

**PUBLIC**

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**Fear for safety/Torture**

**28 May 2004**

**MEXICO**

**Hiram Oliveros (m) aged 28**

**Killed:**

**Mario Medina (m) aged 23  
Roberto Mora (m)**

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Hiram Oliveros, whose partner US citizen, Mario Medina was stabbed to death on 13 May at Nuevo Laredo prison in Tamaulipas State. They were accused of being involved in the murder of journalist Roberto Javier Mora and were reportedly tortured into confessing to the crime.

Hiram Oliveros is reportedly separated from other prisoners. However, concern for his safety remains as Mario Medina was stabbed 88 times by another inmate despite alleged assurances by prison authorities to a US consular official the day before his death, that he too was safely separated from other inmates. In the days following his detention, Mario Medina reported that he had been tortured and sexually assaulted by police officers in order to force him to confess to the murder of Roberto Javier Mora.

Roberto Javier Mora, the editor of the local newspaper *El Mañana* was found dead at his apartment in the town of Nuevo Laredo on 19 March. The police reported that he had been stabbed 26 times. He had exposed allegations of corruption and drug trafficking in his newspaper. Local human rights organizations have denounced his murder and called on the authorities to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.

According to reports, Mario Medina and Hiram Oliveros, who were neighbours of the victim, discovered his body and contacted the local police station. They were arrested by the police officers as primary suspects of the murder on 26 March. The two men later stated that they believed they had been detained and accused of the crime because they were a gay couple who could be forced to make a confession. The Attorney General of Tamaulipas (*Procuraduría de Justicia de Tamaulipas*) has claimed that Roberto Javier Mora was murdered because Mario Medina suspected his partner was having an affair with the journalist, whom he killed out of jealousy. Mario Medina's alleged confession on video has been used to substantiate this allegation.

On 30 March, Mario Medina and Hiram Oliveros issued a statement to the press in which they denied knowing Roberto Javier Mora or being responsible for his killing. They also alleged they were tortured by police agents in order to make them confess to the crime. Mario Medina said that during his detention the state judicial police agents (*agentes ministeriales*) threatened him by saying: "we will "disappear" you, you know that everybody disappears here" ("*te vamos a desaparecer, ya sabes que se desaparecen todos aquí*"). He also said he was beaten and sexually assaulted as well as denied access to his family and lawyer during his detention.

Following Mario Medina's allegations of torture, a judge ordered two police officers to appear at a court hearing. According to reports, neither officer turned up. Police officers from the office of the Attorney General in Tamaulipas are charged with investigating Mario Medina's death, which could create a conflict of interest as they are the same ones who arrested both him and Hiram Oliveros.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Torture and ill-treatment are widespread in Mexico. Amnesty International has documented many cases where prisoners have been convicted chiefly on the basis of confessions extracted under torture. The courts

rarely challenge these confessions, even when the defendants retract them and complain that they have been tortured.

Crimes against journalists, committed in regions near the border with the United States, are very often linked to their work reporting on drug trafficking, corruption and the participation of state officials in these crimes. The authorities rarely investigate these cases effectively creating a climate of impunity.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Hiram Oliveros who is imprisoned at Nuevo Ladero, Tamaulipas State where his partner Mario Medina was killed on 13 May 2004;
- calling on the authorities to fully investigate the death of Mario Medina, for the results to be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- calling on the authorities to fully investigate allegations that Mario Medina and Hiram Oliveros were tortured during their detention in March 2004 and to investigate allegations that they were accused of the crime on account of their sexual orientation;
- expressing concern at the killing of the journalist Roberto Javier Mora on 19 March and insisting the authorities to undertake an exhaustive and independent investigation into the killing, for the results to be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- expressing concern for the safety of journalists in the State of Tamaulipas and urging the authorities to guarantee their safety, so that they can carry out their legitimate work without fear of reprisal.

**APPEALS TO:**

Governor of Tamaulipas

Lic. Tomás Yárrington Ruvalcaba  
Gobernador del Estado de Tamaulipas  
Palacio de Gobierno  
Av. Juárez y 5 de Mayo

Ciudad Victoria 87009, Tamaulipas, Mexico

**Telegram: Gobernador del Estado de Tamaulipas, Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico**

**Fax: +52 834 318 8701**

**Salutation: Dear Governor/Señor Gobernador**

Attorney General of Tamaulipas

Dr. Ramón Durón Ruiz  
Procurador General de Justicia del Estado de Tamaulipas  
Palacio de Justicia  
Calle Sietecero  
Boulevard Praxedis Balboa s/n, 2º piso  
Col. Centro  
Ciudad Victoria 87009, Tamaulipas, Mexico

**Telegram: Procurador General de Justicia del Estado de Tamaulipas, Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas Mexico**

**Fax: +52 834 318 7184**

**Salutation: Dear Attorney/ Señor Procurador**

Human Rights Commission of Tamaulipas

Lic. Eduardo Garza Rivas  
Presidente de la Comisión de Derechos  
Humanos del Estado de Tamaulipas  
Calle 14 No. 355 Sur  
87000, Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico

**Telegram: Presidente de la Comisión de Derechos, Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas**

**Fax: +52 834 312 4565 (If someone answers say: "Tono de fax por favor")**

**Salutation: Dear Attorney/Señor Procurador**

**COPIES TO:**

Centre for Border Studies and the Promotion of Human Rights

Centro de Estudios Fronterizos y de Promoción de los Derechos Humanos A.C (CEFPROD HAC)  
Calle Zaragoza 581 Altos, Despacho 6

Zona Centro, Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mexico

**Fax: +52 899 922 2441 (choose 1, then ask for a fax tone)**

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 9 July 2004.