

Network of Concerned Historians				NCH
Campaigns				
Year original	Year follow-up	Circular	Country	Names
1999		13	Guatemala	Juan Gerardi, auxiliary archbishop

Announcement

In our last news circular (*NCH #10*) of November 1998, we included facts on the murder of Bishop Juan Gerardi, director of the *Recuperation of Historical Memory Project* (also see *NCH #2*). Amnesty International now launches an appeal to clarify the circumstances of the murder. I hope that you are able to send the recommended appeals. Please remember to write in your professional capacity. If all of us write, some 250 letters of historians and others from all over the world will reach Guatemala and may make a difference.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Amnesty International Worldwide Appeals February 1999; AI Index: NWS 22/02/99

Extrajudicial Execution Bishop Juan Gerardi

Nearly a year after the murder of *Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera*, those responsible have still to be brought to justice. Bishop Gerardi was battered to death with a piece of paving stone in Guatemala City on 26 April 1998. The 76-year-old director of the Archbishop's human rights office was killed only days after launching a report by the Guatemalan Catholic Church's *Recuperation of Historical Memory Project*. The report was based on a three-year study of more than 55,000 human rights abuses reportedly perpetrated during the 36-year Guatemalan civil conflict, and concluded that around 79 per cent of the abuses had been carried out by the security forces. Amnesty International fears that Bishop Gerardi was murdered by agents of these official forces.

In the face of all the evidence, the authorities have refused to acknowledge that Bishop Gerardi's killing may have been politically motivated. The official investigation into his death considers the murder to be either a common crime or a crime of passion. In a report released on behalf of the Guatemalan Catholic Church in November 1998, former Attorney General Acisclo Valladares concluded that Bishop Gerardi's murder had all the hallmarks of an extrajudicial execution. The report also stated that the priest held in connection with the murder had been wrongfully accused.

Please write, urging a full, independent and impartial investigation into allegations that military or former military personnel were involved in the April 1998 murder of Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera. Call for those responsible to be brought to justice.

Send your letters to:

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Salutation: Dear President