

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/21/97

21 April 1997

Further information on EXTRA 54/97 (AMR 41/20/97, 18 April 1997) - Fear of imminent deportation of human rights defenders

**MEXICO** Vilma Núñez de Escorcia, Nicaraguan national  
Benjamín Cuéllar, Salvadorean national

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Vilma Núñez de Escorcia and Benjamín Cuéllar had their appeals to remain in Mexico rejected by the Ministry of the Interior on 18 April and had to leave Mexico at noon on 20 April.

Amnesty International has also learned that Vilma Núñez was visited in her hotel at 2:30am on 19 April by eight members of immigration who requested, in an intimidating manner, that she sign her expulsion order (*acta de expulsión*). They told her that she was being expelled because she was interfering in the internal affairs of the country ("*Venía a inmiscuirse en los asuntos internos del país*").

Amnesty International deplores the way these two human rights defenders have been treated. When applying for visas to visit Mexico as part of the delegation of the *Federación Internacional de Derechos Humanos* (FIDH), International Federation of Human Rights, both Vilma Núñez and Benjamín Cuéllar had informed the Mexican consulates in their respective countries of the reason for their visit to Mexico. On that basis the two human rights defenders were issued with tourist visas. The subsequent withdrawal of those visas and the deportation of the two Central Americans is an act of bad faith carried out for political reasons by the Mexican authorities, and contradicts their publicly-stated commitment to allow international human rights defenders freedom of access to Mexico.

During the official visit of a high-level Amnesty International delegation to Mexico in November 1995, Foreign Affairs Minister José Ángel Gurría stated that Mexico had an open door policy for any international non-governmental organization that wished to investigate the situation of human rights in Mexico.

Amnesty International believes that the work of human rights defenders on behalf of those who are not in a position to defend themselves should be protected, not attacked. Human rights defenders monitor adherence to standards of human rights agreed by the international community, and as such their work should not be interpreted as being politically motivated interference in the country concerned.

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

- expressing serious concern at the expulsion of Vilma Núñez and Benjamin Cuéllar, Central American human rights defenders, on 20 April 1997;
- reminding the authorities of their publicly stated commitment to an open-door policy on international human rights defenders, and urging them to reiterate this in the light of the deportations;
- urging that all human rights defenders be allowed to carry out their peaceful activities in Mexico, in line with the Mexican Government's international commitments.

**APPEALS TO:**

1. Minister of the Interior:

Lic. Emilio Chuayffet Chemor  
Secretario de Gobernación  
Secretaría de Gobernación  
Bucarelli 99, 1er piso, Col Juárez, 06699 México DF, MEXICO

**Faxes: + 52 5 546 5350**

**Salutation: Sr. Secretario / Dear Minister**

2. Minister of Foreign Affairs

Lic. José Ángel Gurría Treviño  
Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores  
Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores  
Av. Ricardo Flores Magón No.1, Colonia Nonoalco Tlatelolco  
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**Salutation: Sr. Ministro/ Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

1. Human rights organizations

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San Salvador, EL SALVADOR

2. Newspaper

Sr. Director  
La Jornada  
Balderas 68  
06050 México D.F., MEXICO

and to diplomatic representatives of Mexico accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**