

MEXICOUp to 250 striking students of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM), National Autonomous University of Mexico

Up to 250 students were reportedly beaten and arrested by police at a university campus in Mexico City on 1 February 2000. Amnesty International is concerned that excessive force was apparently used in the arrests, and that they may face further ill-treatment in detention.

Students at the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM), National Autonomous University of Mexico, have been on strike since 22 April 1999 in protest at proposed reforms to the university system.

After clashes between striking students and university employees, more than 400 officers of the *Policía Federal Preventiva* (PFP), Federal Preventive Police entered the university site *Escuela Nacional Preparatoria 3* and arrested the striking students, reportedly beating them as they did so. At least 37 people were reportedly injured.

A local non-governmental human rights organization which gained access to the detained students reported that they were informed of their rights and given access to state-assigned defense lawyers (*defensor de oficio*), but denied the right to see private lawyers before making statements.

The Attorney General's Office (*Procuraduría General de la República*, PGR) has reportedly filed charges of terrorism, rebellion, and sabotage (*Terrorismo, Motín y Sabotaje*) against at least 175 of those detained, reportedly claiming that they were caught in the act (*in flagrante delicto*).

Amnesty International recognises the duty of the Mexican authorities to maintain law and order, but is concerned at the excessive use of force in making these arrests, and at the judicial authorities' apparent failure to allow those detained access to defence lawyers of their choice.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has documented several attacks on students involved in the strike, who have been abducted, tortured, beaten and in some cases even subjected to simulated executions. Amnesty International is not aware of the progress of any official investigations to bring those responsible to justice. (See News Service 109/99, AMR 41/09/99, 4 June 1999; and UA 278/99, AMR 41/28/99, 22 October 1999 and follow up.)

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

- expressing concern at the apparent excessive use of force by police arresting up to 250 striking UNAM students on 1 February 2000;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety of all those detained;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that they are allowed access to defence counsel of their choice, medical attention and their families;
- reminding the authorities that the detained should be charged with a recognizable crime or released;
- calling on the authorities to investigate the circumstances in which these students were arrested, and for the results of the investigation to be made public.

APPEALS TO:

Mayor of Mexico City
Licda. Rosario Robles
Jefatura de Gobierno del Distrito Federal
Plaza de la Constitución esq.
Piso 1, 06068(5) México D.F. MEXICO
Faxes: + 52 5 510 0771
Salutation: Sr. Ing / Dear Mayor

Attorney General of the Republic
Lic. Jorge Madrazo
Procurador General de la República
Av Reforma, esq. Violeta
Col Guerrero
Mexico DF, CP 06300
MEXICO
Faxes: + 52 5 346 0906
Salutation: Señor Procurador General/ Dear Attorney General

Attorney General of Mexico City
Lic Samuel Villar
Procurador General de México DF
Niños Héroes 61, 3er piso, Col. Doctores
Mexico DF, CP 06720
MEXICO
Faxes: + 52 5 133 7631 (if fax tone not available, please try later)
Salutation: Señor Procurador / Dear Attorney General

Human Rights Commission of Mexico City
Dr Luis Barreda Solórzano
Presidente de la CEDHDF
Av. Chapultepec 49, Col. Centro
México DF, CP 06040
MEXICO
Faxes: + 525 681 8490 (if fax tone not available, please try later)
Salutation: Estimado Dr. / Dear Dr. Barreda

COPIES 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 16 March 2000.