

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/58/96

UA 227/96

Fear for safety

27 September 1996

MEXICORazhy González, journalist
Leticia Hernández Montoya (f), journalist

Gloria Leticia Díaz (f)
Maribel Gutiérrez (f)
Kenia Guzmán Pérez (f)
Rolando Aguilar
Sergio Flores Hernández
Jorge Arriaga Garduño
Angel Blanco Morales

journalists named in
18 September communique

Mario García Rodríguez
Juan Angulo
Juan José Guadarama
Carlos Yáñez Cruz
Oscar Basave
Javier Trujillo
Héctor Téllez

Uri Barreda
Misael Habana
Alejandrino González
Ezequiel Fierro
Daniel Genchi
Arturo Luna
Julio Manuel Millán
Alberto Ramírez

journalists named in 19

Roberto Campos
Raúl Vázquez
Javier Maciel Meza
Luz Amalia Orona (f)
Heriberto Ochoa

September communique

There is serious concern for the safety of journalists covering news relating to the *Ejército Revolucionario Popular* (ERP), People's Revolutionary Army, an armed opposition group (see background). This concern has grown since 13 September 1996 when the ERP held a secret press conference to which journalists from four national newspapers were invited to attend, and to which they were taken blindfolded.

On 17 September one of these journalists, Razhy González, director of "Contrapunto", a weekly magazine critical of the government, was kidnapped by four heavily armed men alleged to be police officers, near the centre of Oaxaca city in Oaxaca state. His abductors made death threats against him and his family, and repeatedly interrogated him on how he had come to know about the ERP. He was released on 19 September 1996.

On 18 September, the home of Leticia Hernández Montoya, director of the local newspaper *Expresso* in Guerrero State, correspondent of the national newspaper *Excelsior*, and also one of the journalists who had gone to the ERP press conference, was reportedly visited by a Commander of the *Procuraduría General de la República* (PGR), Attorney General's Office. As the journalist was not

at home, the man interrogated one of her relatives about Leticia Hernández Montoya, her activities and her relation with the ERP.

On 18 September a subdelegate of the *Procuraduría General de Guerrero*, (PGE), Attorney General's Office in Guerrero State, made a public statement in a Guerrero Newspaper "*La Crónica*" in which it accused 15 journalists (named above) of collaborating with the ERP. A second communique was issued on 19 September adding another 13 names (above) to the list. Amnesty International fears that the accusation against these journalists puts them at risk of human rights violations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The *Ejército Revolucionario Popular*, ERP, the People's Revolutionary Army, made its first appearance on 28 June 1996. Thousand of troops have poured into Guerrero since then. There have been continuous reports of threats, intimidation and ill-treatment against members of local communities, mainly indigenous peasants, as troops and police search homes and vehicles for weapons and ERP members.

On 28 June 1996, the Governor of Guerrero state issued warrants against several members of peasant organizations, apparently for belonging to the ERP. More than 40 members of peasant organizations were subsequently arrested in Guerrero state by police members. All the peasants were questioned about their belonging to ERP. Latest reports confirm that most of them were tortured. All currently remain in prison (see EXTRA 103/96, AMR 41/34/96, 5 July and updates).

A climate of systematic human rights violations and impunity prevail in Guerrero, and there has been an increase in serious human right violations against journalists, including attempted murder, "disappearances" and torture (see UA 158/96, AMR 41/30/96, 28 June; UA 42/96, AMR 41/07/96, 21 February; UA 172/96, AMR 41/35/96, 8 July).

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

- expressing deep concern about continuing human rights violations against journalists (name some of them) and the lack of effective action to stop the violations and to end the impunity currently enjoyed by most perpetrators;
- expressing serious concern for the safety of all the above named reportedly threatened or harassed in connection with their professional activities;
- urging the government to take appropriate measures to protect the journalists and their right of freedom of expression as guaranteed in the Mexican Constitution.

APPEALS TO:

1) Attorney of the state of Guerrero
 Lic. Antonio Hernández Díaz
 Procurador del Estado de Guerrero
 Carretera Nacional México-Acapulco Km. 6.300
 CP 39.000, Chilpancingo, Guerrero, MEXICO.

Telegrams: Sr. Procurador, Guerrero, México

Faxes: + 52 747 223 28 (voice: ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Procurador/ Dear Attorney

2) Governor of the state of Oaxaca

Lic. Dióodoro Carrasco Altamirano
Gobernador del estado de Oaxaca
Palacio de Gobierno
Oaxaca, Oaxaca, MEXICO
Telegrams: Gobernador Carrasco, Oaxaca, Mexico
Faxes: + 52 951 637 37
Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

3) Interim Governor of the state of Guerrero
Ángel Heladio Aguirre Rivero
Gobernador Interino del estado de Guerrero
Palacio de Gobierno
Plaza Primer Congreso de Anahuac
39000 Chilpancingo, Guerrero, Mexico
Telegrams: Gobernador Aguirre, Chilpancingo, Guerrero, Mexico
Faxes: + 52 747 23072 (voice: ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")
Salutation: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

1) Daily newspaper
Sr. Editor, La Jornada
Balderas 68, 06050 México D.F., MEXICO

2) Weekly magazine
Sr. Editor, Proceso
Fresas 7, colonia del Valle
03100, México D.F., 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 20 November 1996.