

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 41/037/2005

16 September 2005

Further Information on UA 50/05 (AMR 41/008/2005, 2 March 2005) and follow-up (AMR 41/015/2005, 23 May 2005) - Fear for safety/Prisoner of Conscience/Unfair Trial

MEXICO

**Felipe Arreaga (m)- environmental activist**

**Thirteen other former members of the Organizacion Campesina Ecologista de la Sierra de Petatlan (OCESP), Peasant Environmentalist Organisation of the Sierra de Petatlan**

**Celsa Valdovinos (f), wife of Felipe Arreaga and leader of Organizacion de Mujeres Ecologistas, Women's Environmentalist Organization**

**Albertano Peñalosa Dominguez (m), environmental activist and founder member of OCEP**

**Adali Peñalosa (m), aged 15 ] his sons**

**Isaac Peñalosa (m), aged 19 ]**

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Environmental activist and prisoner of conscience Felipe Arreaga has been acquitted of murder, and was released on 15 September. However, he, his family and other environmental activists in the region remain in grave danger.

Amnesty International welcomes the decision of the Guerrero State court to acquit Felipe Arreaga. This verdict was made possible by the efforts of his lawyers from the local human rights organisation, *Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña "Tlachinollan"* ("Tlachinollan" La Montaña Human Rights Centre) and the national and international pressure for Felipe Arreaga's release. After his release, Felipe Arreaga told the media that he would continue to defend the environment and thanked national and international human rights organizations for their support.

During his trial, one of the men responsible for the prosecution reportedly threatened reprisals against Felipe Arreaga and his family if the environmental activist was not convicted. It is feared that Felipe Arreaga, his family and other environmentalists in the region could face attack.

Felipe Arreaga had spent more than 10 months in prison in Zihuatanejo, in Guerrero State, and accused of the murder of the son of a local *cacique* (local political boss) committed in 1998. Strong evidence demonstrated that the case against Felipe Arreaga was fabricated as a reprisal for his leading role in protests against excessive and illegal logging of forests in Petatlan, Guerrero State.

Thirteen other former leaders of the *Organizacion Campesina Ecologista de la Sierra de Petatlan* (OCESP), Peasant Environmentalist Organisation of the Sierra de Petatlan still face arrest warrants in connection with the same case. Amnesty International fears that the thirteen are being targeted in order to deter environmental activism in the region.

Amnesty International is not aware of any substantial advance on the investigation into the attack against environmental activist Albertano Peñalosa and his family in May.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:**

- welcoming the release of Felipe Arreaga Sánchez on 15 September;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety of Felipe Arreaga Sanchez, his family and other environmental activists from the Petatlan region, in Guerrero State

- urging the authorities to ensure that Felipe Arreaga receives adequate compensation for his false imprisonment for nine months;
- calling on the authorities to carry out an investigation into his prosecution, which was based on fabricated evidence, and for the arrest warrants in the same case against 13 other former leaders of the *Organizacion Campesina Ecologista de la Sierra de Petatlan* (OCESP) to be cancelled;
- calling for an independent and impartial investigation into the attack against Albertano Peñalosa and his family and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, including environmentalist activists, and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

**APPEALS TO:**

State Governor

Lic. Zeferino Torreblanca Galindo

Gobernador Electo del Estado de Guerrero.

Horacio Nelson número 15 Fraccionamiento Costa Azul

C.P. 39850, Acapulco, Guerrero, México

**Fax: +52 747 47 14788 (if someone answers, say "Tono de fax por favor")**

**Salutation: Dear Governor /Señor Gobernador**

Attorney General of Guerrero

Lic. Jesus Ramirez Guerrero, Procurador General de Justicia del Estado de Guerrero

Carretera Nacional México-Acapulco Km. 6+300

Tramo Chilpancingo- Petaquillos, Chilpancingo 39090, Guerrero, México

**Fax: + 52 747 47 22328**

**Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Señor Procurador**

Director of Human Rights - Interior Ministry

Maestro Ricardo Sepúlveda

Secretaría de Gobernación

Reforma 99, PISO 21, PH, Colonia Tabacalera, C.P. 06030, México D.F. México

**Fax: + 52 55 51 28 02 34 (if someone answers the phone, ask for "tono de fax, por favor")**

**Salutation: Estimado Maestro/Dear Sir**

**COPIES TO:**

Human rights organisation

Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña "Tlachinollan" AC.,

Calle Mina número 77, Colonia Centro, Tlapa de Comonfort Código Postal 41304, Guerrero, México

President of the Human Rights Commission of the State of Guerrero (Coddehum)

Lic. Juan Alarcón Hernández

Avda. Juárez, Esq. Galo Soberón y Parra

Col. Centro, 39000, Chilpancingo, Guerrero 39000, México

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**Salutation: Sr. Presidente/ Dear Sir**

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 28 October 2005.