

Bamaca Case: Acts of Repression

1. 1993: Shortly after my hunger strike in front of the Polytechnica, a bomb went off in the building where my attorneys' offices were located.
2. Throughout 1993 and 1994 I received numerous threats via telephone and in leaflet form.
3. Oct.-Nov. 1994: During my 32 day hunger strike in front of the National Palace, I received a number of death threats and a vehicle drove by during night, and someone opened the window and aimed a shot gun at me.
4. Spring of 1995: Just before my third hunger strike, my friends at the Guatemala Human Rights Commission in Washington, D.C. had their steel security door torn off the hinges and left in the street; only their answering machine was stolen. This was preceded by a number of telephone threats.
5. April 1995: After Congressman Torricelli disclosed that my husband had been killed upon the orders of Col. Alpirez, and that Alpirez was a paid CIA "asset", I was asked to testify before the Senate intelligence Committee. I did so. The FBI then made a hurried visit to my home in Texas late one night. They explained that that the Guatemalan army had hired someone to kill me, and that I should take steps to protect myself.
6. Throughout the rest of 1995, Sr. Arango, as the Special Prosecutor in the case, tried valiantly to open the graveyard at Las Cabañas, where Everardo may be buried. He tried for months to gain entry, and was shot at while he sat in his office, finally coming under so many death threats against himself and his children that he was forced to resign from office.
7. Dr. Arango was replaced by Silvia Jerez. She was shot to death (13 bullets) in 1998, shortly before Dr. Arango traveled to Costa Rica to testify to the Corte Inter-Americana.
8. Members of the Minugua team, throughout 1995 and 1996, brought me reports from credible sources of various army plans to assassinate me by staging muggings or assaults by local gangs.

9. In early 1996 my American lawyer's car was firebombed next to home in Washington D.C. at 4 am. The next day, also at 4 am a white pick up truck with darkened windows drove up to the church community where I was living in D.C., and a man took careful aim at my bedroom window and fired.

10. When I tried to assist Otoniel De La Roca Mendoza flee the country in late 1997; we were both pulled of the airplane. There were gunmen visible in our hotel parking lot. We arranged for his escape via Mexico. All of his family and friends came under immediate and serious death threats. We were able to move his closest relatives fairly quickly and Minugua was of great assistance as well. Others fled the country on their own.

11. After the 1998 trial at the Inter-American Court, Santiago Cabrera Lopez and his family came under very serious death threats.

12. Since the unanimous decision of the Inter-American Court in our favor in 2000, four of Otoniel's cousins have been murdered.

- Not long after the Inter-American Court gave its ruling in my case, Otoniel received a telephone call from an unnamed man who shouted at him that they had found him at last, that they should have killed him the first time, and that they were now going to kill him and his family. He hung up, but the threats continued, and he was followed from work. As a result he and his family were forced to move once again, taking careful measures to conceal their whereabouts. Strange men approached the house in the middle of the night a year ago, firing guns in the air as they drove off.
- Far worse however, has been the accelerating persecution of more distant family members still residing in Guatemala. Since Otoniel's escape, they had all been visited repeatedly and threatened by frantic military agents bent on locating him in the United States. In 2000, Otoniel's cousin, Jose Matilda Alvarez, was inexplicably murdered. Otoniel's former wife and teenage son (German Anibal De La Roca Melendez) were followed and threatened, eventually forcing them to move. In 2002 a cousin, Jesus Mendoza, was found dead and mutilated. Galindo Mendoza, another cousin of Otoniel's and his relatives came under intense surveillance by men known to be military liaisons. He fled to the U.S. but was deported back to Guatemala in 2003. He was immediately followed and was planning to flee the country yet again. He was taking his young niece, Wendy, home from school on his motorcycle in broad daylight when they were stopped by armed men, one of them a known military liaison, which shot him to death. Wendy

later received death threats as well and was forced to flee the country. In August 2004 Jesus Mendoza (Otoniel's cousin) was shot several times through the head and left in his vehicle. Nothing was stolen.

- Three women relatives fled the country after serious threats and tried to re-settle in Mexico. The Guatemalan military agents tracked them down there, and they fled again, towards the United States with a coyote. The youngest, a teenager, is diabetic and nearly perished on the journey.
- Otoniel's son German Anibal has suffered a number of grave attacks as well. These range from frightening calls with funeral music, to police dragging him alone from a bus at a checkpoint and telling him they had orders to shoot to kill; to laying siege to his home one night and clambering onto his roof (the police station is nearby but no one responded to his calls). One year ago he was riding his motorcycle to work early in the morning hours on a mountainous road. A car with darkened windows followed him, and slowed down till all the other cars had passed. Then it turned off its lights and charged him. He did not go over the edge, but crashed. His shoulder was dislocated.

13. After the government decided to pay the reparations award, my sister in law Egidia Bamaca Velasquez, was attacked in her tiny home, in front of her children, by a group of men in ski masks wielding machetes. They were evidently looking for her bankbook, which she had left with her adult son, since she cannot read or write.

14. Dr. Arango died in a tragic car "accident" very similar to the one suffered by Otoniel's son, shortly after the Inter-American Court issued its February 2009 order that the Guatemalan government carry through the required criminal investigation and prosecution.

15. Shortly before the prosecutor in this case attempted to re-open the grave in Retalhuleu in May 2009, Angel Nery Urrizar was shot to death in Mazatenango (reportedly he received thirty five bullets). He was a key witness as to the identity of the person in fact buried in the grave there.

16. I am currently being threatened with criminal charges in Guatemala.

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