

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 34/25/94  
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UA 173/94 Fear of torture

3 May 1994

GUATEMALA two members of the *Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC)*, Committee of Peasant Unity:

**Arturo Federico MÉNDEZ ORTIZ**  
**Alfonso MORALES JIMÉNEZ,**

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Arturo Federico Méndez Ortiz and Alfonso Morales Jiménez, of the Maya-Mam ethnic group, were arrested on 22 April 1994, by members of the National Police in the Municipality of Huehuetenango. Fears for their safety have been heightened by reports that Alfonso Morales has been beaten in detention. The two men are being held at Huehuetenango prison.

According to reports, Arturo Méndez and Alfonso Morales are accused by members of the *Patrullas de Autodefensa Civil (PAC)*, Civil Defence Patrols, (civilian agents of the armed forces) of the assassination on 15 September 1993 of the leader of the local PAC. At the time of that killing, the army reportedly declared to the media, without apparently presenting any evidence, that it was the work of leaders of popular organizations such as the *Coordinadora Nacional de Viudas de Guatemala (CONAVIGUA)*, National Coordinating Committee of Widows of Guatemala, the CUC and others.

Lawyers and leaders of the largely indigenous CUC are trying to get access to the detainees. There is no information available about their current state of health, although Alfonso Morales was reportedly tied to a pole and beaten at the time of his detention.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Popular grassroots organizations like CUC and CONAVIGUA have been long-term targets of human rights abuses in Guatemala. One recent incident involved CUC member Efraín Yaxon Guarcax, a 27-year-old peasant of the Maya-Cakchiquel ethnic group, shot dead on 22 April 1994 when he was travelling from Guatemala City to his home in Sololá in circumstances which suggest that the official security forces may have been involved.

In another case similar to that of Arturo Méndez and Alfonso Morales, Tomás Pérez Pérez and Jesús Cuc Churunel, also members of CUC, have been held in the Santa Cruz prison since July 1993, accused of the killing of Jorge Carpio Nicolle on 3 July 1993 (see UA 219/93, AMR 34/46/93, 6 July 1993; and UA 231/93, AMR 34/47/93, 15 July 1993). Marta de Carpio, Jorge Carpio's wife, has said publicly that these people are being used as scapegoats and has repeatedly denounced deficiencies in the official investigation into Jorge Carpio's killing.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Arturo Federico Méndez Ortiz and Alfonso Morales Jiménez;
- urging the authorities to clarify their legal situation;
- calling for an inquiry into allegations that Alfonso Morales was beaten at the time of his arrest and asking that those responsible be brought to justice;
- asking that while held in detention they be humanely treated and given access to an independent lawyer, a doctor and their families;

- urging that they either be released or brought promptly before a competent court.

**APPEALS TO**

1) President of the Republic:

S.E. Ramiro de León Carpio  
 Presidente de la República de Guatemala  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Presidente de León Carpio, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 347364**  
**Telexes: 5331 CAPRES GU**  
**Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente /Dear President**

2) Minister of Interior:

Lic. Danilo Parrinello Blanco  
 Ministro de Gobernación  
 Ministerio de Gobernación  
 Despacho Ministerial, Of. No. 8  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Ministro de Gobernación, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 515 368**  
**Telexes: 5085 MINGOB**  
**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

3) Minister of Defence:

Gral. Mario Enríquez Morales  
 Ministro de Defensa  
 Ministerio de Defensa  
 Palacio Nacional, Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Telegrams: Ministro de Defensa, Guatemala, Guatemala**  
**Faxes: + 502 2 21906/515252**  
**Telexes: 5361 COMGUA GU**  
**Salutation: Sr. Ministro / Dear Minister**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Human Rights Procurator

Lic. Jorge García Laguardia  
 Procurador de los Derechos Humanos  
 12 Avenida 12-72, Zona 1  
 Guatemala, GUATEMALA  
**Faxes: +502 2 81734**

Head of the Presidential Commission Coordinating the Policies of the Executive relating to Human Rights

Lic. Jorge Gonzalo Cabrera Hurtarte  
 Presidente  
 COPREDEH  
 15 Avenida 18-38, Zona 13  
 Guatemala, GUATEMALA

Indigenous Rights Group

Defensoría Maya  
 32 av. 1-56,

Zona 7, Guatemala  
Guatemala

and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala accredited to your country

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 June 1994.