UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

June 2, 1999
Bill Schlotter

_x000B_INDIGENOUS VENEZUELANS BRING CONCERNS TO UCSB

Jaime Turon, mayor of the politically troubled Venezuelan state of Amazonas and a member of its indigenous Ye'kwana people, will speak about the struggles of his homeland Wednesday, June 2, at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Amazonas, recently created and bordering Brazil and Colombia, is mostly populated by native Ye'kwana and Yanomamo people and is facing multiple crises posed by disease, cocaine smuggling, renegade mining and logging and political strife that could erupt into guerrilla war. Turon, the top elected official in the region, and his native people often find themselves at odds with the aims of Catholic Salesian Missionaries and others in the Venezuelan federal government. Since his election as the state alcalde (mayor) two years ago, Turon repeatedly has been threatened, harassed and physically attacked by his opponents, supporters say.

Turon and six associates are making a week-long visit to the UCSB campus as the guests of Napoleon Chagnon, professor of anthropology, who has studied the people of the region for 35 years. Wednesday's talk will be held at 12:30 p.m. in the Multicultural Center. A reception will follow. Turon will speak again at 12:30 p.m. Thursday in Room 2001 of the Humanities and Social Sciences Building. On Friday, Turon and his associates are expected to market baskets made in their region at the University Center market.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.