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Torture / Fear for safety

13 February 1995

MEXICO

María Gloria GUEVARA NIEBLA (f)
Jorge SANTIAGO SANTIAGO

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Hilario MARTÍNEZ HERNÁNDEZ
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Fears for the safety of several people detained by the Mexican Federal Judicial Police in the past few days have been heightened by allegations that one of them has been tortured in custody.

On 12 February it was reported that María Gloria Guevara Niebla, detained in Mexico City on 8 February, had been tortured between 8 and 9 February, and forced to sign a confession. Amnesty International has learned that she was also threatened with the torture of her two-year-old son.

Jorge Santiago Santiago was detained in Teopisca, Chiapas, on 10 February. The others named above were detained in the town of Yanga, state of Veracruz on 8 February. The detainees are reported to be members of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) and were allegedly detained in connection with weapons found in Mexico City and Yanga. In an interview published in the Mexican daily *La Jornada* on 10 February, Jorge Santiago Santiago, director of *Desarrollo Económico y Social de los Mexicanos Indígenas*, a non-governmental organization in Chiapas, denied any involvement with the EZLN.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In a press statement on 9 February, President Ernesto Zedillo called for the arrest of several EZLN leaders, including sub-commander Marcos, whom he named as Rafael Sebastián Guillén Vicente. The President also named four other alleged leaders of the EZLN and arrest warrants were issued against all five.

It is reported that warrants have now also been issued against 13 indigenous people alleged to be EZLN members.

The offices of CONPAZ (*Coordinación de Organismos no Gubernamentales por la Paz*), the Coordination of Non-governmental Organizations Working for Peace, in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, were raided by members of the Mexican Federal Judicial Police (PFJ) on 10 February at 1.15am. Members of CONPAZ are reported to have been followed by the police when they left their offices shortly before the raid.

Amnesty International fears that these developments may result in further human rights violations. In the armed clashes which began on 1 January 1994, at least 145 people are reported to have died before a cease-fire was called in mid-January 1994. Amnesty International has documented widespread human rights violations in the context of this conflict, including the summary execution of prisoners, extensive use of torture, and "disappearances" perpetrated by members of the Mexican Army. To date no member of the security forces has been brought to justice for these violations.

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

- expressing concern at the alleged torture of María Gloria Guevara Niebla by members of the security forces;
- requesting a prompt and impartial investigation into these allegations and calling for those responsible to be brought to justice; asking to be kept informed of the outcome of these investigations;
- urging immediate measures to ensure the physical and mental integrity of all the detainees (naming some or all), seeking assurances that all are being humanely treated and are allowed immediate access to their relatives, doctors and lawyers.

APPEALS TO

1) President of the Republic

Lic. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León
 Presidente de la República
 Palacio Nacional
 06067 México D.F., MEXICO

Telegrams: Presidente Zedillo, México D.F., Mexico

Telexes: 170937 sppnme; 1774468 sppnme

Faxes: + 52 5 271 1764

Salutation: Sr. Presidente/Dear President

2) Minister of the Interior

Lic. Esteban Moctezuma Barragán
 Secretario de Gobernación
 Secretaría de Gobernación
 Bucareli 99, 1er. piso
 Col. Juárez
 06699 México DF, MEXICO

Telegrams: Secretario Gobernación, México D.F, Mexico

Faxes: +52 5 592 0584

Salutation: Sr. Secretario/Dear Minister

3) Minister of Defence

Gral. Enrique Cervantes Aguirre
 Secretario de la Defensa Nacional
 Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional
 Blvd. Manuel Ávila Camacho y
 Avda. Industria Militar
 Col. Lomas de Sotelo
 11640 México DF, MEXICO

Telegrams: Secretario Defensa, México D.F., Mexico

Faxes: (+52 5) 557 1370 (voice line: ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Secretario/Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Human rights organization

Sres. CONPAZ
 Chiapa de Corzo 19, El Cerrillo
 San Cristóbal de las Casas
 29220 Chiapas, Mexico

2) Human rights organization

Sres. Centro de Derechos Humanos
San Bartolomé de las Casas
5 de Febrero No. 6
San Cristóbal de las Casas
29200 Chiapas, Mexico

3) Daily newspaper

Sr. Editor
La Jornada
Balderas 68
06050 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 27 March 1995.