

Dear President Jorge Videla,

We write to you with a profound sense of concern and urgency regarding a tragic situation suggesting the need for immediate action by the Argentine Government.

We have been aware for some time now of the grave problem of 'disappearances' in Argentina. The 1976 Annual Report of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission comments the situation as affecting many American countries: "There have already been many cases recorded of 'missing persons', that is, persons who, according to witnesses and other evidence, have been detained by military or police authorities but whose detention is denied or whose location is unknown.

The status of 'missing' seems to be a comfortable expedient to avoid application of the legal provisions established for the defense of personal freedom, physical security, dignity and human life itself. In practice this procedure nullifies the legal standards established in recent years in some countries to avoid illegal detentions and the use of physical and psychological duress against persons detained..." Many concrete cases have been brought to our attention over the last three years ~~which~~ concerning Argentine citizens by relatives or friends ~~who~~ of those disappeared ~~whose long search for news of their loved ones have brought them to the United States.~~

We have learned of the courage and persistence of ~~particularly~~ the mothers and wives of 'disappeared' in Argentina who ~~for~~ have unceasingly requested information about what has happened to their loved ones. They have been better known for their silent vigils in the central Plaza de Mayo in front of the Government building, but no less heroic are their tireless efforts going from one place to another trying to get some news. The majority are mothers in search of their children and we feel the Argentine government has a moral obligation to give them honest answers to the questions that have been troubling them for so long.

It is with a deep sense of shame that we have received reports of the calumny, ~~and~~ harassment and repression that has been ~~released~~ unleashed by Argentine security forces against them. In December 1977 the first large group of mothers (8-1) were abducted outside of Santa Cruz Church ~~in~~ ^{B. A.} and have never been heard of since that time except for informal reports of ill-treatment and secret detention

at the hands of people who are either members of the Argentine Security Forces or very closely related to them. As one more incident in this sad tale of official repression against the mothers, 43 of them were arrested on 18 January, 1979, ^{the mothers} and have been prevented ~~since~~ by police from entering the Plaza de Mayo ~~Square~~ ^{since that time}.

We were shocked to hear of a new escalation of repression against the mothers in this past two months culminating in the 'disappearance' of ^{Mrs.} Thelma Jara de Cabezas (46 years) L.C. 4.312.117. She was mother of Gustavo Alejandro Cabezas, who disappeared on 10 May, 1976 (C.I. 7.352.568), ^{was} and ~~x~~ one of the leading members of the 'Plaza de Mayo' mothers and secretary of the Commission for Political Detainees and the 'Disappeared' in Argentina. On May 2 she went to visit her ~~her~~ husband who is seriously ill with cancer in the "Hospital Espanol" in Buenos Aires and was never heard of since except for a telephone call which apparently her captors allowed her to make. ~~It~~ To make the situation even more outrageous, her only other son, Daniel, is exiled in Mexico.

The facts of the situation and the similiary ^{it} with the many other reported cases ^{force} ~~have~~ led us to believe that she has been abducted by either members of the Argentine security forces or a group working with full official approval. We can ~~no longer~~ accept the often repeated argument that your government is unable to do anything about these cases.

We urge ~~you~~ that you rigourously investigate this new ~~xxxx~~ violation and respectfully request that ^{Mrs.} Thelma de Cabezas be freed immediately. We make ours the plea of so many Argentine women that news be given of their 'disappeared' loved ones, ^{and} that these violations which offend all civilised norms of behaviour be stopped.

We respectfully await your response to our concerns,

Sincerely,