

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/11/96

UA 45/96

"Disappearance"

23 February 1996

MEXICO

Angel Valdovinos Garza, aged 27, peasant leader

Angel Valdovinos Garza has not been seen since 26 January 1996, when, according to witnesses, he was driven away from a bus station in Acapulco by members of the Guerrero State's *Gobernación*, Office of Internal Affairs. Amnesty International is deeply concerned for his safety.

It is feared that Angel Valdovinos Garza, a member of the *Organización Campesina de la Sierra del Sur* (OCSS), Southern Sierra Peasant Organization, in the municipality of Petatlán, state of Guerrero, may have been abducted because of his leadership role on behalf of a group of 40 peasant families who face eviction from their seaside land in the hamlet of Las Antenas.

According to reports, the local authorities have stepped up pressure against the settlers, which has included harassment of the families by the local police, to force them to abandon their land to allow the construction of a tourist resort. Angel Valdovinos Garza has been in the forefront of opposing the eviction, and has been threatened in the past for his role.

Since his "disappearance", Angel Valdovinos Garza's relatives and acquaintances have looked for him in local hospitals, police stations and prisons, without success. They have recently presented a complaint before the governmental National Human Rights Commission.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Angel Valdovinos Garza is the second OCSS leader to have "disappeared" within the last year. In May 1995, Gilberto Romero Vázquez "disappeared" in the town of Atoyac de Alvarez, Guerrero. A month later, on 28 June, 17 peasants travelling to Atoyac de Alvarez for a peaceful demonstration to call for his release were massacred in an ambush staged by the state police and high government officials from Guerrero (see UA 159/95, AMR 41/15/95, 5 July 1995; and follow-ups AMR 41/16/95, 26 July and AMR 41/18/95, 17 August). The whereabouts of Gilberto Romero Vázquez remain unknown.

Latest reports indicate that relatives of victims, witnesses, and other OCSS members continue to face threats and intimidation in the context of the massacre of 28 June 1995 (see UA 37/96, AMR 41/06/96, 15 February 1996). On 18 February 1996, nine peasants were summarily executed by members of the state police in Guerrero state (see UA 44/96, AMR 41/08/96, 22 February 1996).

Amnesty International is increasingly alarmed at the prevailing impunity for most of those responsible for such crimes, and the lack of effective action by the Mexican Government to ensure a halt to such a scale of human rights violations in the state of Guerrero.

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

- expressing deep concern about the reported "disappearance" of Angel Valdovinos Garza;
- calling for an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation to establish his whereabouts, and asking to be kept informed of developments;
- seeking absolute guarantees of his physical safety if he is in detention;

- expressing deep alarm about continuing human rights violations in the state of Guerrero, and the apparent lack of effective action to stop them and to end the impunity currently enjoyed by most perpetrators.

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. Presidente / 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) Lic. Ruben Figueroa Alcocer

Gobernador del Estado de Guerrero
 Palacio de Gobierno
 Plaza Primer Congreso de Anahuac
 Chilpancingo, Guerrero
 Mexico C.P. 39000

Faxes: +52 747 23072 (voice line: ask "me puede dar tono de fax por favor")

Telegrams: Gobernador Alcocer, Guerrero, Mexico

Salutation: Sr.Gobernador/Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

1) Daily newspaper

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

2) Human rights organization

Sres.
 Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechso Humanos A.C.
 Pitagoras #736- 3er. piso
 (Entre Concepción Béistegui y Torres Adalid)
 Col. Narvarte, 03020 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 April 1996.

