

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

20 March 1998

MEXICOCésar Estrada Aguilar

All members of CEDIAC

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of César Estrada Aguilar, member of the *Centro de Derechos Indígenas* (CEDIAC), Indigenous Rights Centre, based in Sitala, Chiapas state, as well as all other members of the organisation.

On 17 March 1998 César Estrada Aguilar was detained by two police officers in the municipality of Sitala, for no apparent reason. They reportedly forced him at gunpoint to drive around the surrounding area and repeatedly threatened him with death because of his peaceful activism for indigenous rights.

César Estrada Aguilar was subsequently held incommunicado in the police station in Sitala for three hours, while the threats and harassment by the two police officers continued. He then managed to escape, taking refuge in the buildings of the municipal president of Sitala, where he now remains.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the past four years Amnesty International has documented a systematic pattern of human rights violations against peasant and indigenous activists, by members of the security forces as well as by paramilitary groups, in the states of Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca. Many such violations have occurred in the context of counter-insurgency operations in which security forces have attempted to link peaceful activists to the armed opposition groups *Ejército Popular Revolucionario* (EPR), Popular Revolutionary Army, based in Guerrero and Oaxaca States, and the *Ejército Zapatista de la Liberación Nacional* (EZLN), Zapatista Army of National Liberation, based in Chiapas State. (For further information see UA 351/97, AMR 41/103/97, 6 November 1997; follow-up AMR 41/02/98, 13 January 1998; UA 37/98, AMR 41/08/97, 6 February 1998; EXTRA 17/98, AMR 41/11/98, 20 February 1998; and follow-up AMR 41/12/98, 23 February 1998)

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

- requesting that adequate measures be taken to guarantee the physical safety of César Estrada Aguilar;
- calling for an immediate investigation to be opened into the arbitrary detention of César Estrada Aguilar and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- seeking assurances that all members of CEDIAC will be able to carry out their peaceful activities without being subjected to human rights violations;
- expressing concern at the deterioration in the situation of human rights in Chiapas State.

**APPEALS TO:**

Governor of the State of Chiapas

Lic. Roberto Albores Guillén  
Gobernador del Estado de Chiapas  
Palacio de Gobierno, Piso 1  
Col. Centro, 29000  
Tuxla Gutiérrez  
Estado de Chiapas  
MEXICO

**Telegrams: Gobernador del Estado, Chiapas, México**

**Faxes: + 52 961 2 0917**

**Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor**

Attorney General of Chiapas State

Lic. Jorge Hernández Aguilar  
Procurador del Estado de Chiapas  
Procuraduría General del Estado de Chiapas  
Tuxla Gutiérrez  
Estado de Chiapas  
MEXICO

**Telegrams: Procurador del Estado, Chiapas, México**

**Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear State Attorney**

**COPIES TO:**

Human rights organisation

Centro de Derechos Humanos  
"Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez" A.C.  
Serapio Rendon 57-B  
Col. San Rafael, 06470  
México D.F. MEXICO

CEDIAC

**Fax: + 525 511 5302**

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 2 May 1998.