

Buenos Aires, May 25, 1976

MISTER PRESIDENT:

On May 14th at 5 a.m. a group of heavily armed and similarly dressed plain-clothes men broke into my apartment - 2949 Santa Fé Avenue, 3rd Floor "A" - where I live with my wife and five children. The group's leader clamorously let it be known that it was a procedure of the Argentine Army.

After a brief inspection, not having actually found any element that could lead to incrimination whatsoever, the intruders arrested my daughter MONICA MARIA CANDELARIA MIGNONE (Federal Police Identity Card Nº 6.336.146). The man responsible for the operative^{on} told us that they would take her to Army Regiment Nº 1 of Palermo for questioning with reference to another person.

The behavior of the participants was severe, but also prudent and correct. For this and other evidence - for example, the professed nature of the procedure and the content of their conversation with my wife and myself - I have the certainty that the leaders of the operative were, actually, officers of the Armed Forces. That assurance is the only hope that encourages me in these terrible moments, when I think of my daughter.

Up to this date - ~~for~~ already eleven days -, I haven't been able to know where Monica is. It's as if ~~the earth would have swallowed her~~ she had vanished off the face of the earth. Nobody accepts the responsibility for her detention, nor informs us where she is. All the organizations consulted or notified - be it in a personal manner or through the means of Habeas Corpus (presented at the Capital's Federal Criminal and Correctional Court Nº 1) - have answered negatively, including the Police, Armed Forces, Ministry of the Interior and National Penitentiary Service. And this is the most serious part, from many points of view, since I have no doubt about the involvement of the Armed Forces.

Confronted with such a situation and having exhausted all other instances, I resort - as last alternative - to you, Mister President, appealing not only to your status as Head of State and Commander in Chief of the Army, but also as a Christian, citizen and family man.

It is of no interest to consider at this moment the eventual responsibility of my daughter, which will come forth from the investigation to be made. Moreover, I am deeply and objectively persuaded of her innocence, since she lived with us. I only ask something elementary in a civilized society: to know her whereabouts, what authority has ordered her arrest, how is she (since she has a congenital health problem), and - if ~~XXX~~ possible - of what she is accused.

I do it moved by the contents of last night's T.V. message, where you stated that one of the main objectives of the government you preside is "the energetic protection of the human rights of all the community members ... which are inalienable and sacred ... and essential to man's dignity". I agree with you that the fight against subversion "demands drastic measures" and I am willing to give my share of the solicited comprehension. But I do not see any incompatibility between that demand and the natural right to know the whereabouts of a detainee.

If Mister President orders, as I am sure, that this simple information be given to me, he will bring tranquility to an anxious and desperate family that wishes to believe in the authenticity of the Human, Christian and Argentine principles and values repeatedly proclaimed.

I omit other considerations that this event stirs up in my spirit for not being the appropriate moment to further them and I await your answer.

Sincerely

Emilio Fermín Mignone

TO MR PRESIDENTE
ARGENTINE REPUBLIC
GENERAL JORGE RAFAEL VIDELA