

PUBLIC

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"Disappearance" / Fear of torture

17 July 1998

MEXICO

Antonio Aguilar Hernández

Antonio Aguilar Hernández, a member of the *Comité de Familiares y Amigos de Presos Políticos y Sociales en Mexico*, the Committee of Friends and Family of Political and Social Prisoners in Mexico, "disappeared" on 11 July 1998 after taking part in a sit-down demonstration calling for the release of a group of political prisoners. He left the protest at around 6pm and has not been seen since.

This is second time that Antonio Aguilar Hernández has "disappeared". Last year he was held for over two months and tortured, allegedly by security forces, while his family were kept under constant observation (see UA 342/97, AMR 41/100/97, 31 October 1997; follow-up UA 342/97, AMR 41/107/97, 11 November 1997). Antonio Aguilar Hernández was, until his latest "disappearance", receiving support from an Amnesty International funded project for victims of torture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Arbitrary detentions and "disappearances" have been common occurrences in Mexico over the past four years. Amnesty International has been documenting this rise with increasing concern (see MEXICO: 'Disappearances': A black hole in the protection of human rights, AMR 41/05/98, 7 May 1998).

In most cases, there is strong, or even incontrovertible, evidence of official participation in "disappearances", yet those responsible continue to enjoy impunity. Amnesty International believes that immediate action must be taken to stop the widespread and systematic practice of "disappearances", which also prevailed in Mexico in the 1970's and 1980's.

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

- calling for the whereabouts of Antonio Aguilar Hernández to be made known to his family immediately and that he be immediately released unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- calling for prompt and thorough investigations into the renewed "disappearance" of Antonio Aguilar Hernández, that the findings be made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- expressing concern at the continued pattern of impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of 'disappearances', undermining the protection of human rights in Mexico;
- reminding the Mexican authorities of their commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 5: "No one shall be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Interior

Lic. Francisco Labastida Ochoa

Secretario de Gobernación, Secretaría de Gobernación

Bucarelli 99, 1er piso, Col Juarez, 06699 México DF, MEXICO

Telegrams: Secretario Gobernación, México DF, México

Faxes: + 52 5 546 5350

Salutation: Sr. Secretario / Dear Minister

Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Jorge Madrazo Cuellar
Señor Procurador General de Justicia de la República
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Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear Attorney

Attorney of the Federal District

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Procurador del Distrito Federal, Procuraduría del Distrito Federal
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Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear Attorney

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Congressional Commission on Human Rights

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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 September 1998.

***"No one shall be subjected to cruel, inhuman or
degrading treatment or punishment."***