

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AMR 41/12/98

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to 15 per section.

23 February 1998

Further information on EXTRA 17/98 (AMR 41/11/98, 20 February 1998) -

MEXICO Fear for arbitrary detention / Possible prisoners of conscience
and new concern: Possible extrajudicial execution/Fear for safety

**José Tila López and witness testifying before international human rights
observers in Chiapas State**

On 21 February 1998 a group of indigenous people was reportedly ambushed by members of the paramilitary group "*Paz y Justicia*", Peace and Justice, killing José Tila López and wounding several people. The attack took place in Tila municipality, Chiapas state. Hours before José Tila López had given evidence about human rights violations against peasants and indigenous people to an international delegation of human rights observers presently in Chiapas state.

José Tila López, a Chol Indian peasant from Yosijha, but displaced to Tzaquil, a village in the northern part of Chiapas, was part of a small group of indigenous peasants who had testified about human rights violations carried out by members of the security forces, as well as by paramilitary groups.

Members of the group who witnessed José Tila López's killing have given the names of the attackers to the international delegation. The names are also to be formally handed to *Procuraduría General de la República*, (PGR), Attorney General's Office, with a request for an investigation.

On 23 February, members of the international delegation plan to take further testimonies during a visit to communities in the north of Chiapas. This is an area renowned for violence, partly due to the impunity enjoyed by paramilitary groups. The delegation also intends to visit José Tila's relatives, including his father, who witnessed the killing.

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

- urging that immediate measures be taken to guarantee the safety of all witnesses giving evidence to the international human rights delegation, following the killing of José Tila López on 21 February 1998 in Chiapas state;
- urging a prompt, impartial and effective investigation into the killing of José Tila López, that the findings be made public, and that those found responsible to be brought to justice;
- requesting an investigation into the impunity enjoyed by paramilitary groups operating in Chiapas, and to bring those responsible for human rights violations to justice;
- urging the authorities to take necessary steps to disband the paramilitary groups.

APPEALS TO

1) Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lic. Rosario Green Macías
Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores

Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores
Av. Ricardo Flores Magón No.1,
Col. Nonoalco Tlatelolco
06995 México D.F.
MEXICO

Faxes: + 52 5 782 4109

Salutation: Sra. Secretaria / Dear Minister

2) Governor of the State of Chiapas

Lic. Roberto Albores Guillén
Gobernador del Estado de Chiapas
Palacio de Gobierno, Piso 1
Col. Centro, 29000, Tuxtla Gutiérrez
Estado de Chiapas, MEXICO

Faxes: + 52 961 20918

Salutations: Sr. Gobernador / Dear Governor

3) Attorney General of Chiapas

Lic. Jorge Hernández Aguilar
Procurador General de Chiapas
Procuraduría General de Chiapas
Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Estado de Chiapas, MEXICO

Telegrams: Procurador del Estado, Chiapas, México

Faxes: + 52 961 65376 (if voice, ask "me puede dar tono de fax, por favor")

Salutation: Sr. Procurador / Dear State Attorney General

COPIES TO:

Human Rights Organizations

Comisión de Derechos Humanos "Fray Bartolomé de las Casas",
Francisco León 46, Barrio de Santa Lucía
San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas C.P. 29250, México

Congressional Human Rights Commission

Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Congreso, Edificio del Congreso de la Nación,
Avenida del Congreso, Edificio A, 2 nivel, Mexico D.F., MEXICO

Faxes: + 525 542 3247

and to diplomatic representatives of México accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals 6 April 1998.