

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 41/013/2004

25 February 2004

Further Information on UA 23/04 (AMR 41/003/2004, 16 January 2004) Fear for safety/Use of excessive force and new concern: fear of unfair trial

MEXICO **Members of the community of Tlalnepantla, State of Morelos**

New names: **Pedro Lagos González (m)**
Benjamín Medina (m)
Carlos Cedeño (m)

Killed: **Gregorio Sánchez**

Pedro Lagos Gonzalez, a supporter of the alternative local administration set up in opposition to the mayor (*Presidente Municipal*) in Tlalnepantla, State of Morelos, was detained on 18 February and is reportedly now in prison. Amnesty International fears that because of the current political situation in the municipality he may not receive a fair trial.

He is a supporter of the *Consejo Popular Autónomo* (Autonomous Popular Council) and the *Comisión de Pueblos y Barrios de Tlalnepantla en el Exilio* (Tlalnepantla Community Commission in Exile) created by members of the community of Tlalnepantla who fled the municipality as a result of the police intervention of 14 January 2004.

Pedro Lagos González was reportedly forced to get into a vehicle without number plates on the road between Tlalnepantla and the community of Milpa Atla-Xochimilco. His relatives and local NGOs did not find out where he was until 21 February, when the Morelos State Human Rights Commission (*Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos de Morelos*, CEDH) told them that he was in prison, facing charges of robbery and fraud. However the relatives and NGOs have not been able to confirm what charges he is facing, and there is concern that he was arrested without a warrant.

Amnesty International has confirmed that at least 20 people were detained on 14 January during and after the police intervention in Tlalnepantla. They have reportedly been charged with "rebellion, sedition and causing injury" (*delitos de motín, asonada y lesiones*). All were released on bail on 22 January. One supporter of the mayor (*Presidente municipal*) reportedly remains in custody.

Benjamin Medina was reportedly detained on 27 January, and charged with the killing of Gregorio Sánchez. Carlos Cedeño Cortés was reportedly detained the same day, and charged with obstructing the murder investigation. Both men are supporters of the *Consejo Popular Autónomo*, and this has raised concerns about the nature of the evidence against both men.

Around 2,000 people reportedly fled Tlalnepantla during and after the police action of 14 January, and it is not clear how many have since returned. The police officers involved reportedly threatened or intimidated several people. The CEDH has reportedly opened an investigation into the events of 14 January, and allegations of use of excessive force, but no results have been published so far.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- calling on the authorities to guarantee that Pedro Lagos González will not be ill-treated in custody, and that he will be allowed access to his family and independent legal advice, and that he will receive a fair trial;

- calling on the authorities to conduct an independent investigation into the legality of the detention and subsequent procedures against Pedro Lagos González on 18 February 2004;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee that Benjamín Medina and Carlos Cedeño, who were detained on 27 January, will receive due process and a fair trial, in accordance with international standards;
- insisting that the authorities carry out a prompt, impartial and exhaustive investigation into the events of 14 January 2004 in Tlalnepantla, make the findings public and bring those responsible to justice.

APPEALS TO: (if a voice answers any of the fax numbers, ask: “me da tono de fax por favor”)

Governor of Morelos

Lic. Sergio Estrada Cagigal
 Gobernador del Estado de Morelos
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Salutation: Dear Governor/Señor Gobernador

Attorney General of Morelos

Lic. Guillermo Adolfo Tenorio Avila
 Procurador del Estado de Morelos
 Emiliano Zapata 803, Col. Buenavista
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 Estado de Morelos
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Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Señor Procurador

President of the Human Rights State Commission of Morelos

Dr. José Francisco Coronato Rodríguez
 Presidente de la Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos de Morelos
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 62270, Cuernavaca, MEXICO

Fax: +52 777 102 2781

Salutation: Dear President of the Human Rights Commission / Señor Presidente de Comisión de Derechos Humanos

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Santiago Creel
 Secretario de Gobernación
 Secretaría de Gobernación
 Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez
 Delegación Cuauhtémoc
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Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Non-governmental Human Rights Organization

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PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 April 2004.