

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety/ Fear of Unfair Trial/ Harassment

17 October 2003

MEXICO

**Roney Mendoza Flores (m)  
Members of his family**

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Roney Mendoza and his family following continuous threats and harassment against them in the municipality of Villacorzo, Chiapas state. The former member of the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD)*, Party of the Democratic Revolution, was arrested in March and charged with attempted murder.

Roney Mendoza left the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* in 2002 in the run up to municipal elections after his disagreement with the proposed party candidate, who went on to be elected. Amnesty International believes that the criminal case brought against Roney Mendoza maybe motivated by his refusal to cooperate with the new municipal leadership.

Since his detention, Roney Mendoza's family has reportedly suffered repeated intimidation by the municipal authorities and by members of the State Public Prosecutors Office, *Procuraduría de Justicia del Estado (PGJE)*. In recent weeks the family's home has reportedly been under regular surveillance by state and municipal agents. Official vehicles have been parked near the family home and gun shots have reportedly been fired nearby.

On 7 January, Roney Mendoza lodged a legal complaint against several municipal authorities in Villacorzo alleging repeated threats against him and his family, in relation to a dispute over a piece of land owned by the Mendoza family. On 18 March, he was detained by state judicial police in Villacorzo and charged with attempted murder on the basis of a complaint made by a close associate of municipal president. Despite protesting his innocence and presenting evidence refuting the allegations, Roney Mendoza has remained in prison pending trial. On 26 May, a representative of the municipal authorities reportedly visited him in prison and offered to drop the charges against him if he withdrew his complaint against the municipal government.

Since 12 September, prison authorities have reportedly demanded that Blanca Daysi, Roney Mendoza's wife undergo non-standard and intrusive gynaecology inspections in order to visit her husband. She has reportedly refused to comply due to the lack of appropriate personnel and equipment and also because relatives of other detainees have not been subjected to the same procedures. During the first week of October, witnesses who came forward to testify to Roney Mendoza's innocence were also reportedly threatened by the individual he is alleged to have tried to kill.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Disputes at the municipal level of government remain very widespread in rural Mexico, particularly in the southern states of Guerrero, Chiapas and Oaxaca. These often lead to human rights violations and Amnesty International frequently receives reports of municipal authorities abusing their authority in order to silence critics through the use of unfounded criminal charges and investigations by the judicial authorities which were intended to intimidate or detain opponents. Despite complaints lodged with state authorities these abuses are often not investigated and those responsible remain free to commit further human rights violations with impunity, leading to worsening community conflicts.

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

-expressing concern for the safety of Roney Mendoza and his family who have repeatedly been threatened and intimidated by the authorities in the municipality of Villacorzo, Chiapas state;  
-calling for immediate measures to be taken to guarantee their safety, in accordance with their wishes;  
-calling for an immediate, full and impartial investigation into the threats and intimidation against Roney Mendoza and his family and for the results of the investigation to be made public;  
-calling for the authorities to guarantee that Roney Mendoza receives a fair trial in line with international fair trial standards.

**APPEALS TO:**

Attorney General of Chiapas

Mariano Herrán Salvatti  
Procurador General de Justicia del Estado de Chiapas  
Libramiento Norte s/n  
Infonavit el Rosario  
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas  
México

**Telegram:** Procurador, Chiapas, México  
**Fax:** + 52 961 616 57 24  
**Salutation:** Dear Attorney General / Señor Procurador

Governor of Chiapas

Pablo Salazar Mendiguchia  
Gobernador del Estado de Chiapas  
Palacio de Gobierno del Estado de Chiapas  
Av. Central y Primera Oriente  
Colonia Centro, C.P. 29009  
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas  
México

**Telegram:** Gobernador, Chiapas, México  
**Fax:** + 52 961 612 09 17  
**Salutation:** Dear Governor / Señor Gobernador

President of the Supreme Tribunal of Justice of Chiapas State

Lic. Milton Escobar Castillejos  
Presidente del Supremo Tribunal  
de Justicia del Estado de Chiapas  
Libramiento Norte Oriente 2100  
Fraccionamiento Del Bosque, Edificio A, 2º .piso  
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, C.P. 2047  
México

**Telegram:** President of the Supreme Tribunal, Chiapas, México  
**Fax:** + 52 961 61 653 50 (If someone answers the phone ask: “me da tono de fax, por favor”)  
**Salutation:** Dear President of the Supreme Tribunal/ Señor Presidente del Supremo Tribunal

Municipal President of Villacorzo

Lic. Julio César Zuarth López,  
Presidente Municipal de Villacorzo,  
Palacio Municipal de Villacorzo  
Chiapas  
Mexico

**Telegram:** President, Chiapas, México  
**Fax:** + 52 965 65 163 46 (If someone answers the phone ask: “me da tono de fax, por favor”)  
**Salutation:** Dear Municipal President/ Señor Presidente Municipal

**COPIES TO:**

Human rights Centre "Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez" A.C  
Centro de Derechos Humanos "Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez" A.C. (PRODH)  
Serapio Rendon 57-B  
Col. San Rafael, 06470  
México D.F. MEXICO  
**Fax: + 52 55 5535 6892**

and 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 28 November 2003.