

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 41/007/2001

6 February 2001

Further information on UA 15/01 (AMR 41/004/2001, 23 January 2001) - Impunity / Legal Concern

MEXICO Ricardo Miguel CAVALLO

The Mexican authorities have decided to extradite Argentine former naval captain Ricardo Miguel Cavallo to Spain, where he will face charges of genocide, terrorism and torture. Amnesty International welcomes the decision, which reaffirms the principle of universal jurisdiction, contributing to efforts all over the world to bring to justice those responsible for serious human rights violations.

On 2 February the Mexican Foreign Ministry ratified a legal ruling to extradite Ricardo Miguel Cavallo, making the important point of including torture. Torture had been excluded from the original ruling of 12 January, which argued that there were grounds for complying with Spain's extradition request regarding the allegations of genocide and terrorism, but not of torture. Cavallo's lawyer is to lodge an appeal (*amparo*).

Cavallo had been arrested by Interpol-Mexico on 24 August 2000 on suspicion of involvement with the illegal importation of used cars. Immediately following his detention, the Spanish authorities had sought his extradition to Spain for alleged crimes of genocide, terrorism and torture.

Under the Argentine military junta, which ruled from 1976 to 1983, Cavallo (also known as Miguel Angel Cavallo) was assigned to the notorious Naval Mechanics School (*Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada, ESMA*) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where many of the victims of the military junta were taken and last seen.

Cavallo is the second former member of the Argentine military to be detained abroad for human rights crimes during the "Dirty War". The first, Jorge Olivera, detained in Rome last year, was later released. Cavallo is one of more than 90 former members of the Argentinian security forces under investigation by Baltasar Garzón, the same Spanish judge who sought the extradition from the United Kingdom of Augusto Pinochet in 1998.

No further action is requested from the Urgent Action network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.