Convention and is part of that treaty," adding that "the US State Department contacted my office and urged us to give 'careful consideration' to that fact." Shortly before the Governor made his decision, the Oklahoma Court of Criminal

Appeals voted 3-2 to grant Osvaldo Torres an indefinite stay of execution in order to review the consular rights issue and whether Torres's trial representation had been adequate. Since taking office in January 2003, this is the first time Governor Henry has granted clemency in a death penalty case. He had previously rejected three recommendations for clemency from the Board. One of the lawyers on the case passed on the following message to UA Network members: ***"I just wanted to thank you for the help provided in Osvaldo's case. A court order for a hearing and clemency - just in a matter of hours - is overwhelming!!! I will make sure Osvaldo knows how much work you did and I know he will be moved by what so many have done to help him."***

(UA 136/04 issued April 2, 2004)

UZBEKISTAN: Death Sentence overturned after UA issued.

On August 17, 2004, the judicial board of the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan overturned the death sentence against Ikram Mukhtarov and referred his case for further investigation. Ikram Mukhtarov was sentenced to death for murdering two people in 2001. The court reportedly ignored his claim that his "confession" to the murders was extracted under torture. However, on July 19, 2004, the United Nations Human Rights Committee appealed to the Uzbek authorities to stay Ikram Mukhtarov's execution while it considered the allegations that he received an unfair trial and was tortured in pre-trial detention. ***The Uzbek non-governmental organization Mothers Against***

the Death Penalty and Torture, which has been campaigning on Ikram Mukhtarov's behalf, believes that international pressure, including appeals by members of the Urgent Action Network, have played a crucial role in getting his case re-examined.

(UA 234/04 issued July 30, 2004 and re-issued once)



Making headlines worldwide!

The Urgent Action Network's appeals are making headlines around the world. Two days after a UA was issued regarding allegations of abuse at the Carmichael Detention Center in the Bahamas, (UA 293/04 issued October 18, 2004) the Center was featured in the Miami Herald with direct and extensive references to AI's findings. Similarly, an appeal on the behalf of prisoner of conscience, US Army sergeant William Webster was featured in a story by The Times, London UK on October 26, 2004. Again the UA Network's appeals were referenced as The Times reported 'Amnesty International has raised a petition with thousands of names that it hopes will embarrass the Bush Administration into reconsidering this landmark case.'

(Bahamas: UA 293/04 issued October 18, 2004;

USA: UA 267/04 issued 17 September 2004)

Letter to Putin: UA appeals reach Russian President

Urgent Action (UA) letter-writers can be confident that their voices are being heard at the very top levels of the Russian administration, following recent evidence that UA appeals on behalf of two "disappeared" Chechen women have been seen by President Putin himself.

In December 2001 thousands of UA Network members took action on behalf of Eset Yahyaeva and Milana Betirgirieva, who had not been seen since Russian soldiers raided their village in Chechnya.

The women had been staying at a relative's house when masked Russian soldiers broke in, threatening to rape and kill five teenage girls who were sleeping in one room. Although they did not carry out these threats, they ordered the girls to lie still, and left the house. When the girls eventually emerged they found that Eset Yahyaeva and Milana Betirgirieva, who had been staying in another room, were missing. Items of

clothing belonging to both women were found in the street outside.

The women's families have now been searching for them for almost three years. However, they have been faced with inaction and even hostility from Russian federal and Chechen law enforcement officials. They have been told to stop searching and have even been warned that other family members would suffer if they continued their search.

They have, however, drawn strength from the many letters of support from Amnesty International members, which have been sent to them from as far as Japan and the USA. They have also seen appeals that were sent to President Putin and the Chechen authorities.

Recently, we have received further evidence that appeals have reached their target. Our researchers have learnt of a Chechen official who met President Putin and asked him about Eset

Yahyaeva and Milana Betirgirieva. President Putin, replying that he knew all about the women, showed him copies of appeals sent to him by the UA Network, which came from all over the world.

Much work remains for the UA Network and AI members to do on behalf of those who suffer human rights abuses in the region. Thousands of Chechen men and women have been killed, subjected to torture, including rape, or have "disappeared" during the past 10 years of violence and armed conflict. Many more families of people who have "disappeared" have spent years trying to find out what has happened to their loved ones.

In continuing to protest at such abuses, however, and in sending appeals to protect the individuals who are most at risk, UA letter-writers can be sure that their protests reach the very top of the Russian administration.

(UA 323/01 issued December 19, 2001)

Mincy and Deyvid's family members outside their home at the Maria Lourdes Plantation in Guatemala where their parents, Margarita and Jose, are workers and union members.

Mincy Magaly Elias, age 15, and her brother Deyvid Estuardo Calmo Elias, age 13, were attacked and beaten on July 6, 2004 while they were washing clothes near their home.

Mincy and Deyvid were featured in a recent Children's Edition Urgent Action.



AIKids at Work In Washington DC!

Virginia S. is a Washington DC parent who is working with her local librarians and neighborhood kids on Children's Edition Urgent Actions (CEUAs). Like many others who take action on CEUAs, the children at the library wrote a "BIG Letter" to the President of Guatemala on behalf of 15-year-old Mincy Magaly Elias and her 13-year-old brother Deyvid Estuardo Calmo Elias, who had been kidnapped and beaten because their parents are union leaders at the Maria Lourdes Coffee Plantation. Virginia and

her children decided to bring the letter directly to the Embassy of Guatemala.

At the Embassy, Virginia writes, "**We were met by Third Secretary Juan Carlos Vila who wanted to know more about the situation and tried to explain that crime prevention, rather than crime investigation, is the norm (or the best that can be hoped) in Guatemala.**"

Secretary Vila said he was grateful that people in the USA cared about Guate-

malans, and wanted more details about the Elias family's situation. Vila promised to pass along the children's BIG Letter and the details about threats against the Elias family to the Guatemalan Ambassador.

For information about receiving Children's Edition Urgent Actions monthly, contact UA staff at the address below. Meanwhile, visit www.amnestyusa.org/aikids

Take Your Human Rights Activism to the Next Level:

Join Amnesty International's Urgent Action Network!



Amnesty International's Urgent Action Network (UAN) serves as the organization's "emergency room" for human rights violations. Every day, UAN members in over 70 countries write personalized appeals to authorities who are in the position to ensure the safety and fair treatment of those whom Amnesty International seeks to protect.

While we celebrate our successes by regularly issuing UA Quotes, we also recognize that we must strive to become a stronger, larger network of concerned activists. Will you be on call to respond to these emergencies? We invite you to join the Urgent Action Network if you are not already receiving the actions. If you enjoy writing appeals and can respond quickly to urgent human rights concerns, please take this opportunity to step up your commitment by getting personally involved in the global fight for human rights.

Join online at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent/register.html> or contact us in Colorado and we will send you a packet of information about the program, including a registration form.