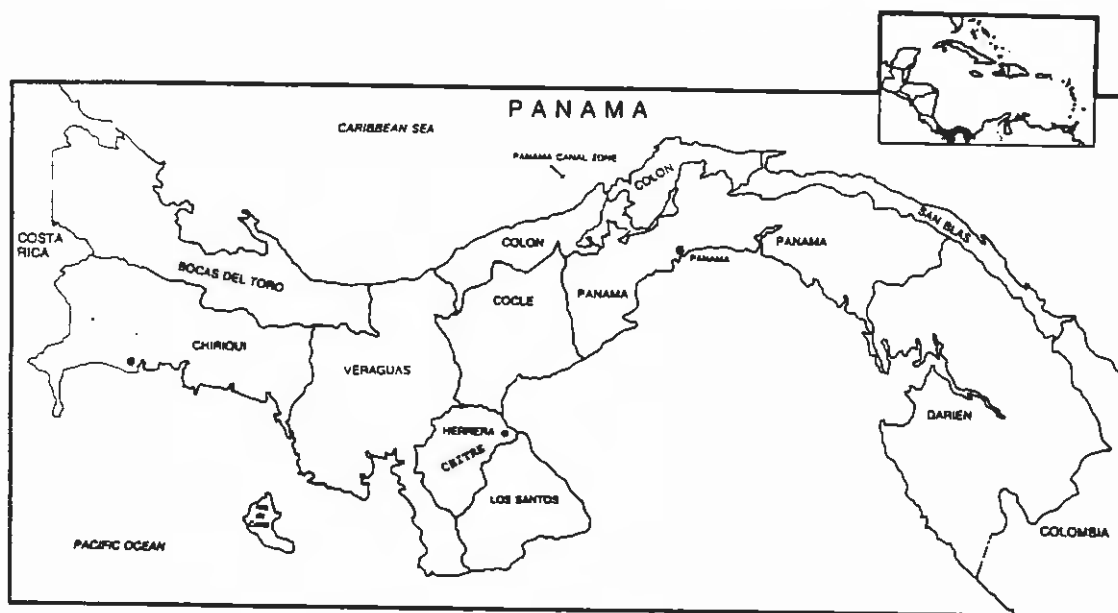


Panama 1987: Health Consequences of Police and Military Actions

THE REPORT OF A MEDICAL FACT-FINDING MISSION
OF
PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



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Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) is a national organization of health professionals whose goal is to bring the skills of the American medical profession to the protection of international human rights. PHR works to prevent the participation of doctors in torture, to defend imprisoned health professionals, to stop physical and psychological abuse of citizens by governments, and to provide medical and humanitarian aid to victims of repression.

This report was written by Jane Green Schaller, M.D. and Robert Cook-Deegan, M.D., who traveled to Panama in August 1987 for Physicians for Human Rights.



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PANAMA 1987: HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF MILITARY AND POLICE ACTIONS
A REPORT BY PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

In August 1987 Physicians for Human Rights conducted a fact-finding mission to Panama in response to invitations from the National Medical Association of Panama (Dr. Jose Trejos, President) and the Association of Doctors, Dentists and Allied Professionals of the Social Security system of Panama (Dr. Edgar Sagel, General Secretary). Both of these associations of Panamanian health professionals have actively sought to promote respect for human rights in Panama. Two Panamanian human rights groups also requested this mission: the Panamanian Committee for Human Rights (Dr. Osvaldo Velasquez) and the Center for Investigation of Human Rights of Panama (Otilia Koster).

The mission's goal was to investigate and document widespread violations of human rights and medical neutrality which were alleged to have occurred in the country following civilian unrest and demonstrations beginning in June 1987.

The first calls requesting this mission were received in Boston on the weekend of July 18, 1987. The mission took place less than five weeks later, between August 23-27, 1987. Jane G. Schaller, M.D. Professor and Chairman of Pediatrics at Tufts University School of Medicine and President of Physicians for Human Rights, and Robert Cook-Deegan, M.D., a senior research fellow at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics of Georgetown University, represented Physicians for Human Rights. They are the authors of the report that follows.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

--Widespread violence by military police directed against unarmed civilians, many of whom were bystanders to peaceful demonstrations. We heard extensive testimony describing indiscriminate and unpredictable military force which had affected Panamanian men, women, and children from all walks of life, wielded in their homes, streets, schools and places of work.

--Indiscriminate use of birdshot and tear gas, frequently fired at close range and into the closed areas of cars, buildings and homes resulting in serious injuries. Panamanian Medical Association representatives reported that at least 1,000 individuals had suffered injuries from birdshot between June and August 1987. We witnessed six persons with partial or total blindness, six persons with serious damage to internal organs, and dozens of individuals with superficial wounds. These included children who were bystanders during demonstrations.

--Severe beatings of civilians by police prior to arrest and in police cars with sticks, rubber hoses and gun butts as well as physical abuse of those in detention. We collected over a dozen testimonies of people who were beaten in detention and heard two detailed firsthand accounts of torture in prisons including the hanging of a prisoner by his wrists and beatings and the burning of genitals of another. These accounts conform to numerous other torture testimonies examined by Physicians for Human Rights and other human rights organizations.

--Interference by military in provision of medical care to Panamanian civilians. These abuses included invasions of hospital emergency rooms and inpatient wards by military police who interfered with medical care, prevention of access to medical care for wounded civilians, and misuse of ambulance and forensic services.

--Numerous instances of detention of Panamanian citizens of all social classes for the nonviolent expression of their beliefs. Prisoners have been detained without charges, held incommunicado, imprisoned in severely overcrowded cells under highly unsanitary conditions, and physically abused while in detention.

--Government interference with attempts by members of the health professions to exercise their universally recognized rights to freedom of expression. In 1985 a prominent Panamanian physician was kidnapped, beaten and tortured for speaking out against the deteriorating health system in Panama. In 1987, doctors have been detained and harrassed for attempting to adhere to their codes of medical ethics. Doctors and other health professionals have been threatened and imprisoned for expressing opposition to the government and government policies which they allege adversely affect the health care system.

PANAMA'S RECENT HISTORY AND POLITICAL SITUATION*

The Republic of Panama borders Costa Rica on the North and Colombia on the South. It has a population of 2.3 million on a narrow strip of land comprising mountainous central regions and long coastal expanses. The Panama Canal is a central geographic and political fact of life. A treaty between Panama

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This summary is based on a variety of current sources including: Banks (ed.), Political Handbook of the World:1987, (Binghampton, CSA Publications, 1987); copies of the Central American Report, published weekly in Guatemala City; Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profile 1987-88 on Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama (London, 1987); and Economist Intelligence Reports on Panama, Nos. 3 and 4, 1987 and No. 1, 1988; and Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Panama, Organization of American States (Washington DC, 1979).

and the United States signed in 1977 will shift management of the canal, once fully operated by the United States, to the Panamanian Government by 1999, completing a 20-year phase-in period. The issue of control over the Panama Canal dominated Panamanian politics for many decades, but was not a major issue in the national elections of 1984.

Panama enjoyed a succession of relatively stable elected governments from the time of its independence from Colombia in 1903 until 1968. At that time, the president of eleven days, Arnulfo Arias Madrid, was deposed by the military and the head of the National Guard, Colonel Omar Torrijos Herrera, emerged as the holder of real power in the country. In 1972 a new civilian president was installed; at the same time, however, "temporary, extraordinary executive powers" were vested in General Torrijos who was designated as the "Supreme Leader of the Panamanian Revolution". A new national assembly was elected in August 1978 and a new president, Dr. Aristides Royo, in October 1978. General Torrijos then resigned as chief of government but remained as commander of the National Guard; he effectively retained power over the country until his death in an air crash in July 1981. His rule was marked by pragmatic populist politics and a dramatic expansion of the public sector. Although there were political detentions and sporadic violence by the military police under Torrijos, these abuses were neither as flagrant nor as systematic as those in most other Central American nations and thus attracted little international attention.

Frequent changes of government followed Torrijos' death. General Manuel Antonio Noriega, head of Panamanian military intelligence under Torrijos, became commander of the National Guard in August 1983. In 1984 direct elections for the presidency were held. General Noriega became the candidate of the Torrijos-established Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD); however, widespread popular opposition to his candidacy forced him to step aside in favor of Dr. Nicolas Ardito Barletta. In elections that were marred by allegations of fraud including suspicious breakdowns of computer equipment, interruption of vote counts when the opposition candidate was leading, and ballot counts totalling more than 100% of the electorate in some precincts, Barletta was declared the winner by a margin of 1,713 votes out of 640,000 cast. Within the year Barletta was forced to resign after losing the support of General Noriega, who continued to exercise effective control over the political life of the country. Barletta was succeeded by the first Vice President, Eric Arturo Delvalle, who was in turn deposed at Noriega's behest in February 1988.

In June 1986 the New York Times published a series of reports that charged Noriega with drug trafficking, money-laundering, clandestine arms trading, and the sale of U.S. high-technology equipment to Cuba. Panamanian authorities dismissed these charges as part of a U.S. campaign to prevent Panama from assuming control over the Canal, while local bankers

accused the U.S. of seeking to force the lifting of Panamanian banking secrecy laws in order to facilitate the detention of U.S. tax evaders and to reduce the competitive advantage of Panamanian banks.

Political Unrest and the Deteriorating Economy

General Noriega's rule has been marked by intolerance of dissent, increasing corruption, and considerable fluctuation in economic conditions. Panama's economy is heavily dependent on agricultural exports and regional banking. Government sources claim that during 1987 the economy grew and unemployment declined on the momentum of the previous two years' economic expansion, buoyant demand for the country's international services, and recovery in agriculture. However, these optimistic claims were contested by non-governmental sources, and it seems clear that at least in Panama City unemployment rates were rising and the economy suffering as a result of disruptions caused by the political crisis. In the first part of 1987, Panamanian banks suffered a major erosion of their deposit bases because of fears of possible consequences of continuing political instability. Panama's external debt at the end of 1987 was estimated to be as high as U.S. \$3.8 billion, and the government must now negotiate new agreements with the International Monetary Fund prior to an already extended deadline of April 30, 1988.

Within Panama, there is a larger middle class than in other Central American nations except Costa Rica. Support for the government has steadily eroded in recent years under the economic stresses, suppressions of freedom, charges of corruption and narcotics trafficking, and mounting political violence. Both business and trade union groups have been prominent in staging fiscal disobedience campaigns, strikes, and business closings, but their determination has been successfully broken on a number of occasions by various forms of governmental force.

One incident of particular significance involved the murder of Dr. Hugo Spadafora, a physician who had served as vice minister in the Ministry of Health of the Panamanian government in 1976 and had participated on different sides at different times in the conflict in Nicaragua-- first against Somoza, then against the Sandinistas-- before his death. He was a mysterious, flamboyant, and prominent figure. His tortured and decapitated body was found across the Costa Rican border on September 14, 1985. Reports from several alleged eyewitnesses indicated that he had been arrested and detained within Panama by Panamanian Defense Forces. The Spadafora case provoked considerable criticism of the government both within Panama and internationally. The Panamanian government closed its investigation of the Spadafora case in 1986, concluding that he had been murdered in Costa Rica by unknown assailants. This conclusion was not widely accepted within Panama. Some Panamanians who contested the government's investigation were

subsequently detained. This case has been under investigation by the Organization of American States which in a resolution confirmed in March 1988 states that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the government of Panama was responsible for the murder of Dr. Spadafora.

Members of the Spadafora family met with us at Chitre in the province of Herrera on August 25, 1987 to testify about the need for open investigation and resolution of this case. Two other witnesses testified about the Spadafora incident. A lawyer from Chitre stressed the need for investigation and resolution of this case (testimony 25) and a friend of Dr. Spadafora testified that he had witnessed Dr. Spadafora's arrival alive in Panama shortly before his death (testimony 20).

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PANAMA

Allegations and Detention of Colonel Diaz Herrera

The current wave of political instability followed public allegations against the government made by Colonel Diaz Herrera on June 7, 1987. Col. Diaz, until recently second only to Noriega in command of the Panamanian military, accused General Noriega of playing a direct role in drug dealing, corruption, the Spadafora murder, election fraud, and the death of General Torrijos. These allegations, widely reported, led to the emergence of widespread public demonstrations against the government.

The government responded not only by taking direct action against Colonel Diaz himself, but also by victimizing a diverse range of individuals who had been found by the Panamanian military during a raid on the Colonel Diaz Herrera family home on July 27, 1987. On August 24, 1987 we met with 14 family members of 26 persons who had been arrested on July 27. These witnesses stated that their relatives had been held incommunicado for nearly a month, without sufficient clothes, and without legal aid or contact with their families. These relatives expressed great concern about the health and well-being of the prisoners, fearing that most of them had been sent to the prison island of Coiba which is known for harsh labor under severe conditions. The family members stated that their relatives had done no wrong by being at the Diaz Herrera house, and that they should be freed since they had committed no crimes nor had any known charges been brought against them. They stated that they had been trying to gain access to their relatives through political and religious channels without success. This retaliatory victimization of innocent persons is a clear and direct violation of all of the relevant norms of international human rights law. All but two of these individuals had been released by February 1988; Colonel Diaz himself has gone into exile in Venezuela.

Emergence of Peaceful Opposition

A coalition of groups opposed to the government was formed on June 11, 1987. This coalition, the Cruzada Civilista (Civic Crusade), has grown to include over 200 civic groups across the country, among them the Panamanian Medical Association and the Association of Doctors, Dentists and Allied Professionals of the Social Security System (AMOACSS). The Crusade is supported by several opposition political parties. The symbol of the Crusade and of the opposition is the color white worn somewhere on the clothing or waved as a flag. On August 6, 1987 the military searched and ransacked Crusade headquarters in Panama City, issuing arrest warrants for six Crusade leaders who were subsequently forced into hiding or exile.

Military suppression of civilian demonstrations entered a new phase in June 1987. In early July, public demonstrations against the government intensified, becoming almost daily occasions. These demonstrations were marked by the peaceful participation of thousands of citizens in marches and automobile caravans. During the worst incidents of the summer the military arrested and detained more than 600 citizens on July 10 and, according to many citizens we interviewed as well as videotaped records, used shotguns and tear gas indiscriminately. Many civilians were injured and, according to witnesses, many injuries were inflicted intentionally and gratuitously. Military forces, armed with tear gas and machine guns, moved into residential neighborhoods. Private homes were entered by the military, and shotguns and tear gas were said to have been used widely in private residences and buildings. Many of those arrested on July 10 were bystanders who were not directly involved in demonstrations. Violations of medical neutrality (described below) on July 10 included the military invasion of three hospitals in Panama City.

Restriction of Press Freedom

Press and broadcast freedom were severely curtailed during this period. Following several years of indirect harassment of opposition news media, the government closed three opposition papers, La Prensa, Extra and El Siglo, radio stations, and television channels on July 26, 1987, the same day a student was killed by a member of the Panamanian Defense Forces in a mountain resort outside the town of El Valle. Strict censorship was imposed on remaining media outlets. Radio KW-Continente was closed on June 11th or 12th, and Radio Mundial threatened. Television channels 4 and 13 were forbidden to broadcast news of the Crusade at risk of losing their frequencies and licenses. Crusade witnesses detailed the documentation and publication in the newspapers of untrue and slanderous charges against members of the opposition. Concern was expressed that such newspaper stories could later be used to justify requests for the extradition of persons who had been forced to flee the country. La Prensa was allowed to resume publication on January 20, 1988, but again closed on February 25, 1988. Radio Mundial, the last

of the opposition stations, was forcefully closed in February 1988; its owner was kidnapped, beaten and subsequently released.

U.S. Government Response

On June 26, 1987 the United States Senate passed a resolution urging a return of democracy to Panama. On June 30 demonstrations, alleged to have been staged and supported by the Panamanian government, damaged the United States Embassy in Panama City. Secretary of State George Shultz subsequently publicly supported the Civic Crusade. At present, both military and civilian foreign aid from the U.S. to Panama are suspended. Subsequent legislation passed by Congress in December 1987 has extended this suspension until freedom of the press is restored and democratic reforms take place.

U.S. Investigations and Indictment of General Noriega

General Noriega is currently under investigation by four agencies of the U.S. Government -- the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Customs Office, and the Department of Justice. These investigations are reported to center on his alleged collusion in transporting drugs, laundering money derived from criminal activities, corruption, selling and transporting arms, and smuggling. In February 1988, General Noriega was indicted by two Federal grand juries in Florida on charges of drug trafficking, and extensive testimony was presented to U.S. Senate hearings concerning his alleged illegal activities. Various trade and aid embargoes were subsequently imposed upon Panama by the US Congress and Administration.

Panamanian Political Events of February and March 1988

On February 26, 1988 President Arturo Delvalle attempted to dismiss General Noriega as commander of the Panamanian Defense Forces; however, the General retained control of both the military and the Panamanian Congress. The Congress then dismissed Delvalle as president. Manuel Solis Palma, the minister of education, was named president, and a new set of ambassadors and government representatives appointed. Mr. Delvalle remained in Panama in hiding, still claiming to be the legitimate President. The U.S. and most other countries continued to recognize representatives of the Delvalle presidency. Steps were undertaken to freeze Panamanian monetary assets and suspend loans. In February public demonstrations against the government occurred sporadically in the face of heavy public presence of military patrols. In March, an unsuccessful military coup was reported against General Noriega. Monetary supplies dwindled in the face of economic embargoes, and cash for payrolls for government employees was lacking. A generalized strike called by the opposition was reported as highly successful, but was broken after nine days. Public protests were suppressed by General Noriega's forces who remained in control of Panama at the time of this writing.

Official Panamanian Government Endorsement of Human Rights
Treaties and Covenants

In recent years Panama has ratified a significant range of international human rights treaties and has thus clearly committed itself to respect and to ensure the rights laid down in those treaties. In particular, Panama has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

THE PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DELEGATION

While we were in Panama (August 23 through August 27, 1987) we visited Panama City and the provincial cities of David (Chiriqui province) and Chitre (Herrera province). We listened to 52 detailed testimonies from more than 70 victims or family members of victims of police brutality (see appendix). We also met with and received testimony or statements from officials of Panamanian medical and dental groups, Panamanian human rights groups, the Catholic Church, the Panamanian government, the United States Embassy, and a cross section of Panamanian citizens representing working class people, professionals, and students.

Observations of Widespread Public Unrest

We found widespread, visible evidence of recent unrest and violence in Panama City and in the provincial cities we visited. Streets were littered with paper and remnants of barricades, sometimes still burning. Many buildings were boarded up. Anti-government graffiti was everywhere. The United States Embassy and the headquarters of the Chamber of Commerce in Panama City had been disfigured with red paint thrown at the buildings during attacks. The Chamber of Commerce had many broken windows, some of which were boarded up; the broken windows of the United States Embassy had been mostly repaired by the time of our visit.

We observed demonstrations involving thousands of unarmed citizens during visits to several neighborhoods and regions in both the capital city and the outlying provinces. This opposition was directed against the government and appeared to include members of various socioeconomic classes and racial groups. As far as could be seen demonstrators were unarmed save for white flags, white handkerchiefs, and pots and pans and automobile horns used for making noise. Between early June and the time of our visit, demonstrations were being reported almost daily, generally organized by and for specific groups of people: doctors, lawyers, teachers, students, women, laborers.

The absence of opposition press, television, and radio made

assessment of the extent and depth of opposition difficult; there have been vast discrepancies in estimates of numbers of demonstrators by human rights groups and the government.

During the five day mission, we were struck by the frequency of public demonstrations in many different parts of Panama City. At apparently pre-designated times, citizens would lean from their windows banging on pots and pans and would sound their auto horns. People waving white flags and handkerchiefs were frequently in evidence. These demonstrations took place not only in affluent parts of town but also in poor and working class districts. There was considerable pot banging in the shabby apartment buildings adjacent to the Catholic archdiocese headquarters - a very poor area of Panama City. We saw a public project called Libertadores which we were told had been the site of massive anti-government demonstrations by working class and poor residents on July 10, 1987. We also heard a number of testimonies, some included in the appendix, concerning incidents in the relatively affluent areas surrounding the campus of the University of Panama, where members of the military have on a number of occasions shot tear gas and birdshot into private residences and entered apartment buildings and homes on the pretext of seeking escaping students.

Visits to Two Provinces

On August 25, 1987, we visited the provincial cities of David in the Province of Chiriqui and Chitre in the Province of Herrera and observed widespread protests which included "caravans" of more than a hundred automobiles winding their ways through these provincial cities. The caravans were greeted enthusiastically by what appeared to be a cross-section of citizens from all social classes with many placards and much horn blowing; the streets were lined with people waving white cloth and shouting approval. There was no obvious military presence in David that day, although we were told that previous similar demonstrations had been forcibly broken up.

In Chitre, there were trucks and gatherings of military along the route of a caravan, but no attempts at intervention. Two days later, however, a similar demonstration in Chitre was reportedly broken up by the military, with the beating and arrest of a number of citizens.

Public and Institutional Opposition to Human Rights Abuses

We heard testimony from more than 70 Panamanians at the offices of the Panamanian Committee for Human Rights in Panama City and at open meetings organized by citizens in the provincial cities of David and Chitre. Several citizens told us that open testimony about human rights abuses seemed a more effective means of protest than attempts to pursue complaints through legal channels, given the political climate in Panama. Both the Panamanian Committee for Human Rights and The Center for Investigation of Human Rights had been attempting to collect

and publicize evidence of human rights violations. We were told that testifying about violations of human rights abuses entailed definite risk and that some victims of violations had been intimidated into not coming forward. The Civic Crusade and the Catholic Church had also been vocal in opposition to human rights violations, as had the Panamanian Medical Association and the Allied Health Workers of the Social Security System.

The Civic Crusade

We met relatives of leaders of the Civic Crusade who were themselves in hiding at the Chamber of Commerce on August 26, 1987. We heard a statement about the history of the Civic Crusade, and graphic descriptions of the entering of the Chamber of Commerce offices on August 4, 1987, by military forces. We were told that military had ransacked offices, removed papers, and defaced the building.

The Catholic Church

On August 25, 1987, we met with two bishops of David, Msr. Daniel Nunez and Msr. Carlos Ambrosio Lewis, in their church headquarters in David. A number of nuns and other church workers were also present. Bishop Nunez said that he received reports from all over the province of Chiriqui, and that he was getting reports and complaints of human rights violations almost daily. He stated that the church was trying to form a committee on human rights in David. Much concern was expressed by those present about who would protect human rights workers if they stood up for persons who were being persecuted. Church officials provided us with a number of printed death threats which they said had been passed out in the David area in the previous several weeks, some making reference to the church.

On August 26, we met with Archbishop McGrath, the Archbishop of Panama, and Msr. Brown, a Bishop of Panama City, in the Archdiocese headquarters in a poor neighborhood of Panama City. Archbishop McGrath had just spoken strongly condemning human rights offenses by the government; both he and Msr. Brown expressed grave concern about the current state of human rights in Panama (appendix).

Approaches to Government Officials

We made numerous requests through the Panamanian Embassy in Washington, D.C., government officials in Panama City, and various other channels to meet with several government ministers who are also doctors; with the head of military medicine, Dr. Martin Sosa; and with the doctor in charge of prison health at the Modelo Prison, Dr. Alges Torres. We were not granted access to any of these government officials, but we were able to meet with Dr. Francisco Sanchez Cardenas, the Minister of Health on August 27, 1987. Dr. Sanchez presented a long prepared

statement to us (appendix). The principal points he made were that the current political unrest in Panama was aimed at overthrowing the government, that the military had been as careful as possible of civilians under the circumstances, that General Noriega himself had assured the State Council that all those imprisoned had received good medical care, and that he himself sought to maintain friendly relationships between the Ministry of Health and all those who worked for health. He presented accounts of two incidents, the shooting of a student (testimony 3) and the beating and detention of a doctor (testimony 42), which differed greatly from previous testimonies we had heard from a family member (testimony 3) and the victim (testimony 42). On balance, we found the Minister of Health's statements and explanations inconsistent with much of the testimony we received during the rest of the mission.

FINDINGS *

Indiscriminate and excessive use of military force against Panamanian Civilians

We heard extensive testimony concerning widespread and indiscriminate use of police and military force against Panamanian civilians, including women and children. This force was said to have been random and unpredictable. Scores of witnesses and victims testified about military violence used in private homes, school and university campuses, classrooms, churches, places of work, and automobiles, and stated that excessive use of military force was affecting all segments of the Panamanian population.

Use of Birdshot and Bullets Against Unarmed Civilians

We heard testimony and examined physical and radiologic evidence documenting the widespread use of birdshot against Panamanian citizens. According to testimonies and information gathered from a wide range of sources, we concluded that birdshot was being shot indiscriminately by military as a means of crowd control, at close range, and into private residences

* We were not able to verify each and every detail of these testimonies of abuse, although we did whatever we could to ensure their accuracy and consistency with events and with other accounts that we heard. In most cases, we were not aware of any reasons to question the general credibility of the witnesses who came forward to tell their stories at considerable risk to themselves. Many of these testimonies were corroborated by physical findings apparent to us when we examined the witnesses, or by radiographs or medical records from the times of the events which we were able to inspect. The names of witnesses whose testimonies we compiled are on file with Physicians for Human Rights. To protect the safety of those who testified, names have been largely omitted from the report.

and cars. Children had been shot playing near their homes, going to and from school, and in their schoolyards; adults were shot on the streets, in their homes, and at their workplaces. Panamanian physicians estimated that based on their experiences, more than a thousand Panamanian citizens had suffered birdshot wounds in Panama City and in the provinces between June and August, 1987. We were told by physicians of 25 serious eye injuries that had occurred from birdshot in that same time period. We directly examined six of these patients. We saw two patients and reviewed medical records of three others who had suffered serious internal injuries from birdshot which required surgery. We were presented an account by the attending surgeons of a laborer who had been shot at close range by birdshot sustaining fatal intra-abdominal wounds (testimony 47).

We also heard testimony that Panamanian military were shooting civilians with larger caliber bullets. We documented two incidents from July 1987. In one a student was shot and killed by police while standing with a group of young people on a street after a party (testimony 3). In the other, a laborer, driving with his two children, was shot attempting to turn away from a road block; he survived gunshot injuries to his back. (testimony 13).

Victim Accounts of Birdshot Injuries:

-- A 23-year old student from the University of Panama told us that he was a bystander during a peaceful demonstration in Panama City on June 12, 1987. When he stopped to pick up a seven-year old girl who had fallen, police who were chasing demonstrators fired birdshot directly at him, hitting him in the face and arms and the child he was holding in her back. This incident has left him blind in one eye and with only light perception in the other, despite multiple surgical procedures. Retained pellets in the soft tissues of his hands and arms have impaired the function of his hands. The fate of the child he tried to help was not known. (Testimony 1).

-- A 30-year old man told us that he had encountered soldiers who were in pursuit of people on the street on July 14, 1987 in the city of David. As he escorted a frightened woman into a drug store, he was chased by the soldiers who beat him on the head and neck with wooden sticks and shoved him into a police car, beating him repeatedly. When he jumped from the car the police began firing pellets at him at close range as he fled. Neurosurgeons operated and found more than 24 pellets in his head, some of which are still embedded (testimony 14).

-- A nine-year old girl told us that she was playing with friends near her home in Panama City on June 11, 1987 when police approached causing them to run away. The girl fell and was shot from behind at close range. When another 14-year old girl stopped to help, she too was shot. The nine-year old was severely injured, with bilateral hemothoraces and a possible abdominal injury. The girl's mother said that in the hospital

she had felt threatened by the police and did not feel safe in speaking out about the incident. Doctors familiar with the case of the 14-year old girl said she had undergone abdominal surgery for multiple perforations of the small bowel, an injured spleen (which was removed), and a hematoma in the tail of the pancreas (testimony 37).

Wide use of Teargas, Including Firing Into Closed Spaces

We heard testimony that tear gas was being widely used against Panamanian citizens, being shot not only into crowds and outdoor spaces but also into closed spaces such as homes, school and university classrooms, and motor vehicles. We examined numerous spent tear gas canisters which were brought by witnesses. The canisters were clearly labeled: "For outdoor use only - may cause severe injuries - give medical aid to persons seriously affected." We heard and observed first hand that tear gas was frequently in the air in Panama City, presenting a health hazard to children, to students at schools, and to patients in hospitals which neighbor areas of frequent disturbances such as the Metropolitan Social Security Hospital adjacent to the University of Panama.

Victim Accounts of Indiscriminate Use of Tear Gas:

--An engineer who lives close to the University of Panama told us that he was at home with his family having a birthday party for his four-year old daughter on August 20, 1987, when he noticed students being attacked by police outside. Two police vehicles stopped in front of his apartment building and thirty to forty police emerged wearing gas masks and shields. Family members, standing on their second floor balcony, were shot at with birdshot. Two canisters of tear gas were fired through a glass window into their apartment. The engineer's mother and mother-in-law sustained multiple facial birdshot wounds. The entire family, afraid to emerge, suffered respiratory and ocular effects from concentrated tear gas in a closed space (testimony 7).

--A businessman from the city of David told us that on July 11, 1987 during a day of reportedly peaceful protests, military fired four canisters of tear gas into his car and shot him and his wife with birdshot. The couple fled, pursued by a low-flying helicopter ejecting tear gas. The man and his wife were then beaten, arrested and imprisoned for approximately ten hours. (testimony 19)

--A young man told us that on August 6, 1987, he, his wife, and his 6-month old baby were in a "caravan" in the city of Chitre when a guard threw a tear gas bomb directly at his car and his baby. Fortunately, the canister detonated outside the car. The father was then taken to jail for an hour and fined. (testimony 28)

The shooting of civilians who have been flushed out of buildings and cars by tear gas

We heard testimony that military forces in Panama were using a combination of tear gas and birdshot. According to dozens of witnesses, military would flush out buildings, rooms, or cars with tear gas and then wait to shoot the recipients of the tear gas when they emerged. We heard testimony that this sequence of tear gas and birdshot had been aimed at high school classrooms, homes, and automobiles. Witnesses told us that they often chose to suffer the health effects of heavy doses of tear gas in close surroundings rather than to emerge and risk being shot.

Victim Accounts of tear gas and birdshot:

--Parents, teachers and students told us that on Thursday, July 20, 1987 their high school in Panama City was attacked by military police while students were holding a peaceful march near the school. The police chased the students into the school, firing 70 canisters of teargas inside the school building. As students emerged from the building to escape the tear gas, police fired birdshot causing an estimated 30-40 injuries. One student with a cardiac condition fainted from suffocation; two asthmatics experienced serious difficulty breathing. We examined two of the students who showed wounds from birdshot embedded in the soft tissues. (Testimony 6)

--The father of a family living in the vicinity of the Diaz Herrera house told us that his home was used as a refuge for people being chased in the streets during the demonstrations of July 10, 1987. Two police came inside the house, firing both birdshot and tear gas at the occupants. About twenty people chose to suffer the effects of the tear gas rather than expose themselves to birdshot or arrest. The victims included two elderly women, aged 80 and 95, who suffered serious respiratory effects from the noxious chemicals. (Testimony 11)

Indiscriminate Beatings of Civilians

Scores of witnesses testified about the beating of civilians with sticks, rubber hoses, and gun butts. According to their reports, beatings were dispensed indiscriminately among crowds, and occurred before arrest, in police cars, and in jails. Witnesses, including released detainees, alleged that police encouraged beatings of political prisoners in jail by "common criminals".

Examples of Indiscriminate Beatings:

--A man from the city of David told us that on July 11, 1987, he encountered police as he was heading towards his home. He described how he and a friend were beaten, put in a police car, and further beaten in the car with gun butts and sticks; how police accused them of throwing stones, which they denied; how they were both taken to prison; and how they received no

medical attention despite head injuries. We reviewed the medical report of this witness's EEG taken shortly after the incident; the official reading by a Panamanian neurologist reported "cerebral dysfunction, post-traumatic" (Testimony 17).

--A young doctor told us that he was walking with his girlfriend and five friends near the University of Panama on June 11, 1987, when police fired shots at them from behind. They lay flat and told the police that they were doctors. The police beat them on their backs with rubber hoses as they were lying down and as they tried to run away. The young doctor sought treatment for gross hematuria at the nearby Social Security Hospital. He said that while he awaited test results he was confronted by police, arrested, and jailed. He was released 20 hours later after receiving a visit and a warning from the Minister of Health advising him not to engage in political activities (testimony 42).

Detention and Imprisonment of Peaceful Demonstrators and Bystanders

We heard testimony from Panamanians who had been detained and jailed without charges and without access to families or lawyers. We were not able to investigate prison health directly because we were denied access to the prisons. Citizens from all three cities we visited testified that they had been denied access to medical attention in prison even though they were wounded. Prison conditions were reported to be miserable with gross overcrowding, beatings and robbery from police and "common criminals" alike, inadequate food, and unsanitary conditions including dripping walls and floors covered with excrement and urine.

Although we heard reports of sexual harassment of prisoners and threats to prisoners of rape and deliberate exposure to the AIDS virus, we did not document specific incidents.

Victim Accounts of Detentions and Poor Prison Conditions:

--A 22-year old nursing student from Panama City told us that she and her mother were attacked and beaten by police while walking on Via Argentina on July 10, 1987. The student said she was detained, beaten in a police van, and imprisoned in the Carcel Modelo for 5 days. She was kept with as many as 58 women in a single cell which she described as filthy. The women were terrified of exposure to AIDS when they were put into a cell which had allegedly held male prisoners with AIDS. She was denied medical care for an infected arm (testimony 2).

--A 33-year old security guard told us that he was detained and beaten by police in Panama City when he stopped to buy cigarettes near midnight on July 10, 1987. He said that about 80 citizens were herded into 2 police vans, further beaten, and taken to the Carcel Modelo. He described being placed in a holding cell with about 200 others where about 10 "common

criminals" beat and terrorized the political prisoners. He reported that one man in the cell was repeatedly raped. While imprisoned for 4 days he said he was beaten, robbed, harassed, and denied medical care (testimony 5).

--A dentist from Panama City told us that he was detained when he stopped for a traffic light on July 10, 1987 and found to have a white flag on the floor of his car. He said he was taken to a police station, searched, photographed with a police bayonet placed in his pocket, stripped of all but his underwear, and robbed. He was taken to the Carcel Modelo and put in a holding cell with over 80 people. He described the cell as wet with dripping walls and a floor covered with urine and excrement. He said that an elderly man beside him in the cell had an apparent heart attack; no guard came to help for more than 20 minutes. While in the Modelo prison the dentist stated that he was held incommunicado for 24 hours, beaten, robbed, and witnessed what he believed to be a homosexual rape (testimony 8).

--A 47-year old leader of a teachers union told us that he was detained by military while on his way home on June 24, 1987, in David. He was held incommunicado for three days and then without any hearing was flown to the dreaded prison Isle of Coiba. He was terrified of being dropped alive into the sea from the plane. Kept on Coiba for five days, he lost 15 pounds. When released, he lost his job (testimony 15).

Torture

We heard testimony from two prisoners who were allegedly tortured in jail: one told us that he was hung by his wrists for ten hours and beaten (testimony 32); the other described being burned on his scrotum and beaten (testimony 16). We believe these were not isolated cases. A report on Panama released Amnesty International in March 1988 cited additional cases of beatings and torture in prison.

Harassment of Panamanian Citizens

Several witnesses described harassment of families of Civic Crusade personnel by the military and the Internal Revenue Service. A young wife of a Crusade leader testified that she and her year-old baby had been threatened with harm and were afraid to be alone or leave their house, and that military banged and kicked at their doors at night and kept the family in a constant state of tension. Her brother, a neighbor, was being similarly harassed.

The wife of another Crusade leader told us that in June 1987 a friend had seen people from an electric company truck tampering with her electric meter. The family was then without electricity for 24 hours. Their family home was subsequently surrounded by military and the family had been unable to live at home during the months up to this interview.

In all, 15 testimonies included graphic descriptions of harassment. The brother of a witness to the killing of a student had been reportedly beaten and jailed, his father beaten, and their house ransacked (testimony 3). A man recovering from neurosurgery after being shot at close range in the head said that he was visited repeatedly in the hospital by military who beat on his bedstead with prods (testimony 14). A 16-year old student, tear gassed and shot in a school incident, told of repeated phone calls threatening castration and death (testimony 6). An ice cream vender saw his ice cream wagon destroyed by the same police who had detained, beaten, and tortured him (testimony 16). An opposition congressman and his family described harassment since 1984. Their home has been shot at, vandalized, and ransacked; the congressman has been the object of a smear campaign, and his young children told that they often receive threatening phone calls (testimony 18). A physician who was kidnapped and tortured said that he had been slandered in the press and on the radio, and that his house had been robbed and his car vandalized several times (testimony 43).

Violations of Medical Neutrality

The Panamanian Medical Association and The Association of Doctors, Dentists, and Allied Health Professionals of the Social Security System include an estimated 85% of Panamanian physicians (the PMA has 1800 members, the AMOACSS 3,000 members). Both have been staunch in their stands against recent human rights violations in Panama, in their defense of codes of medical ethics, and in their condemnation of government violations of medical neutrality. Both organizations are members of the Civic Crusade. The Panamanian Medical Association is a member of the World Medical Association.

On August 26 we met with an estimated 100 doctors representing these organizations at the headquarters of the Panamanian Medical Association in Panama City and heard detailed testimony concerning human rights violations, military brutality, violations of medical neutrality, and harassment of physicians by the military. Physician witnesses came from Panama City, Colon, Penonome, Chitre, and David. Representatives of the Dentists Association and the National Association of Residents and Interns also testified. We also spoke with other Panamanian physicians and health workers in Panama City, David, and Chitre.

We were told of frequent and clear violations of medical neutrality by the Panamanian military since June 1987. We interviewed over two dozen doctors, nurses and dentists who gave credible and consistent descriptions to the effect that:

1. Military personnel have patrolled hospital emergency services, especially at times of unrest.
2. Military have interrogated and, in some cases, have

arrested wounded patients before allowing them access to medical care. In other cases, they have delayed or denied access to medical care.

3. Military have insisted on being present during medical treatment and have interfered with the direct evaluation and care of patients. At times, wounded citizens have been arrested and kept in handcuffs while they received medical treatment.

4. Military have directly invaded hospital wards.

5. Both ambulance and forensic services are under government control and ambulances have allegedly been used by the military for other than medical purposes.

Military Interference with Medical Care

We visited the emergency room of Santo Tomas Hospital in Panama City and met two emergency room physicians and one senior nurse who explained that since June 1987 the police had been a very real presence in their emergency room. Traditionally one or two police had been assigned to public emergency rooms, and indeed there had been a small police station at Santo Tomas. These police assisted doctors and nurses with difficult patients. Between June and August 1987, however, they estimated that 10-20 military personnel had been in Santo Tomas emergency room much of the time. According to hospital personnel, these military were no longer helpful, but rather interfered with medical care. Military often saw patients who came to the emergency room before permitting them to see doctors or nurses. Patients with "police" wounds were arrested and taken off without medical care or were seen by doctors only while under arrest and in the presence of military.

Doctors stated that they could not make decisions about patients care under such circumstances and that military no longer respected the confidentiality of doctor-patient relationships. They described how police entered rooms where doctors were examining patients and interfered with medical care. Doctors noted that they were rarely allowed inside the police station at Santo Tomas, immediately adjacent to the Santo Tomas emergency room. Dr. Osvaldo Velazquez, an ophthalmologist and President of the Panamanian Committee for Human Rights, told us he had been inside and seen a bar to which wounded individuals were handcuffed.

The doctors and nurse described a recent incident: Students at a secondary school had been attacked by military. A girl came to the Santo Tomas emergency room hysterical because her friend had been shot. While the medical staff were trying to quiet her in the emergency room, the police were interrogating her in a threatening manner and interfering with the efforts of the doctors and nurses. The girl became increasingly agitated. The nurse asked the military to leave, but they would not. The military threatened to take the girl to the Modelo prison. The

medical staff finally succeeded in taking the girl into an observation room. The medical staff indicated that similar incidents had become an every day experience.

Doctors from the Santo Tomas and Metropolitan hospitals described incidents where military had countermanded their orders for care of patients. One physician, himself a patient after he had been beaten by police, was arrested in the emergency room of Metropolitan Hospital in Panama City while waiting for laboratory work which had been ordered by another physician. He was jailed even though he had a gross hematuria from a renal injury (testimony 42). A 30-year old woman with a possible broken arm was arrested and taken off to a police station while waiting for a radiograph in the emergency room at Santo Tomas Hospital. (testimony 35)

Military Invasions of Hospitals

Military personnel have entered hospitals, pointed guns at doctors and patients and entered patients' rooms, terrorizing staff and patients alike, according to oral and written testimony from the medical staffs of three Panama City hospitals.

A physician from the Cancer Hospital in Panama City testified that on July 10, about 3:00 P.M., members of the military, shooting birdshot and tear gas, invaded his hospital. He said that soldiers ran into the hospital without asking permission of doctors and entered hospital rooms searching for people. Military were lined up outside with guns aimed at the hospital. Military inside the hospital pointed guns at doctors, nurses and patients and intimidated them. The military stayed in the hospital for approximately 30 minutes. The next day the doctors of the hospital protested to the Minister of Health, Dr. Sanchez, with a document signed by 32 staff physicians (appendix) including the director of the hospital, even though he himself was a political appointee. One week later, Dr. Sanchez proposed a commission to investigate these events. The doctors replied that no doctor would participate in such a commission; there was no need for further investigation since they had already signed a document saying that these events had occurred.

Similar events reportedly occurred on July 10 at two other Panama City hospitals: Santo Thomas and the Metropolitan Hospital. Doctors from these hospitals also sent formal signed protests of the events to the Minister of Health. These breaches of medical neutrality were acknowledged to us by the Minister of Health, who said that he planned to order an investigation.

Ambulances Diverted by Military

We heard testimony that ambulances had been commandeered by military forces in David to monitor demonstrations, and that

ambulances in Panama City had not been dispatched to pick up wounded as directed by doctors. One witness testified that he had seen ambulances with crews of uniformed soldiers being used as surveillance trucks.

Inadequacies in Forensic System

We were told that the forensic system in Panama is controlled by the government, leaving little medico-legal recourse for victims. It was not clear how many persons had been killed in demonstrations; relatives of one young man who was killed told us that his autopsy report had been withheld from the family despite multiple requests (testimony 3).

ABUSES AGAINST PROFESSIONALS

We interviewed representatives of several professional groups whose members had been subject to harassment, injuries or detentions. These included doctors, nurses, dentists, teachers, students and business groups in Panama City, Chitre, David, Colon, Penonome and Cocolé.

Physicians

-- In 1985, Dr. Mauro Zuniga, head of the Association of Doctors, Dentists and Allied Health Professionals of the Social Security Administration (which administers the state-operated health system), was kidnapped, beaten and tortured. A member of an opposition party, the Partido Accion Popular (PAPD), he had been critical of the military and had spoken out against the deteriorating status of the health care system and of human rights in Panama. We met with Dr. Zuniga on August 26, 1987 and heard his testimony (testimony 43).

-- Dr. C, of Chitre, testified that doctors have been jailed for trying to organize a strike in sympathy with the opposition, even though they had ensured adequate coverage of their hospitals. He himself was detained on June 10 for trying to organize a strike in solidarity with the opposition. He and two other physicians had guns put to their heads at the time of arrest (testimony 24).

-- Dr. M, an internist at Cocolé, testified that he was detained with two other doctors for 27 hours, apparently for starting a "caravan". Their teenage children accompanied them. They were denied access to a lawyer. They reported that other doctors had also been threatened for voicing opposition in several provinces. Dr. M cited cases of interns and physicians who were expelled from hospital living quarters for voicing opposition to the government. He described forms of harassment such as the spreading of chemical dust in rooms of interns causing respiratory and cutaneous reactions, threats of transfer to distant positions, and warnings to doctors that they would not be granted licenses. According to Dr. M, health workers have also been warned by the G2 security police that their cars

would be burned (testimony 29).

-- An official of the Colon chapter of the Panamanian Medical Association, Dr. E., was arrested and jailed along with another doctor and his own wife and two teenage children. He was denied access to a lawyer, was beaten, and was held incommunicado for 50 hours. He was charged with denouncing General Noriega, participating in demonstrations, and encouraging others to demonstrate (testimony 40).

-- Dr. M, a public health specialist in Panama City, testified that he lost his job after participating in a demonstration. He was transferred to an area far from his home and assigned to do general practice rather than public health (testimony 36).

-- Doctors' salaries had been docked for participation in opposition activities, according to several doctors. Dr. Q, a physician from the town of Penonome near Chitre, reported that money was being withheld from salaries of doctors in his town by the Director of the Health Services of Cocle, Dr. Jose Delgado. He cited seven doctors who had had their salaries docked on account of "unjustified absence". A total of \$200 was deducted for time on the 11th and 12th of June and the 13th of July (the days of massive demonstrations), although the doctors are usually paid \$800 for 22 working days (testimony 45).

Nurses

A nurse testified about the state of nursing in Panama. She noted that there were about 2700 nurses in Panama. She stated that the nurses' organizations cannot belong to the Civic Crusade because nursing jobs are essentially government jobs. She testified that human rights violations have also involved nurses, including one nurse student who was reportedly shot from behind by military and suffered residual leg paralysis. We heard testimony from a nursing student who was beaten and jailed (testimony 2). We were told that on July 9-10, 1987, nurses working at the Metropolitan Hospital, near the University of Panama, were repeatedly harassed by military for wearing white uniforms. A charge nurse in the emergency ward at Santo Tomas Hospital confirmed to us the harassment of emergency room nurses by the military and their difficulties in caring for emergency patients.

Dentists

An executive member of the Dental Association of Panama, Dr. R. P., testified about human rights violations against dentists. In a July 10, 1987, incident a group of two hundred dentists and their families attempted to rally in Panama City. The group was stopped by fifteen armed police who began to beat the demonstrators. Some dentists escaped into a house; at least ten canisters of tear gas were shot inside and the military waited outside to shoot emerging persons (testimony 44).

Several of the demonstrators were subsequently jailed. In another incident reported on the same day, a dentist, Dr. M.C., was shot by police in pursuit of demonstrators. According to testimony, more than 200 birdshot pellets were fired into his back. Only after a crowd and members of the press gathered around him did the military police allow the dentist to be taken for medical care (testimony 39).

University and Schools: Teachers and Students

We heard testimony from five teachers or professors from different institutions who had suffered repression for opposing the government either by participating in demonstrations or by being active in opposition groups, including teacher's unions (testimonies 6, 15, 26, 31, 33,). PHR delegates heard testimony from eleven university and secondary school students who had been the victims of military violence while going to and from schools or on the premises of their schools and campuses. We were told that the campus of the University of Panama had become the site of brutal, frequent and unpredictable military violence against students.

Students told us that many student groups had sided with the Civic Crusade since June 1987 and that this represented a change from former alignments of student groups with left of center groups supporting the the government of General Noriega. We received testimony of incidents involving military attacks on the campus of the University of Panama with tear gas and birdshot, of incidents where military had actually invaded the campus, and of incidents where military prevented injured students on the campus access to medical care.

One of the physicians at a meeting organized for us by the Panamanian Medical Association on August 26, 1987 arrived to testify in a bloody and dishevelled condition (testimony 36); he said he had just been attacked with tear gas and birdshot while attending a course at the medical school on the campus of the University of Panama.

A Visit to the University

On August 24, 1987, we visited the campus of the University of Panama in the late afternoon. Although the campus was ostensibly quiet at the time of the visit, we were denied direct access by police and had to take an alternate route. Upon arrival, we walked past the law school and over the green lawns to Manuel Espinoza Batista Avenue where a group of students were observing two cars burning in the street. The students seemed good natured and were not demonstrating or engaging in any overt acts of violence. Several explained to us that they had observed unknown persons abandon the cars in the street that morning and that other unknown persons later came to set the cars on fire. The students said they had not been involved in the burning of these cars but suspected that such incidents were staged to make students look bad.

Suddenly everyone began to run across the grass away from the street, calling "Hurry, the Dobermans are coming." The "Dobermans", General Noriega's security police, are Panamanian Defense Force crowd control teams in riot gear. We were caught up in the crowd of running students and taken with about ten others to the top of the law school building, some six stories above the ground. From there we observed that the campus had been surrounded on two sides by about twenty truckloads of military, each containing about twenty soldiers. The military wore combat uniforms and gas masks and carried shields. They got out of their trucks, set up guns aimed at the campus, and began to shoot. Tear gas canisters were repeatedly shot into the campus, filling the air with fumes. Even those of us standing on top of the law school were choked and blinded by the tear gas. Birdshot rained on us and on other observers, but not with any great force because of the distance (over 100 meters). The effects of the tear gas lasted for about 30 minutes. Students stated that such occurrences had become an almost daily routine at the University of Panama during the summer months.

Examples of Military Violence Against Students:

--A 20-year old student told us that she and her four girlfriends tried to go home from the University of Panama on the morning of July 29. On their first attempt they were chased back to the campus by "Dobermans" firing tear gas and birdshot at them. Two hours later the five girls again tried to leave. They were confronted by six trucks of "Dobermans" near the Metropolitan Hospital across the street from the hospital and again chased back to the campus. The student was shot and wounded with birdshot in the head, eye, thorax, and hand as she desperately sought a place to hide. Military pursued her further, throwing tear gas into a university building she entered. She was unable to leave the campus for medical aid for two hours, but was finally spirited out in disguise by a professor (testimony 10).

--A 19-year old student told us that he was trying to reach a peaceful student march on August 20. He had permission from his school to attend this gathering. Police attacked him and other students near El Carmen Church with tear gas and birdshot. Students were being forced into police cars. Although suffering from the effects of tear gas, he was able to run to the campus of the University of Panama. As he was seeking a safe place, the police shot him with birdshot and he received multiple wounds to his head, face, neck, and one arm (testimony 38).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support Medical and Human Rights Colleagues in Panama

Health professionals, like all other citizens, are entitled to full respect of their rights to life, to freedom of opinion and expression, to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and to participation in the government of their country. The Government of Panama has fully recognized all of these rights and has guaranteed to respect them in accordance with the obligations it has freely undertaken by ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In the face of gross and persistent violations of those rights by the government it is not only appropriate, but almost incumbent upon Panamanian health professional groups to assert respect for the rights of their members and to speak out about violations. The principal groups, and particularly the Panamanian Medical Association and the Association of Doctors, Dentists, and Allied Health Professionals of the Social Security System, have done so courageously, against strong odds. They not only deserve but need the full support of health professionals in other countries.

Measures of support might include international recognition and support of actions taken by Panamanian medical and human rights organizations on behalf of human rights; support of our Panamanian colleagues in protesting the participation of doctors or other health professionals in violations of medical ethics; and support of any medical colleagues in Panama who are imprisoned or otherwise threatened by the government for taking care of victims of human rights abuses or for opposing government actions that violate medical ethics.

2. Condemn Use of Birdshot As a Means of Crowd Control

We documented the indiscriminate use of birdshot as a means of crowd control. Many injuries were reported, and we confirmed the occurrence of serious eye injuries and serious injuries to internal organs. Such use of birdshot is inhumane. Crowd control should never be sought by such methods in Panama or any other nation. The practice of using tear gas to flush victims out of buildings in order to shoot them is particularly deplorable and appears to be less a method of crowd control than a means of punishment and intimidation. Many of the injured who testified to us were neither participating in demonstrations nor politically involved before their injuries. Such indiscriminate use of dangerous and potentially lethal weapons is unjustified and should be stopped.

3. Condemn Indiscriminate Use of Tear Gas As a Means of Crowd Control, Particularly in Enclosed Spaces

Tear gas is neither a gas, nor is its primary effect tearing. Rather, it is a toxic chemical akin to chemical

warfare agents. Tear gas exists in several forms. Spent dispensers provided to PHR as part of testimony in Panama City consisted of hand-held "grenades" as well as canisters to be shot from guns that contain CS powder (ortho-chlorobenzylidene malonitrile). We brought back several specimens to the United States. All dispensers found were of American manufacture (Federal Laboratories, Saltsburg, Pennsylvania).

CS causes burning and blistering of the skin, headache, uncontrollable coughing and sneezing, and burning of the eyes, nose, tongue and throat. Other symptoms include tightness of the chest and a feeling of suffocation. Prompt removal of people to fresh air usually results in recovery in 15 to 30 minutes if exposure is mild and brief. However, the pain from exposure may endure for several days. Nausea, vomiting, and fainting may sometimes occur. There is also evidence which suggests that CS can, in some cases, result in pneumonia, pulmonary edema (accumulation of fluid in the lungs), heart failure, and liver damage.

The use of tear gas within enclosed spaces is particularly dangerous. Indoor use increases the concentration and extends the period of exposure. Such use is proscribed by warning labels prominently marked on each grenade and canister. PHR condemns any use of tear gas in enclosed spaces.

Use of tear gas in buildings in order to flush out persons to be subsequently shot or arrested is objectionable for many reasons: 1) it is not a method of crowd control, but a violent and potentially dangerous form of intimidation; 2) it removes any way of knowing who is being shot at or arrested, as all residents of a building must evacuate; 3) it results in long-term, high-concentration exposure to toxic chemicals among those who attempt to evade injury or arrest by remaining in the polluted space. For these reasons, we call for the immediate cessation of any use of tear gas in enclosed spaces. We further deplore the use of toxic chemicals as a means to expose people to the dangers of gunshot wounds.

4. Demand Medical Neutrality of Hospitals and Assert the Primacy of Doctors and Health Professionals in Making Medical Decisions

Medical decisions should be made by medical personnel; screening of emergency rooms by Panamanian Defense Forces personnel who have no medical training is a clear violation of the principle of medical neutrality specified in the Geneva Conventions and other international treaties to which Panama is a partner. Entering hospitals to remove patients before treatment is complete and contravening doctors' orders are even more flagrant violations of the human right of access to health care and, in some instances, of the right to life itself. These violations of medical neutrality are deplorable and should cease immediately.

Dr. Sanchez, Minister of Health, promised a report on such violations during a visit with PHR representatives in Panama City on August 26, 1987. The government of Panama is urged to complete that report expeditiously and to distribute it publicly. Directors of hospitals and other health facilities are urged to assure the medical neutrality of practices in their institutions.

5. Ensure Independence of Forensic System and Allow Families Access to Evidence and Independent Counsel.

The medical examining system should be removed from both police and military control and made accountable to medical associations and medical authorities. Autopsy and other forensic evidence should be made available promptly to family and next of kin and to legal authorities, and families should have the right to request independent observers at autopsy proceedings and to have access to independent counsel.

6. Request a review of prison conditions and adherence to the principles of humane treatment of prisoners as outlined in the International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment which Panama has ratified. Although PHR representatives were not allowed to see the prisons first hand, we heard numerous testimonies of people who described cruel, inhuman and unhealthy prison conditions. These matters should be reviewed by appropriate Panamanian authorities, and steps taken to ensure that Panamanian citizens who are detained and imprisoned are treated humanely. PHR condemns the indiscriminate beatings of citizens before and during detention and calls on the Panamanian government to clearly state its opposition to such use of force and to make clear to all military and police personnel that such abuse will not be tolerated.

APPENDICES

MEETING WITH OFFICIALS OF THE PANAMANIAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH

We made numerous requests through the Panamanian Embassy in Washington, D.C., government officials in Panama City, and various other channels to meet with government ministers who are doctors, the head of military medicine (Dr. Martin Sosa), and the doctor in charge of prison health at the Modelo Prison (Dr. Alges Torres). We were not granted access to these officials, but we were able to meet with Dr. Francisco Sanchez Cardenas, the Minister of Health. Dr. Sanchez is a neurosurgeon who still maintains a private practice. We met with him in his office in the Ministry of Health; his wall was adorned with a large color photograph of General Noriega. Dr. Sanchez was joined for this meeting by four associates: including Dr. Eduardo Reyes, a general internist who serves as Vice Minister of Health, Dr. Augustin Luna, a hematologist/oncologist who serves as Secretary of the Ministry of Health, and Dr. Odilio Gonzalez, a dermatologist who also serves in the Ministry. We were accompanied by Dr. Susana Jones, representing the Panamanian Medical Association, and Dr. Osvaldo Valasquez of the Panamanian Committee for Human Rights.

Dr. Sanchez greeted us and began a long and detailed prepared statement. He stated that an unusual political situation has existed in Panama since 1968 and that recently people had been increasingly active politically. Although he himself had shown respect for health workers and various professional groups, he was concerned that health workers should not become involved in politics. The current political situation was clearly aimed at overthrowing the government. Panamanians have not been accustomed to routine human rights abuses, and he and his government health services were very much concerned with the human rights of Panamanian citizens. As proof of this concern, he cited achievements of the integrated health program which he said had received high international praise.

He told us that the Metropolitan Hospital, across from the University of Panama, became involved in political actions. Students from the University of Panama would enter the hospital seeking shelter from police. Resulting actions made it appear that military personnel were interfering with health care. Dr. Sanchez said he was trying to be as careful with these matters as possible. He told us similar situation existed at the Oncological Institute which is in a crowded neighborhood and is often entered for shelter by those fleeing the law. He had ordered investigations into the events of July 10, 1987 at the Social Security Hospital, the Cancer Hospital and Santo Tomas Hospital by a commission which he would appoint. He stated that unrest situations were handled very carefully by the military so that no one had died. He told us that the Armed Forces of Panama were so professionally conscious that they

themselves were always careful of any hospital inpatients.

Concerning the "situation in El Valle", according to Dr. Sanchez, one student did die. Dr. Sanchez went personally to investigate this case. He talked to both health workers and authorities. He concluded that the student who was killed was from out of town and was spending a weekend with his family. About 4 a.m., two Panamanian defense officials were called to his neighborhood to keep order after a social event. The student was with a group of people fighting among themselves. The student yelled out against Noriega and attacked the two Panamanian defense officers. One of these officers actually held his gun with his finger in the barrel so that no one would be hurt. There was an accidental shot which injured the policeman's finger and then hit the abdomen of the victim. The two Panamanian defense officers took the man to the nearest health center. The man's friends, however, threw rocks at the health center, destroyed the ambulance and caused great damage to the health center. The mob also destroyed a public library and part of a church. Finally, the nurse in charge brought the wounded man in an open truck to a hospital in the town of San Carlos where he died. Dr. Sanchez said that this death was an accident, and that the policeman had gravely injured his finger while trying to cover his gun. Dr. Sanchez had not personally interviewed relatives or friends of the victim but had been informed about them by newspaper accounts.

Dr. Sanchez knew no official confirmation of patients being taken from hospitals to detention. He mentioned Dr. Martin Sosa, the head of military medicine, and Dr. Alges Torres, the head of medicine at the Prison Modelo, as maintaining health standards for detainees. He said that General Noriega himself had informed the State Council that all those who had been in prison on July 10 had received good medical care.

Concerning the case of Dr. V., the chief resident in surgery at Santo Tomas Hospital, Dr. Sanchez stated that this surgeon had been caught igniting tires in a public street, dressed in a T-shirt that said "Philadelphia" and wearing a handkerchief over his face. Only because of Dr. Sanchez' intervention was Dr. Victoria freed after two days in jail. Dr. Sanchez assured us again that he was much concerned with the status of physicians and health care workers.

Dr. Sanchez discussed the case of Dr. Jose Rodriguez, the nephew of Colonel Diaz Herrera. Dr. Rodriguez was in the Colonel's household during the 50 days this summer that his uncle was sequestered after making public allegations against General Noriega. Dr. Rodriguez had sent his official resignation as a doctor in a town close to Panama City. On the day that Diaz Herrera was chased from his home, about 50 people were arrested including Dr. Rodriguez. Dr. Rodriguez was carrying weapons. The Minister knew him personally, however, and said he was a good doctor and a humanitarian. Because of these good qualities Dr. Rodriguez was subsequently set free.

He is now reappointed as a doctor; Dr. Sanchez showed a clipping to that effect.

Dr. Sanchez said he had made an appeal to all doctors and to all who work for health and in health care to maintain friendly relationships with the Ministry of Health - both political and professional. He said he was always open to dialog. He insisted, however, that overthrowing the government is the purpose of the current opposition movement and that he does not want health workers to be political.

We queried Dr. Sanchez about the ocular bird shot wounds which had been reported by the Eye Association, and asked him to comment about Dr. Donald Nicholson of the Bascolm Palmer Eye Institute of Miami who had been invited to Panama by the Panamanian Eye Association to help care for these patients. Dr. Sanchez says that this request was presented to the Panamanian Health Council; the Council decided that Dr. Nicholson could come only as a consultant but could not directly participate in patient care because he was not licensed to practise medicine in Panama. Dr. Sanchez mentioned that Dr. Michael DeBakey was not permitted to operate on the Shah of Iran in Panama for similar reasons.

We requested reports of any investigations into violations of medical neutrality which the Minister of Health carried out, and requested that the autopsy report on Eduardo Carrera be given to his family at the request of the family lawyer.

APARTADO 6386
PANAMA 5, PANAMA

COMUNICADO DE LA ARQUIDIOCESIS DE PANAMA

Desde nuestro breve comunicado arquidiocesano del lunes 8 del presente, se ha agravado sensiblemente la crisis que afecta a toda la Nación, dando lugar a la suspensión de algunas garantías fundamentales constitucionales, por decreto de Consejo de Gabinete, en base al Artículo 51 de la Constitución Nacional, declarándose el estado de urgencia en el territorio nacional. Las garantías suspendidas se refieren especialmente al derecho de libertad individual, de expresión, de reunión y de tránsito. No afectan a las celebraciones de Misas y demás reuniones ordinarias de la Iglesia. El estado de urgencia declarado está indicando la gravedad del momento y plantea situaciones que requieren de la Iglesia alguna reflexión y orientación.

1º Es obvio que la suspensión de las garantías fundamentales se refiere a derechos civiles y que en ningún momento se pueden suspender los derechos humanos, que son inalienables: por ejemplo, el derecho a la vida misma. Pero quisiéramos agregar que las mismas medidas de aplicación del estado de urgencia deben llevarse a cabo con gran humanidad: es decir, con respeto por la vida y por la dignidad de la persona humana.

2º En cuanto a la situación del Coronel (Retirado) Roberto Díaz Herrera, podemos comunicar que distintos representantes de la Iglesia de esta Arquidiócesis - sacerdotes y religiosas- han estado acompañando a las personas que están en la residencia del citado Coronel, con el único afán por parte de la Iglesia de insistir en el derecho por la vida, de evitar la violencia, y de favorecer un proceso normal para las acusaciones que él mismo ha presentado.

3º En las presentes circunstancias, prevenimos contra todo tipo de violencia, de cualquier parte. Para este efecto señalamos abusos que nos han sido reportados en estos días:

a.- Algunas unidades de las Fuerzas de Defensa que golpean a civiles sin provocación alguna por parte de éstos.

b.- Arrestos realizados, a veces sin identificación de la autoridad del funcionario que los realiza, y con el empleo de fuerza totalmente indebida.

c.- El empleo de tácticas humillantes para con los arrestados.

4º Señalamos que en casos de arrestos, debe tenerse espíritu humanitario, permitiendo que la persona detenida tome pronto algún contacto directo con su hogar, para mitigar el temor y la angustia de los familiares. De igual forma, prevenimos contra los grupos organizados que con armas y varillas atemorizan a vecindarios, sembrando así el espiral de violencia en el país.

CONCLUSION:

Todos estos síntomas externos de conflicto y de disolución nos han de conducir al examen de las causas más hondas de nuestro malestar, causas de orden social y de orden espiritual para buscarles oportuno remedio.

1º No compete a la Iglesia indicar los remedios concretos, pero sí exhortar a su búsqueda y acompañar con su oración y orientación moral.

2º Que sea ésta la intención especial nuestra en las Misas y demás oraciones durante estos días.

3º Que estas Misas se celebren dentro de los horarios normales, para todos, y sin conexión alguna a manifestaciones fuera de los templos.

4º Que se constituya en la Arquidiócesis un pequeño equipo que reciba y apunte todo informe de situaciones de abuso o violencia para llevarlas al conocimiento y la corrección de las autoridades competentes.

5º Finalmente, exhortamos a las Autoridades competentes que restauren las garantías fundamentales a la mayor brevedad posible.

Que el Señor mire con misericordia nuestra Patria Panameña y ponga en nuestros corazones deseos de conversión para buscar los caminos de la justicia y la paz, animados siempre por su amor.

Panamá, 12 de junio de 1987

+ Marcos McGrath C.S.C.
+ MARCOS G. McGRATH, C.S.C.

Arzobispo de Panamá

+ Oscar M. Brown Jimenez
+ OSCAR M. BROWN JIMENEZ
Obispo Auxiliar

+ Fr. ~~W. L. Lacunza~~
+ JOSE LUIS LACUNZA, O.A.R.
Obispo Auxiliar

Letter to the President of Panama appealing for a cessation of the indiscriminate use of tear gas and expressing concern about its use in closed spaces contrary to warnings on the tear gas canisters.

COMITE PANAMEÑO POR LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS

Apartado 6-4840, El Dorado
Panamá, República de Panamá

24 de Agosto de 1987

Excelentísimo Señor
Eric Arturo Delvalle,
Presidente de la República,
Presidencia.

Señor Presidente:

En las bombas lacrimógenas empleadas por las Fuerzas de Defensas leemos: "WARNING": MAY CAUSE SEVERE INJURY. MAY START FIRES. FOR OUTDOOR USE ONLY. FOR USE BY TRAINED PERSONNEL ONLY".

Como quiera que los antimotines han estado empleando las bombas lacrimógenas en sitios cerrados, sobre lo cual tenemos sobradas pruebas, le rogamos dé las órdenes pertinentes para que esta arma química no se siga empleando indiscriminadamente. Basamos nuestra exigencia en razones humanitarias, en la Convención de Ginebra sobre la reglamentación de armas químicas y en la advertencia de sus propios fabricantes la cual traducimos:

"ADVERTENCIA: PUEDE PRODUCIR DAÑO SEVERO. PUEDE INICIAR FUEGOS. PARA SER USADA UNICAMENTE EN LUGARES ABIERTOS. PARA SER USADO UNICAMENTE POR PERSONAL ADIESTRADO."

Atentamente,



Dr. Osvaldo Velásquez
Presidente

c.c. Presidenta de la Corte Suprema de Justicia
Procurador General de la Nación
Misiones Diplomáticas acreditadas en Panamá
Arzobispo de Panamá
Oficina de las Naciones Unidas en Panamá
Organización de Estados Americanos en Panamá
Amnistía Internacional
Comité Interamericano por los Derechos Humanos
America's Watch
Physicians for Human Rights

Petition signed by physicians, nurses, pharmacy and laboratory personnel and manual laborers of the National Cancer Institute condemning the July 10, 1987 invasion of their premises by armed military personnel.

COMUNICADO A LA NACION

NOSOTROS LOS EMPLEADOS DEL INSTITUTO ONCOLOGICO NACIONAL, REUNIDOS EN ASAMBLEA GENERAL CELEBRADA EL DIA 13 DE JULIO DE 1987.

CONSIDERANDO:

Primero:
Que el día viernes 10 de julio de 1987, unidades de las Fuerzas de Defensa allanaron nuestra institución esgrimiendo armas de fuego, mientras se prestaba atención médica, tal como había sido ordenada por la Dirección General según nota dirigida al Jefe del Departamento de Atención Médica el 7 de julio de 1987.

Segundo:
Que las unidades de las Fuerzas de Defensa asedrentaron al personal de turno en la institución, efectuando disparos en el frente del edificio principal y apuntando con sus armas hacia el interior del mismo, atentando contra la seguridad de los pacientes y del personal que se encontraban en el interior del edificio.

RESUELVE:

Primero:
Protestar de la manera más enérgica contra el atropello cometido hacia la institución, sus pacientes y su personal.

Segundo:
Exhortar a las autoridades correspondientes, para que este incidente no se vuelva a repetir por el bien y la tranquilidad de la ciudadanía.

Tercero:
Proclamar que el Instituto Oncológico Nacional continuará prestando la atención médica a cualquier persona herida que solicite de nuestros servicios durante la presente situación.

Cuarto:
Mantener una actitud vigilante para evitar que se repitan actos tan repudiables como los que se denuncian o que se tomen represalias contra el personal de la institución.

Quinto:
Denunciar este hecho a la ciudadanía a través de los medios de comunicación.

INSTITUTO ONCOLOGICO NACIONAL
PERSONAL MEDICO

NOMBRES

FIRMA

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1- Amado, Anays | : | Amado C 8-13 |
| 2- Arroyo, Jaime | : | [Signature] |
| 3- Berroa, Andrevis | : | Jocapauca |
| 4- Britton, Ricardo | : | [Signature] |
| 5- Britton, Rosa de | : | [Signature] |
| 6- Cebamanos, Fernando | : | [Signature] |
| 7- Constable, Daniel | : | No Trabaja 10 |
| 8- De La Rosa, Carlos | : | No Trabaja 11 |
| 9- De la Rosa, España | : | [Signature] |
| 10- De las Casas, Luis O. | : | [Signature] |
| 11- De los Ríos, Enrique | : | [Signature] |
| 12- De Sedas, Alberto | : | [Signature] |
| 13- Díaz Correa, Enrique | : | [Signature] |
| 14- Díaz, Jorge Augusto | : | [Signature] |
| 15- Díaz, Ricardo | : | [Signature] |
| 16- Fernandez Díaz, Manuel | : | [Signature] |
| 17- Fuentes Eva, Sergio | : | No Trabaja 10 |
| 18- Garcia Arosemena, Julio J. | : | No Trabaja 10 |
| 19- Garibaldo, Mario | : | [Signature] |
| 20- Godoy Solís, Julio César | : | [Signature] |
| 21- Infante Daniel | : | [Signature] |
| 22- López, Eustorgio | : | No Trabaja 10 |
| 23- Lucando, Luis | : | [Signature] |
| 24- Ovalle, Abdiel | : | [Signature] |
| 25- Pereira, Ricardo | : | [Signature] |
| 26- Ramos, Luis H. | : | [Signature] |
| 27- JORGE LUIS, CABALLERO | : | No Trabaja 10.11 |
| 28- Rocha, Carmen de | : | [Signature] |
| 29- Rojas Abrego, Rubén Darío | : | [Signature] |
| 30- Sáenz, Alberto | : | [Signature] |
| 31- Seixas, Rafael | : | [Signature] |
| 32- Selles del Castillo, Jorge | : | [Signature] |
| 33- Singh, Carlos | : | [Signature] |
| 34- Solís Carvajal, Galileo | : | No Trabaja 10.11 |
| 35- Testa Paredes, Rodrigo | : | [Signature] |
| 36- Tinoco, Micanor | : | [Signature] |
| 37- Torrazza, Idalmis de | : | [Signature] |
| 38- Valdés, Plinio | : | [Signature] |
| 39- Vernaza, Joan Lavín de | : | [Signature] |
| 40- Villareal Cruz, Aníbal E. | : | [Signature] |
| 41- Young Díaz, Alonso | : | [Signature] |
| 42- Young González, Kito | : | [Signature] |
| 43- Luciani René | : | [Signature] |

Panamá, 2 de sept. de 1986 (última versión)

ENFERMERAS

- 1.- ALBA MARIBEL Alba Maribel
- 2.- ALEXANDER RUTH Ruth Alexander
- 3.- ALVARADO LIDIA G. (de) Lidia Alvarado
- 4.- ARAUZ LOURDES... Lourdes Arauz
- 5.- AVILA ROSE (de) Rosa de Avila
- 6.- CALVELLO CARMEN (de) Vacaciones
- 7.- CHIZMAR DAMARIS (de) Del
- 8.- CRUZ J. FRANCIA :. No está laborando
- 9.- CAVALLE ANA LUISA Vacaciones
- 10.- DE CRUZ CECILIA L. No está laborando
- 11.- ESCOBAR ANCELINA DEL R. (de) No está laborando
- 12.- FLORES TERESA P. (de) Cruzada de Flores
- 13.- GONDOLA NILKA Reservada
- 14.- GONZALEZ LIBRADA (de) Librada Gonzalez
- 15.- GUEVANA XIOMARA P. (de) Libre
- 16.- JEANNETTE GLADYS Gladys Jeannette
- 17.-
- 18.- KAA DEYLA Deyla Kaa
- 19.- MEDINA TERESA DE JESUS No está laborando
- 20.- McLEAN MARCIA Vacaciones
- 21.- McLAUGHLIN MIRRA Vacaciones
- 22.- McOSTRIS B. (de) Maria B. de Ostris
- 23.- ORIS RUIZ M. M. Ruiz Oris
- 24.- PATTERSON ANDREA Andrea Patterson
- 25.- QUIATMO IDA No está laborando
- 26.- QUINONES MARIZENIA Marizenia Quinones
- 27.- RIOS ZORUIDA (de) Zoraida Rios
Tel. 8-184-287
- 28.- RIVERA ANAIS (de) No está laborando
- 29.- RODRIGUEZ AURISTELA L. (de) Auristela Rodriguez
- 30.- SOLIS ADELA H. (de) Vacaciones
- 31.- VALDESPINO ANTONIO Antonio Valdespino
- 32.- THOMPSON FLORENCIA (de) Vacaciones
- 33.- LOPEZ CORNELIA No está laborando
- 34.- ALVAREZ DOLORES MARIA
- 35.- AGUILAR ARGELIA A. Aguilar

TRABAJADORES MANUALES

- 1.- JENNIE COOK Jennie Cook
 - 2.- MELGADO HERCENES Melgado Hercenes
 - 3.- JANE ABGEL Vacaciones
 - 4.- NURCA BERNABIDA (de) Bernabida de Nurca
 - 5.- GREGORIA LUIS Gregoria Luis
 - 6.- QUIFFERO ANABIO Anabio Quiffero
 - 8.- SOCARRERA MARCEL
- Tecario Encargado
 1. Eduardo Horta Eduardo Horta S. 8-481-519.

LISTA DE PERSONAL DEL LABORATORIO CLINICO
 INSTITUTO ONCOLOGICO NACIONAL

- LIC. AROSEMENA ANA ESTHER Ana Esther Arosemena
- LIC. BARCENAS ENORIS (de) Enoris Barcenas
- LIC. BROWN BIENDA CAMPBELL Vacaciones
- LIC. CORNEJO NIDIA (de) Nidia Cornejo
- LIC. PEREIRA MIRIAM (de) Miriam Pereira
- LIC. QUINZADA MARKELA (de) Markela Quinzada
- SRTA. MIDORA YOLANDA WHITE Yolanda White
- SRTA. JOSEFINA FRIAS GOMEZ Josefina Frias
- SR. VICTOR RAUL VARGAS Q. Victor Raul Vargas

LISTA DEL PERSONAL QUE LABORA EN LA FARMACIA DEL

INSTITUTO ONCOLOGICO NACIONAL

- Licenciado: Ernesto Gutiérrez Ernesto Gutierrez
- Licenciada: Bianca Bejarano Bianca Bejarano
- Asistente: Mitsi B. Abadia Mitsi Abadia
- Asistente: Cirilo Martinez Cirilo Martinez

NATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

of the
Republic of Panama

ANNOUNCEMENT TO PANAMANIAN CITIZENS

In the last weeks, our association has expressed by means of verbal and written statements, our legitimate desire to reestablish a State of Law which guarantees a free country, where to peacefully and securely live free from all fear.

But we have received intimidations, violent attacks, arrests and all possible violations of the physical and moral integrity as answers. Unfortunately, our colleagues, who only committed the crime of expressing their opinion as citizens of this country, were also victims. We health care professionals, who daily give relief to pain and taste the fear of death, deeply condemn these actions that have harmed the Panamanian family, and, by the same token, united the medical society which has calmly said: "Health with Freedom".

Health care professionals have been moved and infuriated by violations that have taken place in the hospital area, where even our patients have been violently attacked. We condemn these actions. We cannot find words to describe such lack of respect toward an institution devoted to the delivery of health assistance.

Medical ethics are invariable during war-like or conflictive times, and the behavior of those professionals who breached their hypocritical oath, to comply with foreign orders, will be severely sanctioned.

If the basic goal of the medical profession is to preserve life, any attempt against the physical or mental integrity of the human being deserves our repudiation. Let's cultivate our intellect, but this will be useless if we do not reinforce our christian and moral values, foundations of the justice and freedom which will undoubtedly come to our children and to our soil.

Board of Directors of the National Medical Association

INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC

The Specialist's Association of St. Thomas Hospital, by this medium, wishes to denounce the following facts:

- 1.- On Friday July 10,1987, members of the National Guard invaded the premises of our Institution, toting and shooting firearms, in the surroundings of Ward 20.
- 2.- Two resident doctors, on their way to answer an emergency call, were intimidated and had guns pointed at them.
- 3.- Said incidents jeopardized both the physical and mental well-being of patients and personnel that labor at Saint Thomas Hospital can be repeated, since an iron gate ad- to the morgue, previously closed in order to bar the entrance of persons who were fleeing for safety from the National Guard, was ordered to be opened by the civilian authorities of our Institution, so as to permit policemen with shields known as DOBER- MEN, to enter and intimidate, restrain and arrest within the Hospital environment.
- 4.- All the wounded that were conveyed to our Emergency Room, were first interrogated by the National Guards, who then decided whether they should be arrested immediately or recieve medical assitant first and subsequently arrested.
- 5.- The "Authorities" of the Saint Thomas Hospital, did not allow the use of four available ambulances of our Institution, despite reception of numerous urgent calls to collect and convey gunshot wounded persons from different sections of the Metropolitan area
- 6.- The Health personnel of the National Institute of Oncology of Panama was denied by the authorities of the Saint Thomas Hospital, the loan of medications for the preven- tion of tetanus (Hypertet and Tetanus Toxoin).

With the above mentioned criminal actions sumarized, the Specialist's Association of the Saint Thomas Hospital, is forced to condemn and protest vigorously against the inhuman acts of the National Guard and the anti-professional and anti-ethical position assumed by those who direct the Saint Thomas Hospital.

Today we solemnly swear before God, our country and the General Public, that we shall not cease to fight until our Hospital- now transformed into a repressive and milita- rized Institution- returns to what by autonomasia it has always been: the first and best health Institution of the Republic of Panama in which, the lowly citizen, who today due to fear, exiles himself, will come back to us when SECURITY, LIBERTY AND DEMOCRA- CY fill the air once more.

DRA. AMALIA RODRIGUEZ FRENCH
PRESIDENTA

DR. OSVALDO QUINTERO
1º VICE-PRESIDENTE

DR. RAFAEL PEREZ FERRARI
2º VICE-PRESIDENTE

DRA. DINA DE LOZANO
SECRETARIA

DR. FERNANDO GRACIA
SUB-SECRETARIO

DR. JOSE A. QUIROS R.
TESORERO

DR. DIOGENES ARJONA
SUB- TESORERO

DR. GASTON DORMOI
VOCAL

Panama, July 17, 1987.



AMEHST

OFICIAL

Communique of the Panamanian Medical Association condemning the violations of hospital space and aggression against patients by military forces.

ASOCIACION MEDICA NACIONAL

DIRECCION CABLEGRAFICA
"AMENALPA"

DE LA
REPÚBLICA DE PANAMA

TELÉFONO 23-5555
APARTADO POSTAL 2020
PANAMA I, REP. DE PANAMA

COMUNICADO A LA CIUDADANIA

Nuestra asociación a senalado responsablemente en las últimas semanas, a traves de comunicaciones verbales o escritas, nuestra aspiración legítima gremial de restablecer un estado de derecho, que nos permita vivir en un país libre de temores, con seguridad y bienestar.

La respuesta a nuestras acciones pacíficas han sido intimidaciones, agresiones, arrestos y toda violación a la integridad física y moral del ser humano que lamentablemente ha alcanzado a colegas médicos que compartieron el solo delito de expresarse como ciudadanos. Los profesionales de la medicina, que diariamente aliviarnos el dolor y palpamos el temor a la muerte, condenamos profundamente estos actos que han lesionado a la familia panameña y a la vez han unido al gremio médico que serenamente ha dicho "Salud en Libertad".


Ha conmovido e indignado a todo el personal de salud la violación de las áreas hospitalarias, en donde incluso los pacientes fueron agredidos; hechos que denunciarnos y condenamos. No hay adjetivo que pueda calificar esta situación de mayúsculo irrespeto al recinto dedicado a brindar salud.


La ética médica es invariable en tiempos de paz o de conflicto y la conducta de profesionales que quebrantaron su juramento hipocrático para cumplir instrucciones extrañas será debidamente sancionada.

Si la misión esencial de la profesión médica es salvar la vida, todo atentado a la integridad corporal o mental del hombre merece nuestro repudio. Cultivemos nuestro intelecto, pero esto será inútil si no reforzamos nuestros principios cristianos y morales, bases de la justicia y la libertad que llegará, sin lugar a dudas, a nuestros hijos y a nuestro suelo.

Junta Directiva Nacional de la Asociación Médica Nacional.


DR. JOSE TREJOS A.
Presidente


DR. OSVALDO QUINTERO
1o Vice-Presidente


DR. MOISES V. RIOS
2do. Vice-Presidente

Panamá, 17 de Julio de 1987.



COMITE PANAMEÑO POR LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS

Calle 48 Bella Vista Edificio La Trona Teléfono 69-2035
Apartado 6-4840, Panamá, Rep. de Panamá.

SUMMARY OF THE VIOLATIONS, BY THE PANAMANIAN DEFENSE FORCES, TO THE GENEVA CONVENTION RELATED TO THE NEUTRALITY OF MEDICINE.

The 15th of March took place a pacific demonstration in front of the Social Security Metropolitan Hospital, because the medical and paramedical personnel had not received payment. Those participating in this demonstration were attacked by antiriot troops with birdshot and tear gases. They were chased inside the hospital where the troops continued shooting birdshot and tear gases. The patients in this hospital were exposed to a high concentration of tear gases, including pepper gas, for several hours. Some of them had to be evacuated to different wards. In this confrontation 12 members of the personnel were injured with birdshot, one of them, a physician, suffered an intraocular injury.

In the Children Hospital the situation was even worse. The antiriot troops practically saturated the building with tear gases. New born babies had to be placed, 3 to 4 of them, in an incubators to save their lives. Four doctors, 2 nurses and 2 paramedics received serious injuries.



COMITE PANAMEÑO POR LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS

Calle 48 Bella Vista; Edificio La Trona Teléfono 69-2035
Apartado 6-4840, Panamá, Rep. de Panamá.

LIST OF CASUALTIES DURING THE ANTI-RIOTS TROOPS ATTACK TO HOSPITALS THE 15TH AND 16 OF MARCH 1988

EDUARDO AGUSTIN: 34 years old
Bullet shot in the right thigh.
He required by-pass surgery to
repair a ruptured artery.

PASCUAL PATTERSON: Bullet shot in the abdomen. In
delicate condition. He required
surgery

FELIPE PEREZ: Bird shot at close range.
Required amputation of distal
third of left leg

INTRA-OCULAR BIRSHOT

PEDRO PABLO CUETO: Right Eye

EDWIN GOMEZ: Right eye

MISAEEL PINEDA: Left eye

DR. LUIS EDWARDS: Ornut only

2 nurses and 2 paramedics with birdshot injuries in different
parts of the body.

PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

PANAMANIAN TESTIMONY, AUGUST 1987

These testimonies were presented verbally to us by victims of human rights abuses who came forward to testify while we were in Panama between August 23 and August 27, 1987. The index presents a listing of these testimonies in the chronologic order in which we heard them. Certain testimonies which seemed to us representative and of interest are then recounted in narrative form. Of these, Testimony 3 was presented by a family member, Testimonies 13 and 35 by direct witnesses of the events, and Testimonies 37, 47 and 52 by physicians who had personally cared for the victims. All of the other testimonies were presented by the victims themselves.

We were not able to verify each and every detail of these accounts of abuse, although we did whatever we could to ensure their accuracy and consistency with events and other accounts that we heard. In most cases we were not aware of any reasons to question the general credibility of these witnesses who came forward to tell their stories at considerable risk to themselves. Many of these testimonies were corroborated by physical findings apparent to us when we examined the witnesses, or by radiographs or medical records from the times of the events which we were able to inspect.

The names of witnesses are on file with Physicians for Human Rights. Here the names are largely omitted to protect the safety of those who testified.

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- * 1. J.S., 23 year old student, Panama City
Birdshot (eye injury), interference with medical care
- * 2. L.P., 22 year old nursing student, Panama City
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- * 3. P.C., Secretary & law student, Panama City
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- 4. R. G., Friend of two wounded students (testimonies 50,
51), Panama City
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- * 5. R.V., 33 year old security guard executive, Panama City
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- * 6. Parents & Teachers Association, students of the Instituto
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- * 7. M. S., Engineer and his mother, Panama City
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- * 8. R. O., Dentist, Panama City
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- * 9. D. V., 51 year old mechanic, Panama City
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- * 10. L. R., 20 year old student, Panama City
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- * 11. R. G., 30 year old citizen, Panama City
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- 12. Twelve Family members of 26 persons arrested in the Diaz
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- * 13. E. F., young adult laborer, David
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- * 14. A. R., 30 year old laborer, David
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- * 15. B. C., 47 year old teacher, David
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- * 16. C. G., 24 year old ice cream vendor, David
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- * 17. F. G., 25 year old mechanic, David
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- * 18. B. M., Christian Democratic congressman, wife, and three
children, David
Beating, detention, harassment
- * 19. O. D., Automobile agent, David
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- 20. D. G., Witness to Spadafora incident, David
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- 21. N. M., Father of 25 year old student who was detained
- 22. A. R., Laborer, David
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- 23. R. L., Fish wholesaler, David
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- 25. A. E., Lawyer, Chitre
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- 26. O. P., Teacher, Chitre
Beating, detention
- * 27. A. T., City Councillor, Chitre
Beating, detention, interference with medical care
- * 28. H. G., 34 year old businessman, Chitre
Tear gas (shot at car with baby inside), detention
- 29. F. M., Physician, Cocle
Detention, harassment of physicians
- 30. A. R., 17 year old student, Chitre
Beating
- 31. C. F., Teacher, Chitre
Harassment
- * 32. A. E., 24 year old automobile distributor, Chitre
Beating, torture, detention
- 33. D. B., Teacher, Chitre
Detention, harassment
- 34. Two Emergency room physicians, 1 nurse, Panama City
Interference with medical care
- * 35. I. Z., 30 year old citizen, Panama City
Beating, interference with medical care

- * 36. E. M., Physician, Panama City
Tear gas, birdshot, harassment
- * 37. K. V., 9 year old girl, and H. P., 14 year old girl,
Panama City
Birdshot (severe internal injuries)
- * 38. O. B., 19 year old student, Panama City
Tear gas, birdshot
- 39. M. C., Dentist, Panama City
Birdshot
- 40. A. E., Physician, Colon
Beating, detention
- 41. R. B., Physician, Panama City
Interference with medical care
- * 42. G. V., Physician, Panama City
Beating, detention, interference with medical care
- * 43. M. Z., Physician, Panama City
Kidnapping, beating, torture
- 44. R. P., Dentist, Panama City
Tear gas, detention
- 45. R. Q., Physician, Penonome
Harassment of doctors
- * 46. D. K., Physician, Panama City
Detention, harassment
- * 47. B. M., Laborer, Panama City
Fatal birdshot wounds
- 48. C. B., Physician, Panama City
(Former Minister of Health)
Deterioration of health care system
- 49. Relatives and friends of the Civic Crusade leaders who
were in hiding
Harassment
- * 50. E. S., 23 year old student, Panama City
Birdshot (eye injury)
- * 51. A. A., 18 year old student, Panama City
Birdshot (eye injury)
- * 52. E. S., 12 year old boy, Panama City
Birdshot (eye injury, severe internal injuries)
- * Testimonies detailed in the following pages

PANAMA TESTIMONY #1

NAME: J. S., age 23

OCCUPATION: Engineering student, University of Panama

TESTIMONY: Miami International Airport, Florida, 8/23/87

INCIDENT: 6/12/87, Panama City

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Birdshot injuries

On June 12, 1987, J. S. was a bystander to a peaceful demonstration in the neighborhood of San Antonio. J. S. bent to pick up a child about 7-years-old, who had fallen. Police were shooting tear gas and firing birdshot at demonstrators and bystanders. When he stood facing the police, he was hit by a shot fired from about 50 meters away in the face, chest and arms. The child that he was holding was hit in the legs and back. He immediately lost his vision, his eyes were oozing, and he was bleeding from numerous wounds.

He was taken to the emergency room of the Santo Thomas Hospital where he was received by a member of the Panamanian Defense Force. The military said that all those with gunshot wounds were considered delinquents and that J. S. could not be treated. Nurses and doctors in the emergency ward attempted to intervene and tend to his wounds, but the military separated them. J. S. waited for three hours in the emergency room. Finally a resident in ophthalmology succeeded in examining him and he was eventually taken to the operating room that night.

J. S. had several surgical procedures between June 13 and June 26, 1987, (repair of both eyes, lensectomy and vitrectomy of both eyes, fluid-air exchange of both eyes).

According to J. S., early in his hospitalization attending ophthalmologists reportedly were not permitted to obtain a CT scan to delineate better the birdshot pellets and the ocular damage. While he was in Santo Tomas Hospital, J. S. was allowed visits only from family members and was told that no "political" persons could see him, including a priest who had been interested in human rights.

Panamanian ophthalmologists wished to send J. S. to Miami for further therapy but Panamanian authorities refused for weeks to grant him a passport saying that they needed a letter from authorities. The hospital director allegedly refused to provide such a letter.

When we met J. S. in Miami, he was under the care of Dr. Donald Nicholson of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. J. S. said that his right eye was blind and that his left eye had only dark and light vision. He had evidence of multiple birdshot wounds to his face, anterior neck, left forearm and hand. He was unable to close his left hand fully because of retained pellets in tendon sheathes. We examined his Miami medical records and radio-

graphs, and documented multiple retained birdshot pellets in his face, scalp, neck, forearm, and hand. According to conversations with Dr. Nicholson on September 11, 1987, J. S. then had 20/400 vision in his right eye and 20/100 in his left eye and remained legally blind. His long term prognosis was considered guarded for vision although his retinas had been successfully re-attached.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #2

NAME: L. P., age 22

OCCUPATION: Nursing Student, University of Panama

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/24/87

INCIDENT: 6/10/87, Panama City

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Beating, detention

L. P., a twenty-two year old nursing student, was on her way to a concentration on July 10, 1987. She and her mother were walking along the Via Argentina when they were attacked and chased by police. They entered a restaurant called El Prado and hid under tables. Police were beating and shooting birdshot at people in the streets. Six women and one man hid in the restaurant. Police entered the restaurant, broke up tables and pushed the citizens outside. L. P. told the police that they could not beat her because she had dignity as a human being. Police then put her into a police truck and beat her. There were twenty other people in the vehicle. The military further menaced the people inside the police truck by beating on their shields.

L. P. and the others in the police vehicle were taken to the Carcel Modelo, where they were registered and searched. L. P. said that at least one woman was searched by male police, and made to strip partially. She was denied permission to make any phone calls; a woman in the jail did later call her home with her whereabouts. Prisoners were photographed and accused of vandalism ("number 21"). Twenty-seven women were then taken to the women's cell. They were terrified because they had to walk by a cell filled with male prisoners. Two "regular" women prisoners in the cell helped the political prisoners by giving them mats. They prayed and sang.

At 4:00 p.m., another group of women detainees arrived, and at 7:00 p.m. more arrived. The G2 (secret police) arrived with cameras. The women were switched to a somewhat larger cell said to have contained some males with AIDS (the #50 cell). By this time, there were as many as fifty-eight women in the cell. The conditions were filthy. The cell was very crowded and everyone was terrified and concerned about AIDS exposure. Nobody slept.

The next noon (July 11th), some of the prisoners were released. Others were told that they would be let out soon, but were not. Everyone remained terrified. Prisoners could hear

guards calling out the names of men who were to be sent to the dreaded prison-isle of Coiba. The prison food was inadequate, although prisoners were able to buy some food from a cafeteria. Dr. Torres, the doctor in charge of prison health, visited on Sunday, July 12th. He did not examine anyone, but asked if anyone needed medicine. He came again on Tuesday, July 14th. L. P. had an arm infection, but was not able to get adequate ointment to put on it.

L. P. said she thought that thirteen university and high school students were in the prison at that time. Before she was released on July 14th, she was interrogated and asked political questions. [She ended her testimony by saying that she still participates in demonstrations.]

PANAMA TESTIMONY #3

NAME: P. C.

OCCUPATION: Secretary & law student at University of Panama
Sister of student shot and killed by military

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 6/24/87

INCIDENT: 7/25/87, El Valle de Anton

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Gunshot (fatal), interference with medical care, harassment of witnesses, withholding of autopsy

P. C. is the sister of Eduardo Carrera, a student who was killed July 26, 1987 in El Valle de Anton (an interior town of 2,000 people, a mountain resort). Although she did not witness these events directly, she gave us this account which she said was based on information from direct witnesses. On the afternoon of July 25, 1987, her brother Eduardo went to El Valle, a resort town where her family has a house and where she and her siblings have spent much time since childhood. On the evening of July 25th, Mr. Carrera attended a party and dance celebrating the end of the holidays. At about 4:00 a.m. in the early morning of July 26, he and twenty to thirty other young people (18-25 years old) gathered outside a supermarket. The young people were talking politics, and one of the students (E. M.), talking of Noriega, said something to the effect of "Down with Pineapple Face". Two police from the neighboring town of La Mesa were in the vicinity, having arrived in a police car. Their names were Corporal Jose Gabriel Garcia and Eliezer Almengor. Witnesses to the incident told P. C. that the police were drunk. The police saw the young people gathered and heard mention of "Pineapple." Garcia asked, "Who said that?" The police began to beat E. M. with a wooden stick, and he began to strike back at the police, saying "why are you doing this to me?" Then Officer Almengor took out his gun and pointed it at E. M. point-blank. Mr. Carrera intervened, saying to the police, "Stop it. This is my friend. He is one of our people." Almengor then turned abruptly and shot Mr. Carrera in the abdomen. He fell to the ground. A

number of witnesses noted that neither police officer was wounded in this episode.

Officer Garcia seemed afraid. The two officers put Mr. Carrera on the floor in the back of their police car, got into the car themselves, and locked the doors. At first they refused to go for medical care; they just sat in the front seat. After an unknown period of time, they drove Mr. Carrera to a local health center which was staffed by only one nurse helper. The police were wielding guns inside the health center. The witnesses came along on foot (no one else had a car), and were angered when they found police had simply put Mr. Carrera on the floor of the health center, but that he was not being cared for. Witnesses started throwing rocks at the health center; one witness knocked down the front door and entered about 30 minutes after Mr. Carrera had arrived at the health center. Mr. Carrera had glassy eyes but was still alive. The police escaped through the back door, firing at the crowd as they went. At this point, Officer Almengor was thought to have injured his finger.

Sometime after 4:30 a.m., Mr. Carrera was taken by car to San Carlos, a town 30-40 minutes away where there was a hospital. He was then put in an ambulance to be brought to Panama City, and died in the ambulance about 6:45 a.m.

A friend who had been in the ambulance called P.C. to tell her that her brother had died. This was the first she knew of the incident. She then went to the hospital and asked for the records. The hospital secretary said she knew nothing about the matter. P. C. asked to see the doctor and was told he was not there. She asked for her brother's belongings but was told that he had had none. She was initially told that the pathologist was not there; however he came in. P. C. talked to him and was allowed to see her brother's body in the morgue. She noted that her brother was wearing only pants, had no shoes or sweater on, and that his epigastrium was covered by a blood-soaked gauze bandage. She saw no other wounds and noted that he looked as though he were sleeping.

P. C. requested an autopsy, but the pathologist told her that he could not do one on Sunday. On Monday morning she again talked to the pathologist. An autopsy was done at mid-day on Monday. The pathologist told P. C. that a bullet had penetrated her brother's body, stomach, intestines, and abdominal aorta and had exited through the back. He said that this was consistent with shooting at close range, that the wound was a cone-like wound. There were no signs of fighting; the only other lesion was a "hole" where an intravenous had been.

Between July 27, 1987, and the end of August, the family heard no word concerning the autopsy report, nor did they receive Mr. Carrera's clothes. The newspapers, beginning on Monday, July 27, 1987, carried a story quite different from what P. C. had heard from witnesses to the event. Newspaper accounts

said that the students had been fighting with the police, that the police had tried hard not to shoot Mr. Carrera, and that the whole event had been accidental. Accounts said that the mob of students had caused severe damage to the health center, had prevented the care of Mr. Carrera, and had wrecked the ambulance so that he could not be taken elsewhere for care. P. C. said that the family had not filed a complaint because it would be useless to do so.

The day after this incident, Almengor, the policeman who had shot Mr. Carrera, was seen in civilian clothes drinking in the town. The local people were angered. That night (Sunday, July 25, 1987) the major in charge of the police force of that zone (Major Aleman), came to the market and exclaimed publicly that he did not care if people brought him two hundred lawyers, that only his word was law in the valley.

Witnesses to this incident have been harassed. The Fiscal (named Luce) and Major Aleman went to E. M.'s house (this is the student who had referred to Gen. Noriega as "Pineapple") on either Sunday, July 26th or Monday, July 27th, broke a number of things, and threatened and beat the father, an old man on crutches. E. M. was not home, but his brother M. M. was. M. M. was arrested and jailed in Penonome. He was denied food and water, was pelted with feces and urine by other prisoners, and was forced to stay in a cell with a wet floor with no shoes. His cellmates gave him a piece of wood to stand on and some water. P. C. did not know how many days M. M. was jailed. M. M. later made a statement on television to the effect that the killing of Mr. Carrera had been an accident and that the students had been drunk. During this television appearance, he was interviewed by the Fiscal.

P. C. told us that troops in the valley are still searching for other witnesses, particularly E. M. and one other witness who was said to have taken a gun from the police. Another Carrera relative was recently fired from her government job. The Carrera family phones have been bugged and family members feel that they are under surveillance.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #5

NAME: R. V., age 33

OCCUPATION: Security Guard Executive

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/24/87

INCIDENT: 7/11/87 - 7/14/87, Panama City

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Beating, detention

R. V. was returning with a friend from the Canal Zone in his own car at about 12:30 a.m. on July 11, 1987. He stopped in an old part of Panama City to get some cigarettes.

He said, "The government came," and made him, his friend and other citizens who had been in the vicinity stand against a wall. R. V. stated that there had been no provocation for this, that he was not even wearing white. The "government" then entered a nearby bar and brought out more people who were also made to stand against the wall. The "government" then began to beat these people, about 80 in all, with rubber hoses and sticks. Two trucks of policemen were involved in this incident, about twenty policemen in all. The police robbed R. V. of his gold chain during the beating. The people being beaten were told to shut up and were dragged to two police cars (panel trucks). Eighty people were stuffed into two trucks with a capacity of perhaps twenty each.

Once inside the police vans, the detainees were beaten more. Everyone was jammed on top of everyone else. They were accused of being dressed in white. When they were taken out of the police cars at the Carcel Modelo, one by one they were beaten about the face and body. At the Carcel Modelo they were stripped, told to leave all of their valuables, and made to do deep knee bends. They were then reclothed and photographed. R. V. said that the police robbed the prisoners.

Prisoners were put in the preventiva cell (a holding cell) and made to leave all of their valuables in a bowl outside. R. V. noted that police were not putting any valuables into labeled envelopes. Ten to eleven common prisoners inside inside the preventiva cell attacked people. These prisoners tried to take the valuables R. V. had saved, including money and cigarettes. R. V. estimated that there were about two hundred people in the cell. The floor was wet and covered with urine. The smell was terrible. The ceiling was wet and dripping. Common criminals, backed up by the police outside, made the political prisoners serve them all night. Police appeared to protect the common criminals so that only ten or eleven of them could effectively terrorize two hundred political prisoners.

At 1:00 a.m., the police threw a man into the cell who was then repeatedly sexually attacked in the open bathroom, much to the terror of everyone in the cell. He kept pleading "Leave me alone, please." During that night, common criminals did rounds of the prisoners saying, "Take off your shoes, take off your pants, take off your shirt." They were allowed to steal any clothing that they wanted. No one got any sleep. In the morning, police taunted the political prisoners with news of a good breakfast, but all they received was a small piece of stale bread and some brown water. Because there were no dishes or utensils, no one could drink. Common prisoners taunted the political prisoners by telling them that they would be sent to the Prison Isle of Coiba.

About two hundred prisoners were then taken to another room, a small room where they could only stand. This room was also filthy. They were then taken back to preventiva, which had been

cleaned, and kept there for eight hours more. Later, they were then told that they would go to the "galleries." No one knew what this meant. R. V. pretended to be sick, said that he needed a doctor and asked that his family bring his medicine. The police refused, saying he could see a doctor two days hence, on Monday. When he insisted furthermore a policeman threatened to send him to a small isolation cell called calabozo. He and nineteen others were taken to a room where they were interrogated, and he was sent to the "second gallery."

To go to the galleries, which contain prison cells, it is necessary to walk by other prison cells. Police guards open these cells so that the prisoners can come out and rob and harass incoming prisoners. R. V. ended up in a cell with some common criminals, "the first kind people" that he saw. One was a thief and two were drug traffickers. They gave him clothes, soap, slippers, a straw mat, and some food from their families. He said that the prison food was so bad he could not eat it. The police observed this and threatened to beat him. The bathroom was slimy and filthy, with three toilet bowls filled to the top to serve about two hundred people. Prisoners were verbally harassed while taking open showers. His cell was across from another cell where prisoners went in and out, smoked freebase, gambled, engaged in sexual activities, fought, and made a lot of noise; it was difficult to sleep.

On Sunday his family came. At first prison officials denied that he was there, but ultimately he saw them. They brought him food, but he was made to throw it out. He was beaten on Monday and left with eight scars. A police guard took him to the prison barber shop and told the barber to shave off his hair and his beard; however, the barber gave him a good haircut instead.

A group of lawyers attempted to help people taken on July 10, 1987, but writs of habeas corpus were ignored. He himself was denied access to a lawyer and was sentenced to ninety days in jail.

He said that the Carcel Modelo was built in 1922 for 250 prisoners, that there are perhaps 500 common criminals in the jail, and that numbers of inmates have been swelled greatly by the political prisoners recently jailed. Comments about the jail and its architecture were confirmed by Jose Manuel Faundez, a lawyer who was formerly a warden of the Carcel Modelo.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #6

NAME: Students, Parents, and Teachers of the Instituto Nacional (a high school)

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/24/87

INCIDENT: 7/20/87, Panama City

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Tear gas (shot into school), Birdshot, Harassment

Representatives of the Parents and Teachers Association of the Instituto Nacional and two students who had been wounded by birdshot testified about events at their high school on July 20, 1987. The president of the Parents and Teachers Association spoke for his group and told us that parents were very sad about what was going on in their country, particularly about the effect of political events on young people. He said that they held General Noriega and the Minister of Education (Manuel Solis Palma) responsible for these matters. The president of the PTA and the others testified about the following incident.

On Thursday, July 20, 1987 some high school students were having a peaceful march near the school. Perhaps one hundred students of the Instituto Nacional were involved in this march. Students encountered police at about 8:15 a.m., and were chased back inside the school building. There were a total of 1500 to 2000 students attending classes in the school. Police proceeded to shoot tear gas into the school. The parents and teachers told us that a total of seventy canisters of tear gas were shot inside the school building over a period of perhaps thirty minutes. Parents and teachers actually collected the canisters, and noted that they were made in the United States and labeled "Not To Be Used in Indoor Spaces; Seek Medical Care." The students were choked and terrified by the tear gas. The one air conditioner in the school was full of tear gas, there was little water, and there seemed no way to avoid the gas. Police waited outside with shotguns, and students were afraid to leave the building. One student tried to kick a canister that had not exploded; the canister went off near him and he fainted. Two boys with asthma had severe difficulty breathing. One student with a heart condition fainted from "suffocation." The next day a number of students were ill with diarrhea; teachers and parents said that diarrhea was thought to be a late effect of the tear gas.

Police remained around the school with their guns drawn. About two hours later some students left, thinking that the police might be gone. Police were still outside, however, and an estimated thirty to forty students received birdshot wounds trying to leave the school. Police further pursued students as they left. A number of terrified students tried to hide in surrounding apartment houses but police surrounded and even entered the apartment houses.

A professor testified that after much of the tear gas had been fired teachers had begged the police for a "time out." Although at one point the police agreed to a "time out", they did not honor their promise; they still hid outside, waited for students, shot them, and followed and chased them. Police shot birdshot inside the school building and also inside surrounding apartment buildings. It is not known how many students were actually arrested. This school was closed July 20, 1987 and remained closed until after our visit.

On Friday, August 21, 1987, representatives of the school met with the Minister and Vice-Minister of Education to ask that their school be reopened. They were told that the school could open only when "student leaders" were expelled. The teachers noted that the School's principal is appointed by the government. One of the parents, a lawyer, said that she has four children who have never known what democracy is like. Teachers asked that we investigate drug traffic in the school, stating that drugs are freely sold in the school and drug sales openly tolerated by police.

We examined one student of the school, a 16 year old boy who had multiple birdshot injuries in his face, chest, and leg. He brought along the pair of shoes he had worn on July 20th which had been scarred by birdshot. He had been trying to leave the school when he was shot. Since July 20th he has received phone calls threatening him with death and castration. Another student, age 18, testified that he was also received birdshot injuries when he left the school on July 20th trying to go home.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #7

NAME: M. S., and His Mother

OCCUPATION: Engineer

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/24/87

INCIDENT: 8/20/87, Panama City

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Tear gas and Birdshot (both shot into home)

M. S., an engineer, lives close to the University of Panama. On the afternoon of August 20, 1987, the family was having a birthday party for his four year old daughter. Others present included his one year old son, his mother, his mother-in-law, and his wife. At 3:45 p.m., M. S. noted that students on the street outside were being attacked by police. Two police vans stopped in front of his house and fifteen to twenty police got out of each. The police were wearing gas masks and carrying shields.

M. S., his mother, and his mother-in-law, standing on the second floor balcony of their apartment, were surprised to see police point guns at them. M. S. called out, "Take it easy, I have two kids in here."

The police shot birdshot at them. Both his mother, age 62, and his mother-in-law, age 64, suffered multiple facial birdshot wounds. Both were wearing glasses and thus escaped eye injury.

The officer in charge then instructed police to throw tear gas into the family's apartment. Two tear gas canisters were fired through a closed glass window into the apartment. By this time, the family had gone inside and were afraid to come out. They suffered the tear gas for thirty minutes in the small closed apartment space, huddled in the shower. The children had severe difficulty breathing. The apartment was so suffused with tear gas that the family had to move out for three days. M. S. said that the police also shot into other apartment buildings in the area. He commented "We really have to stop this." M. S. said that the tear gas canisters were made in the United States (Saltsburg, Pennsylvania).

We examined M. S.'s mother and noted facial scars consistent with birdshot injuries. M. S.'s mother-in-law, age 64, was said to have had an attack of tachycardia and severe problems with her vocal cords since the tear gas exposure. She also has hypertension and has been under medical care since this incident.

M. S. has consulted a lawyer who advised him to come to a human rights group instead of pursuing legal channels at this time..

PANAMA TESTIMONY #8

NAME: R. O.

OCCUPATION: Dentist

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/24/87

INCIDENT: 7/10/87, Panama City

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Beating, detention

R. O. was driving in his car with three colleagues at 3:30 p.m. on July 10, 1987, when he had to stop for a red light. Because he was the second car behind the stoplight, he could not go on through the light when he noticed "six to seven 'governments'" waiting in a side street. There was a white flag rolled up on the floor of his car. Two police walked to his car, saw the flag, and made him get out with the flag. Six or seven police cars then arrived. R. O. was straddled over the trunk of his car and searched. He was then taken to the Balboa police station and was photographed. A bayonette was put in his pocket for the photograph and it was alleged that the weapon was his. He was stripped to his underwear; his shoelaces were taken so he would not hang himself but his belt was left. He was put with twenty-nine other people in a cell that he described as four meters high and two meters wide.

At about 8:30 that night, thirty prisoners were put in a small bus with closed windows. The bus was hot and the passengers found breathing difficult. They were driven towards the Carcel Modelo prison, but somehow ended up back where they started. They were taken to police headquarters and again photographed. R. O. noted that at that time he had a watch and wedding ring. At 9:00 p.m. his clothes were again removed and he was again searched and photographed. He was charged with vandalism, and also international terrorism. He was taken to the Modelo prison to the preventiva cell (a holding cell). A corporal at a desk in the basement offered to care for his valuables. He left his watch but put his wedding ring in his pocket.

When he got into the preventiva cell, he was jumped, searched and robbed by ten common criminals. His identification and wedding ring were taken. He described the cell as horrible and dirty, with sweaty walls; he estimated that it contained about eighty people and smelled foul. He decided not to fight with the common criminals because those who did were badly beaten. He was called out, given a red paper, and waited outside the cell. He went to the desk to find his watch, but the watch was gone. He later found the corporal, got his watch back, and put it in his pocket. However, when he returned to the cell, his watch was stolen with precision by a prisoner who seemed to know just where it was. There were too many people to lie down in the cell; they could only sit. He described a male prisoner being repeatedly sexually attacked by other prisoners in the open bathroom; he thought perhaps this event was staged to frighten political prisoners.

An old man beside him in the cell fell down, seeming to have a heart attack. A doctor who was also a prisoner (having been beaten and arrested in his own home) called for help. Twenty minutes later, guards took both the sick man and the doctor out. The doctor later came back and said that when he told the guards the man had had a heart attack and needed to be hospitalized, they said, "Let him die," and left him lying in the jail for an hour.

R. O. described how the common criminals taunted the new detainees: "I have your pants, I like your shoes," etc. He described the guards taunting prisoners with the promise of food while the food was in fact miserable. He described the walk to other cells with taunts of sexual abuse, excrement being thrown, robberies, etc. He said the "criminals" were allowed to leave their cells, and take what they liked from political prisoners.

R. O. was held for twenty-two hours incommunicado with no lawyer, no minister, no family, no medical attention. He expressed anger that in the newspapers and on television General Noriega claimed that political prisoners had been well treated. He says that his wife had also been threatened.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #9

NAME: D. V., age 51
OCCUPATION: Laborer (mechanic)
TESTIMONY: 8/24/87
INCIDENT: 6/10/87, Panama City
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Tear gas, birdshot

D. V. is a mechanic of marine engines for Almacen Alvey. He and his workmates went to work and did not participate in the demonstrations of June 10, 1987. However, many businesses were shut down that day and the workers mostly stayed inside their workplace and talked until closing time.

About 3:00 p.m., having decided to go home, he and his fellow workers were waiting in a large patio parking area in front of their workshop when the Dobermans (crowd control police in riot gear) arrived. The company is surrounded by a fence, and the patio seemed a safe place. However, the Dobermans began to shoot both tear gas and birdshot into the company complex. D. V. was hit in the face, right eye, right thorax and right side by the first shot they fired, as he said "for no reason". He was also hit on the arm with a tear gas canister. In all, eight people in his company were wounded. The owner of the the company took his own car and spirited his wounded workers out of the side entrance to the Santa Fe Hospital. The police were waiting outside the front gate of the company to prevent the wounded from leaving, but apparently did not know of the back gate.

D. V. has had good eye care (from Dr. Ricardo Velasquez, among others); however, his right eye has been destroyed and is blind despite three operations on the eye. He states that were still pellets in the eye and also in his right thorax. He cannot see well enough to maintain a business which he has at home, and is finding it difficult to support his six children. He suffers severe headaches and is depressed.

We confirmed severe ocular injuries and blindness of the right eye, wounds consistent with birdshot injuries on the right thorax, and a large scar on his right upper arm where he was hit by a tear gas canister. Radiographs confirmed superficial metal pellets in soft tissues of the thorax and limbs and several pellets lodged in the head including one in the right retro-orbital space.

D. V. asked us why this had happened to him. He himself had never been political. He was simply standing in front of his place of work. He said "The police just shot me."

PANAMA TESTIMONY #10

NAME: L. R., age 20

OCCUPATION: Student in Business Administration, University of Panama

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/24/87

INCIDENT: 7/29/87, University of Panama

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Tear gas, birdshot, interference with medical care

L. R., a resident of Rio Abajo, a low-income area of Panama City, went to classes at the University of Panama on July 29, 1987, but found that there were rallies that day protesting the death of Eduardo Carrera. She did not participate in the rallies.

She and several girlfriends decided to go home about 9:30 a.m. They found the roads blocked and no buses running. As they crossed an overpass they saw trucks of Dobermans (riot police) coming down the street. They ran back into the University campus, but as they re-entered the campus they were shot at with both birdshot and tear gas by the Dobermans. L. R. explained that inside the campus students kept vinegar and water to fight the well known effects of tear gas. She and her friends were afraid to leave the campus for a while because the police often hid outside, waiting to attack students.

About 11:30 a.m., she and her friends again tried to go home. They were near the Metropolitan Hospital complex across the street from the university when suddenly she and her four girl friends were confronted by six pick-up trucks of Dobermans. The Dobermans began shooting at them from the trucks at close range, and the girls again ran back into the university campus. This time, however, the police pursued them into the campus.

L. R. was looking around for a place to hide when she was shot. She was wounded with birdshot in the head, one eye, her back, her right shoulder and her left hand. A friend told her that she was bleeding from her eye, but that she must keep going. She fell and hurt her leg. A professor came and helped her into a building. Police, still pursuing her, then threw tear gas into the building. The professor took her to a lounge where a number of student nurses were trying to tend to wounded students. Her eyes had swollen. The nurses said that they could not take care of her eye, that she needed a doctor. The professor consulted the vice-rector of the university who wasn't sure how they could get her to a doctor since the police were still on the campus and would not let anyone leave.

About 1:30 p.m., a professor, two student nurses and a friend took her out in disguise; she was wearing dark glasses so that the police would not know that she had been hurt. She was taken to Dr. Ricardo Velasquez's office about 2:30 p.m. and oper-

ated on at 4:00 p.m. She says that Dr. Velasquez took a pellet "out of my eye" and found no direct damage to the globe. She does, however, have decreased vision in the eye (which might be related to retinal hemorrhage or retinal detachment). Police watched the clinic where she had been taken and because Dr. Velasquez was concerned that police might actually attack the clinic. L. R. did not stay overnight.

We documented that L. R. had multiple birdshot wounds in her face, right shoulder area, and left hand, confirmed by radiographs.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #11

NAME: R. G., age 30

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/24/87

INCIDENT: 7/10/87, Panama City

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Tear gas and birdshot (both shot into home)

R. G. has a home on 45th Street in the vicinity of the Diaz Herrera house. He noted that his house is on somewhat of a hill, that he can see the Diaz Herrera house from his yard, and that he watched the events on the day that Diaz Herrera was taken away.

On July 10th, R. G. and his family were at home. His ninety-five year old grandmother and her eighty year old companion were also in his house. R. G. became aware that police were chasing people on the street around his home. Birdshot and tear gas were being fired on the streets, and people were seeking refuge. About twenty people came into his house; a number of others were not able to get in. At least two police entered the house, shooting both tear gas and birdshot. Four people inside the house were hit with birdshot. Police with gas masks and shields deliberately threw canisters of tear gas inside the house and then backed out. Some people who had left the house and some who not been able to get in were taken away by police; neighbors estimated that ten to twelve people were taken. About twenty people stayed in the house for two or more hours, choosing to suffer the effects of tear gas rather than risk being shot or arrested. The elderly grandmother and her companion, severely choked and blinded by the tear gas, were put in the shower. Police waited one to one-and-a-half hours outside to shoot at anyone who might try to leave the house. Tear gas canisters shot into the home were said to be manufactured by Federal Laboratories, Saltsburg, Pennsylvania.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #13

NAME: E. F.
OCCUPATION: Laborer
TESTIMONY: David, 8/25/87
INCIDENT: 7/11/87, David
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Gunshot

E. F. could not give testimony on August 25, 1987 because he was "working on the Atlantic side". His story was told by others who presented us with pictures of the incident. E. F. was driving his car on July 11, 1987, with his two children. He came to a military roadblock and tried to turn away. He was shot point blank through the door of his car with an M-16 rifle. The bullet made a hole through the car door and entered E. F.'s back. The children were horrified. The police then shot at E. F.'s car with birdshot. E. F. recovered from his bullet wound.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #14

NAME: A. R., age 30
OCCUPATION: Laborer
TESTIMONY: David, 8/25/87
INCIDENT: 7/14/87, David
TYPE OF INCIDENT: Beating, birdshot, harassment

A. R. was walking on a street in David on Saturday, July 14, 1987; it was a "regular day" and there were no demonstrations. He encountered soldiers of the "peace" battalion who were jumping people. People were running away for fear of being beaten. A. R. saw that a woman was having trouble getting away and he tried to help her get into a corner drugstore. He stated that he was not wearing any white clothes.

The soldiers followed A. R. and the woman into the drugstore and pulled A. R. out, beating him on the head and neck with wooden sticks. People in the pharmacy yelled, "Don't beat him anymore." A. R. cried out "Liberty!" The military beat his forehead and back even harder. The military put him in a commando car and continued beating him. A. R. jumped from the car and ran into a store full of people. The military chased him, hit him on the back of the head, and shot him in the back of the head at a distance estimated at less than three meters. Knowing that the police had guns and were shooting, he did not look back for fear of being hit in the eyes. He finally fell down and pretended to be dead. Two G2 military men came with a car, picked him up, and threw him in, but he escaped again despite his wounds.

He later found his way to a private clinic. He underwent neurosurgery and was said to have a cerebral contusion. He said

more than twenty-four pellets (which he called "buckshots") were found in his head, and that some were still embedded there. While he was hospitalized, a soldier of the Red Devil Battalion came into his room repeatedly and beat on his bed with a prod, harassing him.

A. R. is now recovered. He testified wearing a beret which he removed showing a neurosurgical scar. Eight days "later", another tragedy occurred in his family. His five-year old son was killed in an automobile accident under suspicious circumstances; the child was in an automobile which was hit by a government employee said to be drunk. There has been no investigation of this incident although the family has requested one. The family and their lawyer suspect that foul play and harassment were involved in the child's death.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #15

NAME: B. C., age 47
OCCUPATION: Professor
TESTIMONY: David, 8/25/87
INCIDENT: 6/24/87, David
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Detention, harassment

Professor B. C. was detained by police on his way home and taken to the police station on June 24, 1987 at 6:00 p.m. He was not participating in any demonstration. At the police station, he was threatened and told that he would be sent to the dreaded prison-isle of Coiba. He had been a leader of the teachers' union and had been "fighting for freedom for a long time". He was held incommunicado and felt that he was under great psychological pressure. He told us how fearful people were of being sent to Coiba because of harsh labor conditions, reported human rights violations, and assassinations there. He was kept in custody in David from Wednesday June 24th to Saturday June 27th, 1987. His family were not told where he was.

On Saturday, June 27, 1987 with no hearing or trial, the military took him and one "criminal" to a military airport, put them on a plane, and flew them to Coiba. He was terrified that he would be dropped alive into the sea from the plane. He was put into a room where he had to sleep on the floor. He had inadequate clothes. He tried to buy his own food but found only toilet paper and evaporated milk for sale. He was unable to eat. He was kept in Coiba for five days. He lost 15 pounds. He said that the bishop (Bishop Nunez) intervened and gained his freedom after five days at Coiba.

When the professor returned from Coiba he lost his job as a teacher. He now has no salary. He found that his car had been stripped of valuable parts. He is having difficulties supporting his wife and three children. His oldest child has had to quit university for lack of funds.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #16

NAME: C. G., age 24
OCCUPATION: Ice Cream Vendor
TESTIMONY: David, 8/25/87
INCIDENT: 7/17/87, David
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Detention, Beating, Torture, Harassment

C. G., a twenty-four year old ice cream vendor from David, said he was detained on July 17, 1987 about noon for waving a white handkerchief while he was with a group of friends. He was detained by G2 officers in plainclothes. The police threatened him and said "You will die today. You will be sent to Coiba." They blindfolded him with his white handkerchief and took him to police headquarters where he was stripped and kept blindfolded. He was beaten on his head and feet with a hose and spit upon. He spent three hours naked and lying on the floor. His testicles were burned with cigarettes and he was threatened with rape. He was also beaten and was kept in a cell for two hours. He was interrogated about the Christian Democrats.

He was released after about six hours. He stated that a few days (he said "four days") before we met him, the same G2 officers who had detained him had deliberately destroyed his ice cream truck. He now had no means of obtaining another truck or of making a living.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #17

NAME: F. G., age 25
OCCUPATION: Mechanic, student
TESTIMONY: David, 8/25/87
INCIDENT: 7/11/87, David
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Beating, detention

F. G. was a witness to the E. F. assault of July 11, 1987 (Testimony 13). He picked up E. F.'s daughter who was in the car, when he saw that E. F. was injured. He helped E. F. to medical attention. He encountered a battalion of police about 5:00 p.m. as he was returning home. Guards got out of a police car and started beating him and his friend. He was put in a police car. Both he and his friend were beaten with gun butts and sticks in the car by police. He and his friend were accused of throwing stones, which he denied, and were taken to the police station. They were continually beaten. F. G. stated that neither he nor his friend fought back with the police.

He was sent to a cell and found that the prisoners there were friendly. The prisoners gave him medicine for headaches, as he had been beaten on the head, and gave him water to drink. There were five political prisoners in a cell with the common

criminals. F. G. says that another political prisoner was hung by his fingers in the police station and given two injections. F. G. received no medical attention. His family asked for a writ of habeas corpus and he was freed, along with seventeen others. He mentioned other political prisoners who had been taken that day, including a sixty-three year old man (detained for wearing a white shirt) who had a wound in his leg from recent surgery that was reopened after repeated beatings by the police. He said that police taunted him saying "you are here but where are your leaders now?", implying that opposition leaders had run off.

F. G. did not say much about his medical condition. However, we reviewed his electroencephalogram taken on July 15, 1987 and found it had been read by a Panamanian neurologist as abnormal, showing "cerebral dysfunction, post-traumatic." F. G. had been prescribed tegretal and sibelium by a physician, presumably to prevent seizures.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #18

NAME: Bertilo Mejia and Family
OCCUPATION: Christian Democratic Congressman
TESTIMONY: David, 8/25/87
INCIDENT: 8/15/87, David
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Beating, Detention, and Harassment

Mr. Mejia is a well-known senator from David, a member of the Christian Democratic Party. He stated that he had been persecuted since 1979. On June 6, 1984, his residence had been shot at; he went to the courts unsuccessfully. During his campaign for election in 1985, he was smeared and said to be an alcoholic. After a traffic accident on May 5, 1985, the police planted two empty whiskey bottles in his car. In November 1986, when he was in Spain, his children received anonymous threatening phone calls stating that they would be killed. These threatening phone calls had continued. On June 6, 1987, his home was entered when he was not home and "totally messed up." His diplomatic passport and papers and those of his family were stolen. Unknown persons tried to burn the house down but failed because of the high humidity.

On August 15, 1987, at 8:20 p.m., after a mass and a peaceful caravan called by the Civil Crusade, he was standing with his family by his car, parked at South Street in front of a store in downtown David. Two cars from the defense forces came and police asked for his license. He gave them his congressional card and his legislative badge, but they said, "These are worth nothing, you are a disgrace, we don't know you", and they began to beat him with wooden sticks while he stood by his car in downtown David with his family around him. He was kicked forcefully on both legs and in the right flank. He was forced into a patrol car and taken to the police station; he was insulted and beaten along

along the way. While he was being taken to the car his two daughters cried out "Why are you taking our dad?"; the police choked one and shook the other by the arms and threw her against the car. His wife was told "Go away or we'll do the same to you".

The senator was beaten on his legs and thighs on the way to the police station and at the station. He was threatened with violence, castration, and death at the police station. He was seen by several officers including a Lt. Gomez, Lt. Cerano, and Lt. Cano. Lt. Cano finally gave him back his documents stating the incident had been a mistake. Mr. Mejia was taken back to the place where his car and his family were still waiting.

Mr. Mejia stated that this incident was recorded with pictures, and that he was told that the police would later attack the photographer.

The Mejia family continued to be harassed, particularly with threatening telephone calls to the children.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #19

NAME: O. D.

OCCUPATION: Automobile Agent

TESTIMONY: David, 8/25/87

INCIDENT: 07/11/87, David

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Tear gas, Birdshot, Beating, Detention

July 11, 1987 was a day of peaceful protest in David. O. D. was taking part in a peaceful caravan. The military threw four tear gas canisters into his car and shot at him and his wife at close range with birdshot; O. D. presented photographs of his car showing tear gas canisters and birdshot scars. He and his wife ran from the car, pursued by military beating them with hoses, and fled into their automobile workshop. They were pursued by a low-flying helicopter throwing tear gas. O. D. was threatened with having his "brains blown out" if he didn't open up his workshop door. When he opened the door, the police beat, kicked, clubbed, and insulted him and his wife. O. D. was incensed that the military violated his private property. He and his wife were taken to the police station where the police "took data" on him. They were sent to a patio with common criminals. O. D. was bleeding, his arm was broken, and he was limping because of a knee injury. Political prisoners, about one-hundred in all, were then sent to a classroom. There were no restrooms. Prisoners were told, "You cannot ask for anything". Eventually, the men were separated from the women and the men were put in cells with common criminals, about twenty to a cell. He says that thanks to the Chamber of Commerce and to the Bishop (Nunez), he was freed. Women were freed in four to five hours, men in about ten hours. Men were beaten on their legs while in prison. Political prisoners were not kept together but split up into different groups.

There were numerous threats given to political prisoners to the effect "We will destroy you". O. D. demanded a doctor and finally saw one; he said that he was the only prisoner who insisted on seeing a physician.

O. D. gave us a written deposition in English which ended with a statement "God bless the Americas".

PANAMA TESTIMONY #27

NAME: A. T.

OCCUPATION: City Councilor

TESTIMONY: Chitre, 8/25/87

INCIDENT: 7/10/87, Chitre

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Beating, detention, interference with medical care

A. T., a member of the city council of Chitre, was detained on July 10, 1987, as he and his family left for a caravan. His group included his wife, their children, and their children's friends. They were taken to a police station where the civilian headquarters were reopened (it was after hours) so that they could be charged by civil authorities. They were charged with disturbance of the peace and ordered to five to ten days in detention. They were actually kept for five days in jail. A. T. requested a lawyer and, in fact, called A. E. (testimony 25) who by then was already in jail himself. A. T. was beaten and kicked by guards. The women were insulted verbally. They all were subjected to searches as though they were criminals. During the night guards beat on the bars of cells, keeping prisoners awake. Prisoners were forced to sweep and clean the floors of the jail.

As a member of the city council, A. T. protested this treatment vigorously as a violation of the law. According to him, a city councilor cannot be detained without a judge's order. He says he was sanctioned by a civilian authority inferior to him. He protested to the city council, but to no avail. He and his wife and their children spent five days in jail. His son, an asthmatic, age 19, was denied access to a doctor.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #28

NAME: H. G., age 34
OCCUPATION: Businessman
TESTIMONY: Chitre 8/25/87
INCIDENT: 08/06/87, Chitre
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Tear gas, detention

H. G. and his wife were in a caravan with their six month-old baby on August 6, 1987. He was horrified when a guard fired a tear gas canister directly at his car and his baby. The bomb broke the automobile headlight but did not enter the car. He could not imagine that anyone would deliberately harm a child. He was then detained with three others and put in a cell for about an hour. The officer told him that he was charged for disturbance of the peace and stealing from a public bank (a "trumped-up" charge). The police had developed a file for each charge. H. G. said he felt terrible being jailed after living as a law-abiding citizen for thirty-four years. He said that he had continued his protests, however, which would end only when peace and freedom came.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #32

NAME: A. E., age 24
OCCUPATION: Automobile Distributor
TESTIMONY: Chitre, 8/25/87
INCIDENT: 7/3/87, Chitre
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Beating, torture, detention

A. E., a twenty-four year old employee of an automobile distribution firm, was followed by military on his way from Los Tablos to Chitre in the early morning of July 3, 1987. He was stopped and at 2:00 a.m. taken to the police station where he was kept outside until 6:00 a.m. At 7:00 a.m. he was hung by his wrists and kept in this position until about 5:00 p.m. in a small, closed room with little air. He was beaten with rubber hoses while he was hung, and, as he says, treated, "like the worst war criminal." He testified that his hands became terribly swollen and one of his veins "exploded." He was held incommunicado from July 3 until July 5, 1987. He was threatened with death and with the death of his family. He was accused in the newspapers of what he called "phony charges". He was released on Monday, July 6, after paying a "preventive fine" of \$1,000.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #35

NAME: I. Z., age 30

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/26/87 (Given by Dr. Osvaldo Velasquez)

INCIDENT: 8/9/87, Panama City

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Beating, interference with medical care

I. Z. was out painting her curbstone white on August 9, 1987 when she was arrested and beaten by police. She was thought to have a broken arm and was brought to the Santo Tomas Hospital emergency room where she was examined by a Dr. Rivera, who ordered a radiograph of her arm. She had had a prior fracture of the same arm.

Dr. Osvaldo Velasquez was called, as he knew this family, and came to see I. Z. He found her in the police station at Santo Tomas Hospital emergency room handcuffed to a wall bar. Dr. Rivera had wanted to hospitalize her but the military would not allow it. While Dr. Velasquez was in the police station, military came and released I.'s handcuffs. Dr. Velasquez thought that she was about to be taken for the radiograph, but instead she was put into a police car. Dr. Velasquez said to the military, "Where are you taking her? She is under a doctor's orders to have an x-ray." The military replied, "We have a superior order. The military only obey military orders." The military got angry with Dr. Velasquez and drove off with the woman at high speed. She was then taken to G2 headquarters.

Dr. Velasquez called Dr. Trejos, the president of the Panamanian Medical Association, and advised him to intervene. The woman was subsequently brought before the night judge and released about midnight. I. Z. has not since appeared to give testimony.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #36

NAME: E. M.

OCCUPATION: Physician

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/26/87

INCIDENT: 8/26/87, Panama City

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Tear gas, birdshot, harassment

E. M. was to be the first speaker at our meeting with the doctors of the Panamanian Medical Association and the Social Security on August 26, 1987. He was late, and when he arrived, his appearance was indeed startling: dissheveled, wild-eyed, open shirt, loose tie, bloody face, chest and arms.

He had spent four years working at the national level in public health at the University. He had taken part in a demonstration two months earlier and was subsequently fired from his job as an epidemiologist and sent to a distant neighborhood as a

general practitioner. He was involved in a legal battle to regain his university job, but had not yet been successful.

On the day of his testimony, August 26, 1987, he had been attending a scientific meeting at the University of Panama School of Medicine. At about 10:00 a.m., some students were holding a peaceful demonstration in front of the university on Bolivar Avenue. Police attacked the students and surrounded the university. The police moved into the university campus shooting tear gas and birdshot indiscriminately. People attending the lectures with E. M. heard students calling for help and stepped out of the lecture room. E. M. was shot in a parking lot outside the medical school. He stated police were also firing tear gas into classrooms at that time and shooting at students and others from the perimeter of the university. He came to testify straight away without receiving any therapy.

After his talk, we did a quick examination. He had multiple fresh and bleeding birdshot wounds in his face, chest and arm. It appeared that he might have had a birdshot injury to the lateral part of his right eye, which was reddened. He left to receive medical care.

PANAMA TESTIMONY # 37.

NAME: K. V. age 9 and H. P. age 14; K. V.'s mother,
and several of their doctors

OCCUPATION: Children

INCIDENT: 6/11/87, Panama City

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/26/87

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Birdshot

K. V. is nine years old. She was playing school with some other children near her home on June 11, about 6:00 p.m. The children saw a police car coming towards them. They began to run away. K. fell down and was shot from behind at a close distance. Another little girl, H. P. age 14, who bent over to help K. and was also shot at close range by the police. K. spoke for herself as follows:

"I was playing with some friends, playing school. A friend said, 'The police are coming.' I fell down. The police shot me when I fell down."

K. and her mother were careful to say that there were no demonstrations going on in the area at the time. K. was severely injured, with bilateral hemothoraces and a possible abdominal injury; she required bilateral thoracotomies and an exploratory laparotomy.

K.'s mother described events while K. was at the hospital: the child was taken to Santo Tomas, taken from the mother's arms, and put in the hospital. The doctors and nurses in the emergency room were kept from the mother; they thought that she should be allowed to stay with the child. The police insisted this had been an accident. The mother said that she felt threatened by the police and did not feel safe in speaking out. K. herself had suffered from severe depression since the shooting, was under psychiatric care, and was afraid to go to her own house. Her mother asked our group for help should anything happen to them.

A number of doctors (who knew these cases) were present. They included Dr. Rolando de LaGuardia and Dr. Emilio Viggiano. They testified about case of H. P., the second child involved. This child received care at a private clinic, the San Fernando Clinic. She had bilateral chest tubes and required abdominal surgery for multiple small bowel perforations, an injured spleen (which was removed), a hematoma of the left kidney, perforations of the stomach, and a hematoma of the tail of the pancreas. The surgeons estimated that they sewed up six or seven bowel perforations. Radiographs showed more than 120 birdshot pellets in H. P.'s tissues. H. P. has been lost to medical follow-up. The doctors thought that her family had been under military pressure not return for medical care or to talk.

The doctors mentioned that in the emergency room that same day a young girl of two to three years old and a fourteen year old girl were also brought in with pellet wounds. They said that a television reporter or station owner who gave the story of K. V. and H. P. to the Voice of America subsequently lost his broadcasting license.

PANAMA TESTIMONY # 38

NAME: O. B., age 19
OCCUPATION: Student
TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/26/87
INCIDENT: 8/20/87, Panama City
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Teargas, birdshot

O. B., a student at the Instituto Rubiano, on August 20, 1987, was trying to reach a peaceful students' march to be held that day. He had permission from his school to attend. When he arrived near the area of gathering at El Carmen church he saw police. He and other students began to run, and the police began shooting tear gas and birdshot at them. He fled towards the University of Panama campus. He noted that police grabbed students when they could and forced them into police cars. He reached the university but was suffering severe tear gas exposure and did not know what to do. Although he was running away, the police shot him from a distance of about twenty meters. He

received multiple birdshot wounds to his forearm, face, skull and neck. He brought along his blood-stained shirts to show us. He said he was fortunate not to have suffered eye damage. We found evidence of multiple birdshot wounds in his head, face, arm, and neck, and examined his radiographs which showed multiple pellets embedded in soft tissues.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #42

NAME: G. V.

OCCUPATION: Physician (chief surgical resident, Santo Tomas Hospital)

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/26/88

INCIDENT: 7/10/87, Panama City

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Beating, detention, interference with medical care

G. V. is President of the National Association of Residents and Interns and chief surgical resident at Santo Tomas Hospital.

He mentioned the case of E. S. (testimony 52) but said he did not have time to tell us of all incidents and would talk only about what happened on July 10, 1987 when Santo Tomas and the Social Security Hospital and the Cancer Hospital were invaded by police. Two residents at Santo Tomas Hospital had guns pointed at them at about 6:00 p.m. while they were in the sleeping quarters there. That same day there were numerous other incidents. The military did not allow some wounded civilians to receive attention. Members of the Civic Crusade were sent to jail rather than receiving medical therapy. The wounded were frightened to come to Santo Tomas Hospital and went to private clinics instead. The Medical Director of Santo Tomas Hospital would not allow ambulances to go out to pick up the wounded. Military were triaging patients in the emergency room and arresting those who had wounds. G. V. said only a limited number of patients were allowed to receive medical treatment on July 10, 1987.

Doctors protested vigorously to the military but were ignored. Wounded citizens who were hospitalized on that day were sequestered by the medical director who would not let people see their charts and tried to keep their management secret. These patients were admitted to the military ward pavilion and treated by military doctors. G. V. said that the doors of the hospital were actually closed for a time on July 10, 1987 by order of the director.

At this point, we asked G. V. about his own incident of beating and arrest. The Minister of Health had told us earlier that day that G. V. had been burning tires in the street, wearing a shirt that said "Philadelphia" with a handkerchief tied over his face. When we told G. V. this, he laughed and said he had

actually been walking with his girlfriend on June 11, 1987 wearing a shirt that said "Bourbon Street, New Orleans." The day was his birthday. He was in front of the University of Panama with five other people, not participating in any sort of a protest. They encountered police who shot bullets at them from behind. He and his friends fell down flat and told the police that they were doctors. The police beat them while they were lying down and as they tried to run away. They were all beaten with rubber hoses on the back.

G. V. was injured and sought help at the Social Security Hospital nearby; he was having gross hematuria. While he was waiting for laboratory tests under the order of a doctor, he was confronted by police who arrested him and took him off to the Panama Hotel parking lot and then to jail. He requested medical attention and was permitted to see a military doctor who did only a very superficial examination. He was told that he was going to jail and that his human rights were suspended. He was held for twenty hours at the Carcel Modelo. He lost many of his belongings, including two gold chains and \$120, to robberies by prisoners. However, one prisoner he encountered had been his own patient and took care of him.

Dr. Sanchez, the Minister of Health, came to see him in the Carcel Modelo, told him not to participate in political matters anymore, and said that he would try to help him. The doctors of Santo Tomas Hospital threatened to strike unless G. V. was released forthwith. He was released from jail after twenty hours. He said that he had recovered from his beating.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #43

NAME: Dr. Mauro Zuniga

OCCUPATION: Former head of AMOACSS

TESTIMONY: Panama, 8/26/87

INCIDENT: Santiago, Panama, 1985

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Kidnapping, beating and torture

Dr. Zuniga was President of AMOACSS (the organization of health workers in the social security) in 1985. We heard his testimony on August 26, 1987, at the headquarters of the National Medical Association of Panama.

On August 19, 1985, Dr. Zuniga had gone to Santiago in western Panama to speak with other members of AMOACSS about military and human rights violations. He and his colleagues were having lunch in a restaurant called Quo Vadis. About 2:15 p.m. two men entered the restaurant, came up to the table where he was sitting, pointed a gun at his neck, and took him out and "arrested" him. They were wearing plain clothes. He was put in the back

seat of a car with one man on each side. These men beat him, especially on the head and back, with gun butts. They then cut his neck and shoulders with knives, so that he was bleeding. They said they would chop him up and throw what was left of him out of a helicopter. They blindfolded him and continued beating him. During this time, about two hours, he was driven around at slow speeds, then at high speeds, and then taken on a rural road. The car slowed down. He could hear talking on a car radio but could not hear what was said because his ears had been plugged. He was dumped naked and wounded into a field and left alone. He walked to a road and was found by passers-by.

He said this happened to him because he was speaking out about the military. After this incident, the military slandered him in the press and on the radio. His house was robbed and his car broken into several times. He added that he is a political person, being a member of the Partido Accion Popular (PAPO).

PANAMA TESTIMONY #46

NAME: D. K.

OCCUPATION: Physician (Intern, Santo Tomas Hospital)

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/26/87

INCIDENT: 6/10/87 and 7/10/87, Panama City

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Detention, Harassment

D. K., in his early twenties, gave his testimony at the National Medical Association headquarters on August 27, 1987. On June 10, 1987, he and two others were driving to work in their car. They wore white uniforms and carried doctors' identification cards. Police stopped their car in front of the Hotel Panama, and when they saw the white uniforms, ordered them out. The interns tried to explain that they were doctors on the way to work, but this did not help. D. K. was beaten on the arm by a policeman's gun and searched. They were then put in the back seat of the car with two soldiers. His companion Dr. E. R. was ordered to drive the car to the Hotel Panama with a gun to his neck. About two hundred others were being held at that hotel for the offense of blowing horns. They were told that they would all be put in jail, and that the military could do whatever they wanted to them because there were no civil rights anymore in Panama. The interns again tried to explain that they meant no offense but were simply on their way to work. They felt the military actually picked out doctors and made several comments that doctors were all seditious. Military made specific verbal threats against the doctors, handcuffed them, and took them to police headquarters to "make an example of them."

Two hours later at headquarters, D. K. saw Colonel Macias who said this was all a mistake. "We will take you back to work," and took them to the Hotel Panama where they regained their papers.

On July 10, 1987, again D. K. was driving from work to his house at about 6:00 p.m. His car was stopped by military and the same two guards forced him out. They searched him and his car and found a paper from the Civic Crusade and his Swiss Army knife. He was accused of having seditious materials and of being armed. He was again taken to police headquarters, which were that day crowded with women, men and children. He was not allowed to help anyone even though there were a number of injured people. After waiting about four hours, he and two others were taken to a car and driven around the Canal area. Two secret service police were in front and three prisoners in back. The three were told that they would all disappear. They were then taken back to police headquarters. D. K. was charged with being armed and seditious. He was, however, fortunate because he encountered an old friend who was a policeman. This policeman managed to get him released and he went home.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #47

NAME: B. M.

OCCUPATION: Laborer

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/26/87

INCIDENT: 3/14/86, Panama City

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Fatal birdshot wounds

Dr. Gaston Dormois, a general surgeon, told us of the case of B. M., a laborer who was shot to death by the military during a labor march on March 14, 1986. On that day there were two strikes: the doctors striking for better wages and labor striking for better working conditions. There were demonstrations near Santa Ana Park in Panama City. Dr. Dormois said that it was widely believed that demonstrators had been provoked by the military. B. M. was shot point-blank by police with birdshot. He suffered one wound in his right inguinal region and one in his right abdomen. He was brought to Santo Tomas Hospital by labormates in a state of shock. The doctors at Santo Tomas took him to the operating room and found that the first shot had ruptured his groin and his scrotum so that his testicle was exposed. The second wound had resulted from a shot at close range. An expended green plastic birdshot canister was found in his abdomen near his liver. His mesentery was exposed and the right lobe of his liver was destroyed. He had also a four-cm. wound in his colon and injuries to his duodenum and his superior mesenteric vein. He had two cardiac arrests during surgery and died. We were presented with his hospital records from Santo Tomas Hospital dated March 14, 1986.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #50

NAME: E. S., age 23
OCCUPATION: Student
TESTIMONIES: Panama City, 8/27/87
INCIDENT: 8/20/87, Panama City
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Birdshot

E. S., an architecture student at the University of Panama, was inside the campus at the University of Panama on August 20, 1987 when he was shot with birdshot. He was brought to a private hospital by the director of student affairs at the University of Panama about 20 minutes after he was wounded. He suffered severe injuries to his right eye and is now blind in that eye. He also had birdshot injuries to his chest. He was being cared for by a doctor who had allegedly cautioned him to be quiet so that "the clinic does not get into trouble." He also believed that if he kept quiet, he would not be charged with any offense. He did not know how long he would be in the clinic and was worried about the quality of his medical care and his future. He asked us to keep this quiet, as he was afraid. The University of Panama is thought to be paying his bill.

We confirmed the presence of severe damage to the right eye and multiple birdshot wounds of the thorax.

PANAMA TESTIMONY #51

NAME: A. A., age 18
OCCUPATION: Student
TESTIMONIES: Panama City, 8/27/87
INCIDENT: 8/20/87, Panama City
NATURE OF INCIDENT: Birdshot

A. A. is an 18-year old law student who was on the street near the University of Panama on August 20, 1987, when he was shot by police from about 100 meters distance. He was hit in his face, most notably in the right eye. He was brought to the same private clinic by a student at the University. He also had been cautioned by clinic personnel about speaking to people. We confirmed that he had only minimal vision (four fingers at 1 meter) in the right eye and still had evidence of birdshot injuries in his face and left hand and forearm. He wanted to be a lawyer, he told us, to fight for "freedom, justice and democracy in a government that will serve all the people."

PANAMA TESTIMONY # 52

NAME: E. S., age 12

TESTIMONY: Panama City, 8/26/87 (Dr. Edgar Sagel)

INCIDENT: 6/87, Panama City

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Birdshot

Written testimony, radiographs, and photographs of E. S. were presented to us by Dr. Edgar Sagel. E. S., a twelve year old boy from the neighborhood of San Miguelito, was shot by military ("Dobermans") while on his way to school in June 1987. He sustained severe injuries including penetrating wounds to both eyes, a left hemothorax, and multiple soft tissue injuries to his face, neck, and thorax. He required both thoracic and ocular surgery, and was blinded in both eyes. He has been lost to medical follow-up, and is thought to be somewhere in the United States. We were presented with his medical records and photographs of his radiographs and his wounds.

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