

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/05/96

UA 34/96

Ill-treatment / Fear of torture

13 February 1996

MEXICO **Andrés Manuel López Obrado, PRD member**
Dorilian Díaz Pérez, civil servant at Town Hall
Rafael López Cruz, President of the State Committee of PRD
Darvin González Ballina, former PRD parliamentarian
and more than 50 other PRD members

More than 50 people are being held in incommunicado detention following the forcible breaking up by the security forces of a peaceful environmental demonstration in the state of Tabasco. Amnesty International is concerned by reports of ill-treatment during the security force operation, and fears that those currently detained are at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

A peaceful blockade by members of the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática, PRD*, Democratic Revolution Party, in the village of Huatacalca, Nacajuca, state of Tabasco, was taking place to demand compensation for pollution caused by an oil platform nearby.

On 7 February 1996, in an operation involving more than 500 members of the army and some 300 of the Federal and State Judicial Police, the security forces broke up the blockade. People were forced into their homes as teargas was launched from a helicopter. A number of people, including indigenous people and fishermen, were ill-treated during the operation. Andrés Manuel López Obrado received a head injury in the course of the police break-up of the blockade, but the full number of those wounded during the security force operation is still unknown.

Five people were arrested on 7 February, including Dorilian Díaz Pérez and Rafael López Cruz. Then, on 8 and 9 February, members of the police and military arrested more than 50 people in the municipalities of Cárdenas and Centia, Tabasco State, including Darvin González Ballina, the ex-municipal president and former PRD Member of Parliament for Tabasco state. An arrest warrant for Andrés Manuel López Obrado has also reportedly been issued.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has recorded a long-term pattern of ill-treatment and torture during arrest and incommunicado detention, heightening fears for those currently held. There are growing fears for the safety of PRD members and indigenous people involved in defending peasants' land rights in the state of Tabasco. Involvement in issues such as land disputes or compensation rights have often resulted in state-sponsored violence against peasants and opposition members in a number of Mexican states, including Guerrero (see UA 159/95, AMR 41/15/95, 5 July 1995 and updates [AMR 41/16/95, 26 July and AMR 41/18/95, 17 August]).

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

- calling for a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into allegations of the use of excessive force and ill-treatment (citing the case of Andrés Manuel López Obrado) by members of the police and military forces on 7 February 1996 in Huatacalca, state of Tabasco, and for those responsible to be brought to justice;

- seeking assurances that all those detained since 7 February are being humanely treated and are being allowed immediate access to doctors, their relatives and lawyers in accordance with international standards;
- calling for them to be promptly charged with recognizably criminal offences or immediately released.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Republic

Lic. Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León
Presidente de la República
Palacio Nacional
06067, México D.F., MEXICO

Telegrams: Presidente Zedillo, México D.F., México

Telexes: 170937 sppnme; 1774468 sppnme

Faxes: + 52 5 271 1764

Salutation: Sr. President/Dear President

2) Minister of the Interior

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

Telegrams: Secretario Gobernación, México D.F., México

Faxes: + 52 5 546 5350/7380 592 0584

Salutation: Sr. Secretario/Dear Minister

3) Governor of Tabasco State

Roberto Madrazo Pintado
Gobernador del Estado de Tabasco
Palacio de Gobierno
Villahermosa, Tabasco, MEXICO

Telegrams: Gobernador, Tabasco, México

Faxes: + 52 5 681 8125

Salutation: Sr. Gobernador/Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

1) Weekly magazine

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

2) Human rights organization

Sres.
Comite de Derechos Humanos de Tabasco
A. Sánchez Magallanes 844 Altos
86000 Villahermosa, Tabasco, MEXICO

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 30 March 1996.