

URGENT ACTION

LGBT ACTIVIST TORTURED BY POLICE

Police officers in the southern Mexican city of Mérida detained and tortured lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights activist José Ricardo Maldonado Arroyo in an attempt to extract information from him. They arbitrarily arrested him for around four hours and threatened him with reprisals if he spoke about the incident. There is grave concern for his safety.

At around 10.30pm on 4 December, four members of the Yucatán state judicial police approached **José Maldonado** while he was at a friend's house and asked him about a suspect in a case that they were investigating. José Maldonado told them that he did not know the man, but the officers arrested him without showing any arrest warrants or explaining the reason for his detention. According to José Maldonado, he was handcuffed, blindfolded, pushed into a car and driven around for four hours. The officers repeatedly beat him in the face, chest and back and forced him to change cars at least four times during the ordeal. The officers questioned him using homophobic language and other threats about the suspect that they were looking for and about José Maldonado's work as a LGBT rights activist and HIV campaigner.

Before releasing José Maldonado in front of his home at around 3am on 5 December, the officers told him: "Do not make a fuss, do not make this bigger. We'll catch you again and we'll put you in prison. We'll file charges against you. We'll fuck you up." (No metas desmadre, no la hagas más grande. Te vamos a volver a agarrar y te vamos a meter al penal. Te vamos a meter cargos. Te va a cargar la chingada.)

Following the incident, José Maldonado sought medical attention and the advice of a local human rights organization. He filed a complaint with the state Attorney General's Office on 5 December but to date nobody has contacted him regarding any investigation into the incident or protection measures. The state judicial police work under the authority of the state Attorney General.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of José Maldonado;
- Urging the authorities to provide him with effective protection in strict accordance with his wishes;
- Calling on the authorities to carry out a full, prompt and independent investigation into this case of ill-treatment and torture, to make the results public and to bring those responsible to justice;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 JANUARY 2011 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez,
Delegación Cuauhtémoc,
México D.F., C.P. 06600, MÉXICO
Fax: (+52) 55 5063 3405
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado
Señor Secretario

Yucatán Governor

Sra. Ivonne Araceli Ortega Pacheco
Palacio de Gobierno, Calle 61 por 60,
Col. Centro, Mérida, C.P. 97000,
Yucatán, MÉXICO
Fax: (+52) 999 930 3124
Email: ivonne.ortega@yucatan.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Governor/Estimada
Señora Gobernadora

Yucatán State Attorney General

Lic. Héctor José Cabrera Rivero
Periférico Poniente Km. 46.5, Susulá-
Caucel, Mérida, C.P. 97217, Yucatán,
MÉXICO
Fax: (+52) 999 930 3267
Email: despacho.procurador@yucatan.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Attorney
General/Estimado Señor Procurador

Copies of your appeals and solidarity messages can be sent to repavih@hotmail.com or repavih@gmail.com. Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

José Maldonado is the director of the Network of People Affected with HIV (Red de Personas Afectadas por VIH, Repavih). The network has been active in Mérida, Yucatán state, since 2006. They provide health care advice and emotional support to people infected with HIV and AIDS and run local campaigns to combat discrimination.

Reports of arbitrary detention, torture, excessive use of force and enforced disappearance by municipal, state and federal police forces remain common in Mexico. Despite some attempts to reform police, particularly federal police, and remove corrupt officials, the continued failure to establish credible oversight controls or criminal investigations of human rights abuses undermined progress.

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