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"Disappearance" / Impunity

18 April 2000

MEXICO

**Jesús Piedra Ibarra and over 400 others who "disappeared"
during the 1970s and 1980s**

Medical student Jesús Piedra Ibarra, a member of the *Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre*, 23 September Communist League, "disappeared" 25 years ago today, reportedly abducted by members of the *Policía Judicial del Estado* (PJE), State Judicial Police, in Monterrey, Nuevo León state. He is one of over 400 people who "disappeared" at the hands of the state, mainly in the 1970s and 1980s. The Mexican authorities have yet to establish their fate or prosecute those responsible.

Jesús Piedra Ibarra's mother, Rosario Ibarra, has campaigned ceaselessly for the authorities to investigate these crimes and bring those responsible to justice. She and the organization she set up, the *Comité Pro Defensa de Presos, Perseguidos, Desaparecidos y Exiliados Políticos*, Committee for the Defence of Prisoners, the Persecuted, the Disappeared and Political Exiles, also known as the *Comité Eureka*, have been threatened and intimidated over the years.

International law has established that the crime of "disappearance" is a "continuing offence as long as the perpetrators continue to conceal the fate and whereabouts of the persons who have disappeared and these facts remain unclarified". Recent international cases, including that of former Chilean head of state Augusto Pinochet, have established that "disappearances" inflict severe suffering on the families of the victims which can amount to torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The cycle of impunity that has characterised and reinforced human rights violations in Mexico must be broken. The Mexican authorities must remember that these unsolved "disappearance" are continuing crimes and it is the state's moral and legal obligation to do everything to establish the truth of each "disappearance", bring all those responsible to justice and fully compensate the victims and their families.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has documented scores of "disappearances", which took place mainly during the 1970s and 80s, and the failure of a succession of governments to assume full responsibility for confronting this legacy, by comprehensively investigating the crimes and bringing those responsible to justice (see *Mexico: "Disappearances": A black hole in the protection of human rights*, AMR 41/05/98). Although the *Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos* (CNDH), National Human Rights Commission, has investigated a number of cases, most relatives still suffer the injustice and uncertainty of not knowing the fate of their loved ones.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:

- reminding the authorities that it is 25 years since the 18 April 1975 "disappearance" of Jesús Piedra Ibarra, reportedly at the hands of the *Policía Judicial del Estado* in Monterrey, Nuevo León state;
- expressing grave concern that his "disappearance", like that of over 400 others dating from the 1970s and 80s, remains unsolved;

- stressing the fact that international law recognises these crimes as continuing offences and the suffering caused to relatives as potentially amounting to torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- calling on the authorities to immediately fulfill their obligation to thoroughly investigate these cases, to establish the truth of what happened to the victims, to bring to account those responsible and fully compensate the victims and their relatives;
- noting that the authorities' failure to effectively confront this legacy of impunity is a grave injustice to the victims and their families, and casts doubt on their claims to be fully committed to ensuring respect for human rights.

APPEALS TO:Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Jorge Madrazo
 Procurador General de la República
 Av Reforma, esq. Violeta
 Col Guerrero
 México D.F., CP 06300
 MEXICO

Telegrams: Procurador General República, México D.F., Mexico

Faxes: + 52 5 346 0906

Salutation: Señor Procurador General / Dear Attorney General

National Commission for Human Rights

Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández
 Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos (CNDH)
 Av. Chapultepec N° 49, 1er Piso, Centro, Cuauhtémoc,
 06040 México, DF, Mexico

Faxes: + 52 5 681 8490 (If voice answers, please ask: "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor)

Salutation: Estimado Dr. Soberanes / Dear Dr. Soberanes

E-mail: correo@cndh.org.mx

COPIES TO:Non-governmental Human Rights Organization

Comité Eureka
 Mazatlan 5 Edificio T #1
 Col. Condesa
 México D.F. MEXICO

and to diplomatic representatives of Mexico accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 May 2000.